

I hope this letter finds you well. I do not yet know your identity; only that you are the champion chosen by the Fey Realm to help us in our time of need. There is much I wish to impart.

As you no doubt know, our fair land has been beset by fell creatures from the Shadow Realm. While such incursions have occurred throughout the Kingdom's history, they have been of late greatly increasing in frequency and numbers. My sages have not been able to determine the cause, and it is all my forces can do to keep our settlements safe. The roadways are overrun, and travel only happens when the need is great and in large numbers for safety.

This dire situation has given me little choice: I have asked for the assistance of the Fey Realm in the hope that one of their number can find a suitable champion in the same way that my own fey companion Rufus picked me long ago.

If this letter reaches you, then my messenger has identified you as the chosen champion. Arm yourself, and explore the world. Seek out the cause of our troubles. Build up your strength of arms and practice the new magical abilities imparted to you by your fey companion. In the pages that follow, I will give you some information about the land and the dangers you will likely face.

Good luck! The fate of our land is in your hands.

Avalina Godfrey, Queen of Faradur

Fey Companion

Most of my subjects do not understand Rufus's true nature, assuming that he is just an ordinary cat that serves as my familiar. In reality, the relationship is more complicated than that. He is the source of my power, and I of his. Your own fey companion will likely assume a different form, but the form does not determine its power. It will grow in power with you as your own skills and experience increase.

Since your fey companion exists between both realms, it cannot be easily killed in ours. If it is defeated in combat, it will merely be banished from our realm for a brief period of time.

Training

You will need to practice your combat abilities and magic as you explore the land. You will also eventually need to find trainers to help hone specific techniques. I can help with some of the basics, but at a certain point you will need to seek out specialists to further train these and other necessary skills.

Strength: This represents not only your physical might, which affects not only your ability to deliver effective blows with melee weapons, but also your ability to withstand the blows of your enemies. As your strength increases, your fey companion's melee abilities will similarly increase.

Dexterity: This represents your hand-eye coordination, as well as your ability to dodge traps and other hazards. Dexterity is important for accuracy with both melee and ranged weapons. As your dexterity increases, your fey companion's accuracy with their ranged and melee attacks will also increase.

Intelligence: This represents your memory and mental discipline, and affects your connection to the Fey Realm, which is needed for casting spells. As your intelligence increases, the power of your fey companion's magical abilities will increase as well.

Cities and Towns

There are many cities and towns to be found in Faradur. The majority of these lie on the mainland, while some are only reachable via ship.

Due to the incursions from the Shadow Realm, many items normally found in these settlements are in short supply. Weapons and armor are used by those defending the residents. Those which may be found will have a high cost, and merchants may require you to donate your existing lesser items to help with the city defense. The disruption of trade routes means that you may have to travel to several settlements to find the supplies that you need.

While you are in a town, take the time to speak with the townsfolk. Seek out as many people to speak with as your time allows. You never know who will have information that could be useful in your quest.

Merchants

Various types of shoppes may be found in cities and towns. Many of them sell goods that you will need for your journeys to come.

Weapon Merchants: While you can fashion a staff for yourself from a sturdy branch for free, you should purchase better weapons once you are able to afford them. A mace is a simple weapon that will have more impact than a staff. Axes can be even more deadly in the hands of a skilled wielder. Swords are the best melee weapons that you are likely to find in the cities of Faradur.

Do not forget to get a ranged weapon as well. The ability to attack foes from a distance may often make the difference between victory and defeat. Slings are common, and usually relatively inexpensive. Bows are much more costly, but are also much more effective. Keep in mind that it is more difficult to aim ranged weapons at adjacent foes, so do still keep a sturdy melee weapon on hand for those situations!

Armor Merchants: Like weapons, good armor is in short supply due to the incursions, and prices are very high. Leather is the most common armor to be found, and while it is not as strong as other types, it is a lot better than no armor at all. Chain armor is made from interlocking metal rings, and it can turn more blows than simple leather. Plate armor is highly prized, and is generally very hard to find even under normal circumstances. Finding a vendor may be easier than finding enough gold to commission a suit, however!

Grocers: In addition to common grocery items, these merchants can sell you trail rations that will stay preserved and keep you fed for long journeys. Definitely do not neglect to stock up on several of these if you are traveling far from home. Grocery shoppes can usually be identified by the iconic bread loaf picture on their shoppe signs.

Healers: Healers have the power to heal your bodily injuries and cure other ailments such as poison or disease. It is always best to know where the nearest healer may be found! The healer in my castle has been instructed to provide his services at no charge to you. Expect to pay a reasonable sum to healers found elsewhere, however.

Shipyards: If you wish to travel beyond the mainland, you will need a ship. It may be difficult to find a shipyard to sell you a ship right now, though, since many ships have been lost due to sea monsters, or taken over by pirates.

Potions: There are some with skills at making magical brews that can cure ills in the same way that a healer might. Carrying some of these with you may save you when you are far away from a settlement with a skilled healer.

Pubs: While these establishments may not seem vital, they are gathering places for townsfolk who may have useful information. Talk to the bartenders, as they hear many things from travelers who stop in their establishments.

Other Items

Not all items are available to buy in shoppes. Some may only be found by chance, or by convincing a skilled craftsperson to make an item for you, if one can be found.

Homing Gem: This powerful gem will transport you any distance back to the location with which you are most familiar, such as your home. The item's magic is invoked by crushing the gem in

your hand, making this a single-use item. Homing gems can only be made by a skilled alchemist, and I am unaware of any that still live on the mainland.

Dust of Disguise: By sprinkling this dust over your body, you can alter your appearance to blend in with the surrounding population. It has no use in human-settled areas, but may be of use to spy on enemies. I believe there is a healer in the island town of Duskgrove that knows the secret of making this dust.

Magical Weapons: While unlikely to be found for sale on the mainland, there may be those who know the secrets of making magical weapons. The dwarves have smithing abilities of great renown, and there are likely others that know how to craft magical bows and swords that you might encounter in your travels.

Dragon Armor: This is the best armor in all of the lands, made from the hides of the most fearsome creatures of the dungeons. As far as I know, the only person who could make it was Jaylan - a human smith who apprenticed with the dwarves. His current whereabouts are unknown to me, however.

Monsters

Many dangerous creatures are roaming freely throughout the kingdom. In addition to ones coming from the Shadow Realm, monsters native to Faradur that are normally kept at bay by our patrols have come out of hiding, and are attacking travelers.

Shadow Rats: These are unusually large and vicious rodents from the Shadow Realm. While more aggressive than their smaller cousins, any traveler with any reasonable skill at arms should be able to fend them off.

Darklings: These diminutive humanoids from the Shadow Realm may only barely be above knee height, but they know no fear and have some skill with their tiny spears.

Goblins: These small but agile humanoids are native to Faradur. While they are not especially tough, their skill with slings makes them more dangerous opponents than they might at first appear.

Skeletons: Animated long ago by dark magics, these mindless creatures seek only to destroy the living. Although they may appear to be frail and brittle, the animating magic gives them surprising resilience.

Fire Beetles: These magical, flaming insect-like Shadow Realm creatures are quite dangerous. They have the ability to shoot jets of fire at their opponents from afar.

Trolls: Since the patrols of the land have stopped, several of these large, brutish humanoids have taken residence under the bridges of the land, attacking hapless travelers. The bridge near my castle is usually safe, but care must be taken when crossing any others.

Ogres: Related to trolls, but much less clever, these monsters can be found wandering the wilderness instead of staking-out strategic locations.

Shadow Orbs: Beware of these terrifying creatures of dark energy. While they are not able to attack from afar, their ability to divide into two autonomous creatures during combat can make them difficult to defeat.

Heads: These odd, floating creatures from the Shadow Realm appear to be gigantic disembodied heads. They have great magical powers, including the ability to teleport and to shoot bolts of lightning from their eyes to attack opponents.

Giants: While not clever or skilled with any kind of weapons, giants are dangerous due to their sheer size and strength. Try to fight them from a distance as much as possible to keep their powerful blows from landing on you.

Death Bugs: These insectoid creatures from the Shadow Realm look like gigantic black roaches. They do not have any magical powers, but they are hard to kill, and their bites can be poisonous.

Dark Drakes: Looking much like small, dark dragons, these reptilian creatures from the Shadow Realm can spit acid at opponents from a great distance.

Night Wisps: Having no corporeal form, night wisps are the sentient manifestation of dark energy from the Shadow Realm. As such, they may only be harmed by spells, magical weapons, or magical creatures such as your fey companion.

Gloom Vipers: These serpentine terrors from the Shadow Realm are to be feared for their size, and their ability to immobilize and constrict their foes in combat. Try to fight them from a distance if at all possible.

Unseelie: These small, malevolent creatures are incorrectly named, as they resemble certain mischievous creatures from the Fey Realm. They actually originate from the Shadow Realm. While not as physically powerful as many other foes, they are a menace due to their abilities to shoot magic projectiles, teleport, and spawn more of their kind in combat.

Titans: Thought to have been dormant for centuries, there have been rumors of these terrible creatures coming out of their hidden underground lairs to attack all that cross their path. They do not originate from the Shadow Realm, and do not possess any magical powers, but their

sheer size and strength, and their skill with thrown boulders make them deadly opponents even for the mightiest of heroes.

Magic and Spells

Upon gaining your fey companion, you should also have gained some minor proficiency at magic. Your abilities will grow in time with practice. You must also travel the land to find and learn new spells when you can. This is done through your connection to the Fey Realm, though I cannot instruct you how exactly you may accomplish this, as it can differ from practitioner to practitioner.

Ray: This is often the first spell practitioners learn. A magical ray is simply a beam of concentrated magical energy that unerringly strikes an opponent.

Sun: Conjuring energy in direct opposition to Shadow, the sun spell conjures a globe of light that follows the caster around to light their way. While generally useless outdoors, it is necessary if you wish to explore the dungeons of the land.

Swap: By taking advantage of the magical bond you share, you can swap places with your fey companion with almost no expenditure of magical energy. Sometimes this can be life-saving in combat as you and your companion have different abilities.

Heal: This powerful spell can heal your bodily injuries. The amount of healing will depend on your skill in the magical arts.

Hop: More versatile than Swap, but requiring the expenditure of much more magical energy, this spell allows you to teleport somewhere nearby during combat. This can often be used to great tactical advantage. A skilled caster may find uses for this spell outside of combat as well.

Zap: A powerful magical practitioner can learn to channel much more magical energy at once in the form of an iridescent bolt of radiance, which may be hurled at foes. This will inflict more damage than Ray, but at the cost of more magical energy.

Dungeons

These are great magical mazes built into the mountains themselves by a long-forgotten magical race. It is impossible to say what their initial purpose may have been, but they are places of great danger and possible reward now. Only a powerful few have made it through one with their lives intact. If your investigations into the ills of your land take you to any dungeons, you will need to be very well-prepared for the foray if you have any hope of surviving the experience.

Dungeon Features

Beyond normal features like walls and doors, there are many wonders and hazards that may be found in dungeons. I do not claim to know all of these, but these are ones that I have heard spoken of by adventurers and sages.

Illusory Walls: These appear to be normal walls, but you may pass through them as if they did not exist, since they are only magical figments.

Traps: Hidden from mundane sight, traps are sprung upon stepping on a certain section of the dungeon floor. Effects may vary. Spikes may thrust out of the floor, or poisoned darts may shoot out of an adjacent wall. Sometimes you may dodge the effects if you are fast enough.

Ladders: Keeping in mind that dungeons are built up into the mountains, you will use up ladders to ascend farther into the dungeon, and down ladders to descend back down to previous levels. There are also ladders that span multiple levels.

Magical Voices: Occasionally, a displaced voice may be heard in the dungeon. These voices may provide cryptic clues, or occasionally misdirection.

Fountains: These geysers of water shoot out of the dungeon floor without any apparent water source or drainage. While some are just fresh water, others are magical in nature, with possible good or bad effects on the drinker.

Treasure Chests: Ancient treasures may often be found in dungeons. Be careful when opening chests of riches, as many are armed with deadly traps!

Winds: In places, enchanted winds can appear out of nowhere and snuff out any light sources, whether they be mundane or magical in nature. While not inherently dangerous, be careful to not allow yourself to stumble in the dark for too long, lest you stumble into another dungeon hazard.

Pits: These are simply large holes in the dungeon floor. Falling through one of these will take the faller down to the previous dungeon level. While these pits are clearly visible from a distance, it is possible to fall through one when rushing carelessly, or stumbling through the dark.

Energy Fields: These glowing fields of magical energy can be seen even in the dark. The effects of passing through one vary from field to field, and could be either beneficial or harmful.

Dungeon Monsters

I have heard varying accounts of the creatures that infest dungeons, and I unfortunately do not have a detailed list. I have heard tales of the walking dead, amorphous creatures of terror, vermin of epic proportions, and much worse. Generally, the creatures on higher levels of dungeons tend to be stronger and more dangerous than those on the earlier lower levels. Take care, and prepare yourself for challenging encounters!

Death and Dying

Through our shared connection to the Fey Realm, I have the ability to bring you back from the dead should you ever fall in combat. Be warned that some of your worldly goods may not survive the ordeal. Take care to defend yourself and your life!