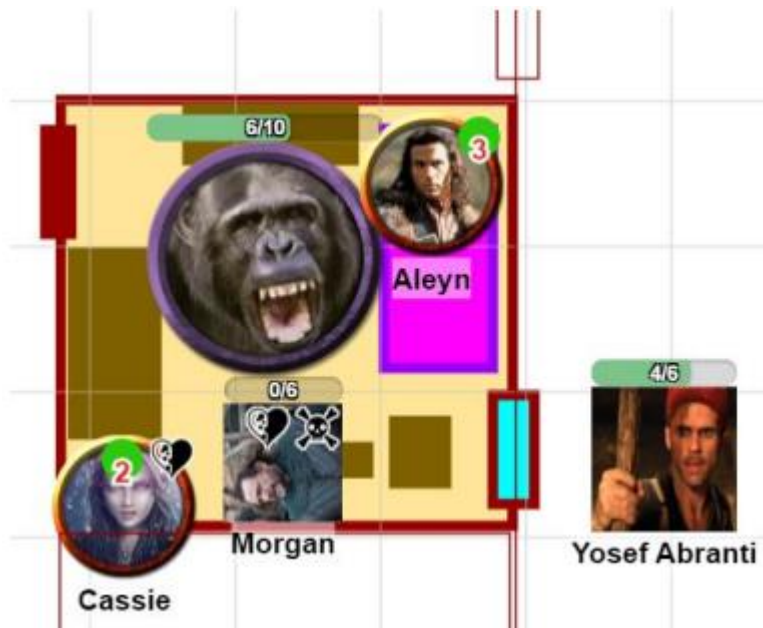


09 – Blood Spatter and Pattern



Cassie rushed to put pressure on Morgan’s deep chest wound. There was blood everywhere – the old man’s and the gorilla’s – but Morgan jerked awake and could slowly crawl for the door.

Aleya was still on the gorilla’s back, arm hooked around its massive throat. It pushed backwards, crashing into the bedroom wall, shattering the planks so it (and Aleya) were half out into the stockade.

By the time Morgan got the door open, they were being approached by two men from inside the rest of the building and Aleya could see a few more with primitive heavy machine guns coming from another building.

Finally Cassie’s persistence at trying to calm things down, seemed to get through to Fain and the gorilla sat down on the broken bed and Aleya raised his hands to the four soldiers while Yosef tried to babble something about “friends of mine – just visiting...” but it didn’t sound convincing.

The Ashe Expedition



The Ashe Expedition was led by Magda Ashe, aided by her boy-friend Bron Voight and their Quartermaster Gul Ben Hassan. They had four soldiers along to protect them from the many MONSTERS in these jungles and four porters. The rest of the expedition (another 10 people) were currently out scouting for some ancient lost temple - The Dworkinarium!

This stockade was their forward base and they'd been here a few weeks already, getting worried that their two scouting parties haven't returned.

Magda was not happy with Yosef – clearly his cover story was falling apart with the idea of guests suddenly materialising inside the well-guarded stockade. Especially as one of the guests was a frickin' 8ft tall gorilla.... who could apparently change into a handsome young man.

Fortunately the Shadow: Trappaz, has its own magic, what with magical monsters like Manticore and Gargoyles, as well as giant insects, dire lions and such and there are spell-casters here (both scouting parties are led by sorcerers). The explanation about Teleporting in from another world doesn't seem mind-blowing to Magda. In fact the Dworkinarium is rumoured to have had some kind of Dimensional Scoop that brought many different peoples and monsters from other worlds about 9,000 years ago. Their legends say that the Smith/Artificer God "Dworkin" came here to work on some mega-project and his treasures are still to be found. Mostly just the human tribes survived from that time, but there are also a race of Mantis-Men, the Thri-Kreen off in the West.

The timing of these Dworkin legends would put it about the time when the Pattern of Amber was created. It's the hope that there might be some truth in it, that led Florimel to send Yosef here a few years ago to infiltrate the Expedition and keep tabs on it. If they find anything useful, he's to steal it and bring it to Amber.

Magda is a doctor of medicine as well as an archaeologist and is able to patch Morgan up, but it will take a few days before he can exert himself without opening the wound.

Yosef gives up his bedroom to Cassie and the others move into the spare beds in the Barracks and they spend a couple of days resting.

Aleyn practices Trump Use by calling Cassie but gets strange results – it sounds like some sort of chaotic industrial drill in his head (and hers) and it was hard to make the connection.

Morgan's Madness

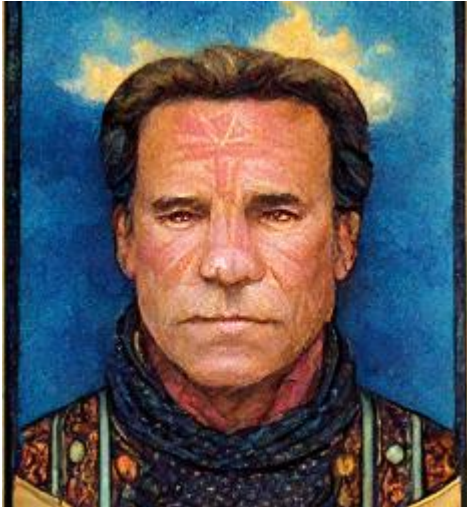
Morgan goes into a fit of rage while Magda is changing his bandages. He's foaming at the mouth and trying to throttle her when Cassie and Aleyn pull him off and sedate him. Magda scrambles away, wiping his spittle from her face. He's clearly got the Rage Virus (probably from the blood spraying on him when he stabbed Fain). Cassie grappled him and dragged him to a bed to strap him down, ignoring the pain when he stabbed her in the leg with the scissors Magda had been using to cut the bandages.

Fain had appeared to have accepted that his Father's Realm was now forever cut-off from the rest of Shadow – he was almost glad about it as it had been a world of perpetual war and violence. His father had forced him and his siblings to fight constantly to make them strong enough to Assay his Logrus Pattern. Only Fain had succeeded and got out of the cell and fallen mountainside.

Fain was enjoying the change of pace, playing cards with the soldiers. He'd accepted Aleyn's explanation for the sudden abduction and teleport. If Setep of House Amon was intending to use him for something, he preferred being here. He'd had enough of being somebody's weapon.

Cassie tried to get more details out of him about how to cure the Virus, but he coldly informed her that the best solution was to kill Morgan quickly. This justifiably angered her, and yet she could feel the anger deepening, especially when Fain turned back to his card game without a second thought for her friend. As the anger flared, she realised that she was also infected!

Getting in Touch with Family



She managed to contact Gerard by Trump – despite the chaotic interference, and was advised to come through to Amber, despite the risk caused by the Trump instability. Gerard told her he had contracted the virus too and been particularly hard to subdue but his family had managed to use The Jewel of Judgement to temporarily suppress the Rage and then he had Walked the Pattern to burn it from his system – the virus is a Logrus-based contagion. They had done the same trick with Caine and he had survived it – although nearly died during the process - and he was cured too.

They still intended to obliterate Gerard's home Shadow, but Setep has not been heard from since the destruction of Brittania. At least the threat from Finndo has been closed off.

Cassie agrees to Walk the Pattern immediately, before the Rage controls her.

Walking the Pattern

It's harder than it was a few months earlier and the veils of fire seem to boil her blood, burning the Logrus stain from her. The resistance builds rapidly and half-seen visions assail her. She risks splitting her focus as one vision seems to offer the hope of a cure for Morgan and almost perishes on the Pattern. She realises that the Pattern is changing her blood – her blood in particular – to carry a cure for this plague. Perhaps THIS is what Fiona, Random and Aunt Flora were discussing in her earlier vision. There are more confusing visions about Nazi Scientists in an underground lab. Rows of babies in incubators. Florimel was there reading reports and ordering them to continue. Asking if they had identified who the Father was?

Finally, she was through and all the fatigue and stress and rage was gone. She used the Pattern's limitless power to teleport upstairs in the castle to meet the rest of the family. Caine even grudgingly shakes her hand and admits he owes her a favour for saving him from Brittania.



Cassie managed to send a vial of her blood through the Trump to Aleyn, but the interference was getting worse so it was too dangerous to try and get him out of there. The serum works and has cured Morgan, but now Magda has it and has had to be restrained before she could spread it further.

Maybe Fain will allow it to be used on him, but that's a conversation for another day.

Aleyn thinks that the Trump jamming might be being caused by this legendary Dworkinarium although the initial Trump Call to Yosef was normal enough and they only noticed the disruption a couple of days later.

[GM: It might need to be Aleyn, Fain and Yosef in the next session due to this mysterious Trump Blocking. Cassie and/or Esther could RISK trying to Trump back, but it looks like the resistance to outward travel has increased considerably in the few hours Cassie was on the Pattern. I will prepare charactersheets for Fain and Yosef in case they are needed].