

Bark at the Moon - 06/12/09

This Week's Recap

The soldiers, mercenaries hired by Councilwoman Dvora, told the group that the councilwoman wanted to see them before they took Free Spirited Arvia to Hierarch Artemesia. As they said it was a matter of importance to the city, the group went along.

They spoke with the councilwoman, though Ming did most of the talking. It turns out that Arvia is the daughter of Glorious Jade Branch, City-god of Chanta. His daughter could one day supplant him, or help bring the recently absent god back to his city. Artemesia would offer the girl up to the highest bidder, which could be dire for the city if it was someone looking to twist her to their own designs.

In a surprise move of fellow-feeling, Ming asks Arvia what she wants. The girl is delighted that someone has finally stopped to think of her, and says she's really not sure where her life is headed. But she definitely doesn't want to "go to the highest bidder," so they leave her with Dvora and get ready to head home.

In return, they discuss money, to which Dvora responds with a laugh, given the pittance they'd agreed to work for Artemesia for. But when they explain that they are really interested in a way for their medicinally challenged friend Abisi to heal from the wounds he's likely to sustain fighting the Wyld, Dvora tells them the legend of No Key, the Mushroom King.

But before they can get out of the treetop city, the bridges and platforms shake beneath their feet and the sky fills with the sound of wing beats. Lily's sister Lilac has grown impatient and

marched two talons of hobgoblins into the streets. As she glides down with her scale of griffons honor guard, she demands that the Lunars give the girl to her.

Two mercenary companies respond to the alarm, but their leaders have been assassinated in the night and they are little more than unruly mobs until Ming and Tse draw them together. In the meantime, Abisi ducks into a nearby bakery for cover and tucks a piping hot pie into the elsewhere to eat later.

It's a tough fight, but the close quarters of the bridges forces the hobgoblins to tighten ranks and keeps them from surrounding the exalts, and they are soon crushed by the shouting river dragon, rhino-man, and their troops. Lilac proves harder to fight, but she too is defeated. As the last few remaining griffons fly away, she shouts a cry of impending revenge.

The Lunars head back to Dvora's to tell her of the attack, and when they get there she is delighted to see them. That is, until she hears that they didn't get her messenger. Arvia has been kidnapped again, as she was on her way back to her home within the city's roots.

At first unsure why they would have taken her back to the place she was lost in at first, they see better once they get on the trail of the kidnapper, an unknown Abyssal who left a miniature skull and gauze calling card.

The undercity winds through earth and wood tunnels and it follows the geomantic curvature of the forest floor. Ming's strong sense of smell in his wolf

form couples with Tse's survival training to quickly find their quarry.

Unfortunately, their quarry was waiting, and leapt nigh-invisible from the shadows ahead. A gigantic soulsteel scythe in her hands, Veil of Ebon Blades slides out of the shadows, her blackened and burned flesh covered in a wisp of funeral gauze. The scythe falls down, and so does Ming.

Tse answers giant weapon with giant weapon, and shifts into beastman form to swing his Tetsubo. It catches the Abyssal and hurls her back, but not before she digs her scythe into his side. As the two trade blows, Abisi slides through the shadows to a spot where he can catch the woman by surprise, but Tse's Tetsubo breaks her back before he can strike.

With the Abyssal dead, they again rescue Free Spirited Arvia and return her to Dvora, who vows to keep her closer and safer.

They then hit the road and head back to Black Branches to tell Voices of Many about the attack from the Wyld within Chanta. When they do, the warrior-turned-leader is incensed, and begins planning justice.

Ming prepares himself for his initiation into the Swords of Luna, and then lopes off into the bordermarches in search of something bigger than his river dragon form. He soon finds it, in the form of four large tree trunks moving on their own. Then he looks up and sees that they're just the legs of humongous wooden cat. One thing inevitably leads to another, and Ming is soon dragging back the severed wooden head of a Cat Tree.

On the way back he spies a small group of wood elementals fleeing from a group

of hobgoblins. He quickly rescues them, and finds that these four are the last survivors of a group of forty that desperately left the Elemental Pole of Wood in search of someone capable of getting rid of the Wood Dragon that has made the pole its home.

Sextis Jylis, the Elemental Dragon of Wood, has been absent from the Pole for quite some time, busy in Yu Shan on who knows what. In his absence, a dragon named Kotomaro the Hidden Lightning has set up dominion there. A craven creature who deals with Fae and Demons, Kotomaro is also a harsh taskmaster. Fearing for both themselves and Creation should something happen to the Pole, the elementals beg Ming to gather a force and exert the power that Exalts are born to.

Back in Black Branches, they discuss their alternatives. The lure of healing magic in the Valley of Golden Needles sounds great, but Creation seems to have need of them at the Pole. And to top it off, their pack leader finalizes his plan: there is an ancient jade obelisk still standing in the nearby bordermarches. It can be taken down, transported to the wyld section of Chanta, and placed in the center of Lily and Lilac's freehold, where it will destroy the wyld pocket and free the trapped Demesnes beneath it.

They decide to follow the wishes of their pack elder, and get a little revenge in the first place, especially once they discuss the feasibility of traveling through the Deep Wyld. Voice of Many introduces them to Darik Beast Tongue, sorcerer and sage. He will be able to guide them through the Wyld and help them to properly retrieve and place the obelisk.

They spend the season preparing themselves, and then head out.

The Mushroom King

[The legend of No Key, the Mushroom King.](#)

NPCs of Note

Free Spirited Arvia:

The daughter of Glorious Jade Branch, Free Spirited Arvia is poised to one day take over godship of Chanta, should she want to. As such, she was caught in a three-pronged power struggle between the city, the Wyld, and the Underworld. But she came out the other side an awakened being, and with a new friend or three. As she learns her way in the world, she could become an important ally to the group, or just a bit part in a past story.

Councilwoman Dvora:

Dvora enlisted the aid of the Lunars to regain Arvia twice, and promised to protect them from the repercussions of angering a guild hierarch, but was sure to make it clear that her influence only stretched as far as the city borders. Their bravery and service to the city earned the group a strong friend in Halta.

Jade Obelisks

During the Solar Deliberative, a mighty push into the Wyld was made, driving it back and expanding the borders of Creation. To keep the areas stable, Solars used many different methods, ranging from the mighty Reality Engines to constant Thaumaturgical rituals, depending on their needs and capabilities. By far the most common method for holding back the Wyld tide was the construction of huge Jade Obelisks.

Situated in geomantic and geometrically auspicious patterns about Creation's rim, these spires of white jade weighed 50 – 100 tons each, and were decorated with Moonsilver and orichalcum scripts telling the tales of their placement. Each one guarded the area around it for miles, keeping the Wyld at bay.

Today, their power has waned greatly, because the network was disrupted during the Balorian Crusade, wherein the Fair Folk mounted an offensive that would have torn Creation asunder had not the Scarlet Empress managed to take control of the Realm Defense Grid and crush them beneath the might of Solar first Age technology. But even weakened, they are powerful deterrents to the Wyld.

Land within seven miles of an obelisk cannot permanently become part of the Wyld, though it can be temporarily overrun, depending upon the current lunar cycle. This immunity does not extend to living creatures, but the effects of the Wyld on living things within one mile of an intact obelisk are reduced by one level. Nothing short of Pure Chaos can affect anything within 100 feet of the obelisk. How much of that protection will remain when it is taken down will depend on the knowledge of the scholar leading the task, and the skill of the craftsman doing the modifications.

Rules of the Game (house rules introduced, rules questions raised and answered, etc.)

Mass Combat:

Unless one side is immune to fatigue, we're ignoring the extra rolls created by the fatigue rules in mass combat.

Gem of Adamant Skin:

This only protects from wounds. Damage taken from poison or other non-external sources is not reduced.