

JOURNEY TO HARTSVALE



✧ DEFIANCE ✧

Journey to Hartsvale—Session 2, follows two distinct adventuring parties, each facing unique challenges and making critical decisions that shape their unfolding narratives. The session involves character management, tactical combat, social encounters, and moral dilemmas, concluding with cliffhangers for both groups. The events described below occur immediately after the events of **Session 1**, with no rests having been taken. It is the 12th of Kythorn.

I. Initial Game Setup and Character Management

The session began with administrative tasks and character updates:

- **Kesh's Development:** **Eligor Loom's** nephew, **Kesh Loom** (controlled by Andrew), is limited to a mace initially. Since Kesh is a *retainer*, the DM mandated that training is required to unlock further abilities, including spellcasting and his potential as a cleric/knight. This will transform the retainer (which normally is always an NPC by game rule) into a PC for Andrew's use.
- **Experience Points (XP):** The DM clarified that the campaign will follow standard experience point advancement, rather than session-based, story-based, or milestone-based level advancement. This may change as conditions warrant.

II. Adventure Thread 1: Eligor's Group (The Road Encounter)

Background & Company: Eligor's party includes a human female, **Fayleen Shray** (NPC), who, until recently, was polymorphed* into a hideous fly-creature by an evil wizard; two mercenary gnomes; two retainers; Kesh; and about 20 entranced townspeople (gnomes) that they rescued in **Autumntree**[†]. The group is making their way to **Phandalin**.



Eligor and Fayleen converse as Kesh and a few gnomes follow behind.

Eligor's warhorse was previously turned to stone and destroyed by a wizard and a Minotaur (**Vorgun**).

Key Events:

- **Fayleen's Gratitude:** Fayleen shares her backstory, expressing her desire to become a Druid. She gifts Eligor (Dayne's character) a powerful magical necklace she took from a wizard's[‡] shelf, in gratitude for his help restoring her to her proper form. The necklace enables any horse Eligor mounts while wearing it to fly short distances. Eligor is not certain that he had anything to do with breaking the spell and credits a golem they killed previously with the removal. Eligor may be wrong about that!
- **Minotaur's Taunts:** **Vorgun** the Minotaur repeatedly appears, taunts Eligor about his destroyed horse, and vanishes, clearly attempting to provoke him. Eligor remains resolute, preparing his companions for potential conflict.

- **The Duel Challenge:** Vorgun appears with the wizard responsible for the horse's petrification. The wizard magically restores the townspeople's minds, causing them to panic at the sight of an approaching Chimera. Vorgun challenges Eligor to participate in a one-on-one duel between him and the guilty wizard within an invisible barrier, 15' on a side (*Cube of Force*[§]), which can physically block non-participants from entering and participants from exiting.
- **Chimera's Arrival:** A large, three-headed Chimera (lion, sheep, and dragon, and a tail with a snake head they call **TOWBUTR**[¶]) lands, observing the scene. Its heads speak, placing bets on the duel and revealing they were once four humans, polymorphed[¶] by an evil wizard named **Grix**. The wizard also kidnapped their wives and daughters, so they now seek to be freed from the curse so they can rescue their families. During this reveal, Fayleen realizes that the same wizard that polymorphed her also polymorphed the Chimera!
- **Eligor's Actions in the Duel:**
 - Eligor accepts the duel, despite Fayleen's inability to help him by giving him additional magic items that might even up the fight.
 - He casts *False Life* on himself for 5 temporary hit points and *Inflict Wounds* on the wizard, dealing 16 damage.
 - The wizard misses with a dagger, seemingly toying with Eligor, and offers him a chance to surrender and become a prisoner, to which Eligor refuses.
 - Eligor casts *Sacred Flame*, but the wizard dodges.
 - The wizard disengages and exits the area.
 - Eligor realizes he can also exit the area and attempts to ally with the Chimera, explaining his mission against evil wizards. The Chimera agrees to protect his companions if Eligor falls but won't interfere in the duel.
 - Eligor tells the gnome leader to gather the panicked townspeople and meet him in Phandalin.
 - The wizard moves closer and re-engages the cube (face 3), trapping Eligor, Fayleen, and Kesh inside with him.
 - **Kesh's Sacrifice:** Kesh attempts to grapple the wizard, assisted by Fayleen (help action). Vorgun, now enraged, enters the duel and attacks Kesh with his great axe, dealing 13 damage, which surpasses Kesh's 10 HP. Kesh is left unconscious and on death saving throws.
 - **Eligor's Response:** Eligor immediately casts *Spare the Dying* on Kesh, stabilizing him, and positions himself defensively in front of

his prone nephew.

III. Adventure Thread 2: Smoke's Group (The Cavern Escape)

Escape from the Dragon Mother: Smoke's party (Smoke, Nock Knock, Corvus, Tullia, and Figgbar) is in a frantic sprint through dark tunnels, fleeing the roar of the Purple Dragon Mother. Drow soldiers are also running, adding to the chaos.

Key Events:

- **Knock Knock's Critical Injury:** **Nock Knock** (Brian's character) falls behind, takes a critical hit, and drops to zero hit points, unconscious on the tunnel floor.
- **Tullia and Smoke's Aid:** **Tullia** notices Nock Knock's predicament and quickly orders **Smoke** to "*Get the bird!*" Smoke (Isaiah's character) turns back and begins to drag his comrade. When Tullia (Samantha's character) sees that Smoke is not dragging him fast enough, she drops Corvus (who she was carrying under her arm) and turns back to help. Frustrated that even their combined efforts are still too slow, Tullia picks the tabaxi up herself and starts running!
- **Drow Standoff:** The Drow leader (**Finnerdon** - NPC) stops the group at a tunnel intersection, demanding they surrender their weapons and sit against a wall while a healer is summoned for Nock Knock. Eventually the kenku regains 4 HP from the drow cleric's healing and wakes up.
- **Defiance and Deception:**
 - **Figgbar** (Dan's character) defiantly refuses to comply, drawing his sword, but is stopped by Tullia.
 - **Corvus** (Chris's character) uses a *Charm Person* spell on Finnerdon, making the Drow leader amenable to him. Finnerdon, now charmed, is torn between his duty and his "friendly acquaintance" Corvus.
 - Finnerdon's second-in-command, **Olfin** (a hulking Drow who brought a set of shackled chains), becomes suspicious of Finnerdon's odd behavior. He accuses Finnerdon of speaking to Corvus "differently" than when speaking to him and the squad.
- **Internal Drow Conflict & Escape:** Olfin (NPC) accuses Finnerdon of being "out of place" and attempts to grapple him, plunging the Drow soldiers into a chaotic brawl. Seizing the opportunity, Figgbar encourages the party to "*Run for it!*". Corvus mimics a dragon's roar to further disorient the Drow. The party quickly grabs their weapons (Corvus retrieving his staff and knife).

Finnerdon, finally fooled that the dragon is approaching, takes off running with three of his loyal men. After a few seconds, he returns and asks, "*Corvus, aren't you coming?*" Corvus and the heroes decide to follow him since he is still charmed. After the group runs about 70 feet, Olfin and his men give chase.

- **New Threat:** As the heroes, Finnerdon, and his loyalists sprint down the tunnel, they run headlong into a **Grick**, which immediately attacks Finnerdon, fully engulfing the drow's head in its maw!



IV. Session Conclusion

Both groups are left in perilous situations. Eligor is trapped in a magical cube with a wounded ally, facing a dangerous wizard. Smoke's group has narrowly escaped imprisonment by the Drow soldiers and in the next session may have to battle the Grick!



* DM Modified, True Polymorph spell.

† **Autumntree** is a DM-created gnome village, which Eligor and his company liberated while also freeing the entranced gnome townsfolk described in this summary. These events occurred in one of the DM's 6 pre-campaign "backstory-builder" sessions. These sessions enabled the players to

learn their characters' strengths and weaknesses, without fear of them dying.

‡ *The wizard mentioned by Fayleen is not the wizard accompanying the minotaur, Vorgun.*

§ *The 2014 DMG details how the Cube of Force works on page 159. The wizard was able to choose different settings and turn it on and off, as needed, during the duel.*

|| *TOWBUTR is an acronym for **That One Who Brings Up The Rear**. The creature's three heads refer to themselves as MEE, MESELF, and AYE. The lion's head is MEE, the dragon's head is MEESELF, and the sheep's head is AYE. Collectively they refer to themselves as UHS (pronounced US).*

¶ *DM Modified, True Polymorph spell.*

Transcription services by:

