

The Plane of Zrcopia, Year 2166 in the Age of Gyre

You are in a bar, drinking a pint of oak-mead, when a tall man with black armour paces into the room. "Hello," the man in black armour says. "I need your help. This place is not safe for us. You may have noticed the insignia on my chest. We are going to a hideout of my organization, The Demonhead Cult. Beware the light. Don't let it touch you." You decide to follow the man out of the bar.

As usual on Zrcopia, it is hot, dry and windy. Zrcopia is, after all, covered by a vast desert. The man leads you towards a signpost. He looks at it for a moment, then turns to you. "We will need to go across the desert. It will be a difficult journey, and we will need to travel only by night. As for who I am, my name is Thaysae, and I am the current leader of the Demonhead Cult." You look at him for a moment, thinking maybe it isn't such a good idea to follow this guy. You decide to follow him anyway, but ask "What is in this for me?" He smiles darkly. "If you are still alive when we reach the hideout, I will pay you and recruit you to the cult.

The Journey, Day 1.

As you head out the first night, Thaysae asks you if you know how to fight. You say yes, but you have never faced a live enemy before. Thaysae smiles darkly. He says "That can be changed. What is your weapon?" You pull out your sword, a darksteel blade called Xeros, and show it to him. "Very nice, but not really my style," Thaysae says. "Now, lets see how you handle it in battle." Before you have time to say anything, Thaysae melts into the shadows, and the sand where he was explodes upward. A hulking beast appears, staring at you with its fangs glistening in the moonlight.

You silently curse Thaysae for plunging you into a battle you did not want. But you hold your sword up and begin to fight, charging the beast. You fight for three or four minutes, sword on claws and teeth, until you finally get a lucky strike. The beast slowly dies, clawing at its wounds, and for a moment you are standing there, holding a sword and looking at a dead beast, when the beast explodes into darkness and sand. Thaysae

is standing where the beast was. He smiles his dark smile. "It seems you really can fight."

Thaysae summons some rides for you and him, as in, Thaysae turns into a demon while you ride a disgusting camel. "We need to get to that town before daylight," the demon says in Thaysae's voice. You look ahead. There, on the very edge of the horizon, is a town. "What is the name of that town?" you ask. The demon smiles. "Wivmovun," says Thaysae's voice. "It is... Well, you shall see when we get there."

The Journey, End of Day 1. Location: Wivmovun

Thaysae finds a spot for you and him to sleep: an abandoned bar. As you fall asleep, you hear some strange noises. It sounds like someone is tearing into a dish of meat. You decide you can find out when you wake up, and so you go to sleep.

When you wake up, Thaysae is awake too, looking out the window. It seems to be almost dusk, and Thaysae said he was vulnerable in light.

You ask him, "When will we start? It is almost dusk."

Thaysae replies, "Wivmovun is not safe right at dusk. The creatures here get restless and start killing anyone on the streets."

You say "But we can take them, right? Otherwise, how will we get out of the town?"

Thaysae smiles. "We can fly out."

The Journey, Day 2. Starting Point: Wivmovun

Thaysae turns you into a bat and himself back into a demon. Then you fly out of the bar, over a horde of what look like vampires or thugs. They shout at you, but by this time you are long gone, following Thaysae the demon over the soft silvery sand.

Thaysae yells back to you, "I think we shall reach my headquarters in two more nights, not counting this one. However, our next stop will be at one of my hideouts, and there will be no monsters against us." You try to speak, but no sound comes out except a squeaky little bat chirp.

“Oh, I almost forgot you were a bat. Well, let’s cast a spell on you to make you speak.” he says. There is a flare of light, and suddenly you begin to talk instead of squeaking.

“Thaysae, you said there would be no monsters *against us*. Does that mean there will be monsters?”

Thaysae turns his demonic head. “Am I a monster? If so, then yes, there will be monsters. However, I think we are almost there. Look!”

You look, but all you see is a little path, leading straight into a spire of rock. “Thaysae, that is just a rock. You can not possibly think that—” But you are cut off as Thaysae turns back into a human, does a front flip, and lands on one knee right in front of the spire. Then he snaps his fingers, and you appear on the ground next to him, in human form.

Thaysae says, “Now here is the hard part. Only a few people can do this.” He puts his hand on the spire, and the shadows on it begin to bend and twist. As you watch, awestruck, they form themselves into an arch, and a stairway leading down appears inside.

Thaysae smiles. “After you.”

As you descend into the hideout, you see a number of strange people or things walk by. For example, you see a man walking by with the head of a dragon. There is another man whose whole body seems to be made of slime, sometimes solid, other times forming itself into weapons. Thaysae finds an empty room, gestures for you to go in, and shuts the door. You look around. The only two things in the room are a cot and a strange thing in the corner that seems to be spewing out shadows. The shadows snake along the wall and, slowly, form themselves into words: GO TO SLEEP. Nothing more is required. You go to sleep.

The Journey, End of Day 2. Location: Demonhead Cult Hideout

When you wake up, there is another shadow message on the wall. It says: THE ROOM IS LOCKED. FIND YOUR OWN WAY OUT. You curse Thaysae. Why on earth

did he trap you in this room? Then you look at the shadow spewer. You walk closer and closer, and then you finally reach out and touch it. And then... there is nothing.

You wake up with Thaysae and the Ooze Man standing over you.

Thaysae says, "Well. You got out, but you almost killed yourself doing it. It is time to go, or we waste time."

The Journey, Day 3. Starting Point: Demonhead Cult Hideout

As you head out again, you as a talking bat and Thaysae as a demon, you wonder, "How the hell did I get myself into this? For all I know, Thaysae's just planning to kill me!"

Thaysae turns and looks at you. "I won't kill you, little bat, but watch your thoughts. Many are able to read thoughts."

Almost nothing happens during that night, except for you trying without success to turn into a demon. You stop at an abandoned shed that no one has used for centuries and get some rest, then head out again. You are now flying through a series of caves you didn't know existed, and you think it is probably daytime right now. Thaysae seems to have no intention of stopping, since you are not in sunlight, and you keep flying the whole day. Just as you think you might fall asleep flying, you and Thaysae shoot out of the caves into the silvery light of the moon. You have been traveling for almost 24 hours. Thaysae falls to the ground in human form, turns you into a human, and you both collapse on the ground, exhausted.

The Journey, End of Day 4. Location: Hills of Zurok.

When you wake up, you notice a large pair of black boots right in front of you. You start to say "Thays—" but then you realize. Those are not Thaysae's boots. You look up into the eyes of a huge and muscular man, dressed in armour. He is holding your sword, Xeros, and Thaysae's blade, the Sword of Light and Shadow. He smiles down at you. But it is not a friendly smile.

“Hello, young fool. I have tied up Thaysae, the ignorant knave, with ropes of rage, which he can not break. You, on the other hand, could join me. I, like Thaysae, have a cult, but my cult causes destruction. Join The Zurok.”

You look at the man, then glance over at Thaysae. He is tied up, unable to move. You know you have to help him, so you look back at the man. “Sure, I will join. Can I have my sword now?”

The man smiles in his not nice way. “First you must know my name. Guess that, and you can join Zurok.”

You have no idea what the man’s name is, but suddenly the shadow of the man twists into letters. A-L-E-R-D-A-N. You realize Thaysae is still helping you. “I name you... Alerdan!” you yell.

He smiles. “Good job. You will be useful. Here is your blade.” He hands you Xeros, and you immediately swipe upwards, knocking the Sword of Light and Shadow out of his hands. You grab the sword, and fling it to Thaysae. He catches it, but can’t do anything, as he is still held by the ropes. Dodging a slash from Alerdan, you cut the ropes. Thaysae turns to you, and you leap into battle. Alerdan realizes he is no match for you and Thaysae. He retreats, yelling for backup.

End of The Journey. Climax: The battle of Rage and Shadow

You and Thaysae briefly relax, then prepare to face the enemy. You know Alerdan will be back with reinforcements, so you ask Thaysae, “We will be sorely outnumbered. How do you plan to fight them all?”

Thaysae smiles. “They get their cult, we get ours.”

In almost no time, standing in front of you and Thaysae is the entire Demonhead Cult, decked in armour and preparing for battle. The Ooze Man, whose name is Doruk, begins turning his body parts into gelatinous green weapons. A woman whose name you don’t know keeps turning into a skeleton and back again. Thaysae is turning some people down at the end of the ranks into demons, and you are being given a set of armour similar to Thaysae’s, except yours is tinted purple instead of black. Everyone

gets into battle positions, their armor flashing in the moonlight. Then a battle cry goes up and the enemy surges over a hill towards them.

A full blown magical battle between two of Zrcopia's strongest cults is something to remember for a lifetime. The skeleton woman turns into a femur, and a startled Zurok man trips over it. Then he turns into a corpse. Doruk transforms into a wall of oozy gelatin and crashes down on an enemy squad. Thaysae and his army of demons are picking up startled Zurok archers and dropping them, and you are battling several magicians. The first throws energy at you and the second and third chant ominously. Then they turn into assorted human bones and fall to the ground.

The skeleton woman stands there, holding out a smoking palm. "You should go to the leader," she says. "He needs some help."

You find Thaysae battling in the center of the battlefield, fighting none other than Alerdan. You throw yourself into the fight, and the ultimate battle begins. Slash, dodge, cut and slice... you and Thaysae are overcoming Alerdan. Suddenly, he jerks upright and begins to tremble violently. His hands turn into flaming maces and his skin burns off, revealing an elemental's terrifying features. The elemental hisses, "Die, human scum!" and launches himself at Thaysae. Thaysae transforms into a shadow, then disappears completely. The elemental turns to you, steaming and smoking. You wish you could disappear like Thaysae, and suddenly...

You are bright light, sailing through the skies. You can see Thaysae, as a shadow, on the ground. You look at each other, and you know what to do. You concentrate on becoming a ray of pure destructive light, and channel yourself directly at the elemental's heart. As you shoot towards the heart, Thaysae does the same. You combine, light and shadow, and a brilliant and awesome explosion shatters everything.

The battle is over. Every enemy is either dead or captured. Thaysae is back as a human, and you are back too. Everyone gathers, looking at you, and Thaysae starts to chant a strangely powerful chant, joined quickly by the rest of the cult. A blazing tornado of light and shadow slams into you, and you know you are a member of...

The Demonhead Cult