

Siren's Prize (Portals of Paolithica III – Kalimar)

Cover Sheet

Adventure by Jacqui Smith

Duration 27 days (1st Harvest 805 – 27th Harvest)

Adventurers

Thorn	Warrior	Human	Female	
Arwen	Earth	Human	Female	Leader
Vanderhand	Warrior	Human	Male	Military Scientist
Aqualina	Water	Human	Female	Scribe

Party Employer

California Smith

Plane

Paolithica/Kalimar

Places visited

Rangifera – (Alusia)

Dralven in the Kingdom of Eldore (Kalimar)

NPCs

Brendlin Orth – Merchant

Simmul – Tailor

Rosla – Simmul's wife

Ruelin – Brendlin's accountant

Mission

To find out where another portal leads to.

Siren's Prize (Portals of Paolithica III – Kalimar)

Aqualina

This adventure sounded intriguing. Advertised by California Smith, he wanted a party to go through a portal and explore an unknown plane. Well, I had nothing better to do at the time so I thought I'd go. With me in the meeting room were the following:

Thorn – Female nonmage warrior

Arwen – Female earth mage

Vanderhand – Male nonmage warrior

I'm Aqualina. Human female water mage originally from Pasifika. And Pasifika would be where we would be going initially, more specifically, the island of Rangifera. On Rangifera was a portal to the plane of Paolithica where a pattern of portals were. Five had already been investigated and now we were going to do one more. California suggested we do one on an island since I could make boats.

After some discussion, Vanderhand was the Military Scientist, we couldn't decide on party leader and I'm the scribe. We finally got our party leader by using trial by combat between Thorn and Arwen. Arwen won.

4th Harvest

We didn't actually leave for a few days as there were preparations to do. Besides, it was easier getting our Greater's once the queues had subsided. I paid 6250 for a sixteen point greater from Herkum for my spells and magic resistances. I also paid 1800 for three rat skinchanges – easier to transport the horses. So Waverunner became a rather annoyed rat for the trip. The other reason we didn't leave earlier as I had a lot of Waters to make for people. Thorn's collapsible tower was getting filled up with supplies. I finally decided not to take my outrigger but the surfboard went in.

The trip out was in a boat that Arwen had, that she could actually cast on. It wasn't a big boat so we had to make do, but it was a very fast boat. As a consequence, we passed the 'Sea Dragon', which had Starflower's party on it. They were also heading to Rangifera on their way to one of the other portals. So we went around their boat a couple of times, hassling them good naturally. I was also sunning myself on the decking wearing only my two piece swimsuit so the sailors were getting a good view.

9th Harvest

Finally arrived on Rangifera. The wharf and small village had been set up near the ruins of Upper Pasifika. Palm trees were now growing but, unfortunately, no coconuts. Trading stations had also been set up from the Planes of Khoras and Garweeze World. So we investigated what wares they had.

After that, we headed inland towards the portal to Paolithica. It was a trilithon stone structure surrounded by a circle of standing stones. We went through and found ourselves on a grassy plain. Nearby was a smaller portal which provided a shortcut to the Khoras portal.

After studying the map we concluded that we could try sailing downriver to the ocean in Arwen's boat as it had a property that allowed it to go to any destination required by the shortest possible route. A river was near the Khoras portal so, to avoid an long overland trip, we would take the portal to the location of the Khoras one and attempt to sail down the river. If it was navigatable to the ocean, then the boat would take us.

It was late evening by the time we had our plan so the tower was set up and watches set.

10th Harvest

The breakfast porridge was 'interesting' that morning – I was the designated cook. Fortunately, Vanderhan was able to fix it.

.2.

After breakfast, we went through the Khoras trade portal and came out near the Khoras portal. We then headed down the river for ten miles before we reached a junction that the boat could not get past. So we had to walk a mile down river before sailing on. The next twenty miles was through plains then through hillier country. The

next stopping point was a shallow point and a ford which we had to go around. Finally we reached the top of a 40ft high waterfall. Arwen used an earth elemental to carve some steps so we could get down. On the other side of the waterfall pool, a Neanderthal was seen. We had lunch while we were watched with curiosity.

Finally sailed on before stopping at another junction. Here, we found a stone with crude drawings on it. After carrying on we finally reached the ocean and made our way to the island where we camped on the beach.

11th Harvest

After a shellfish breakfast we headed up the elemental carved stairs in the cliff. At the top was a bowl shaped grassy valley with the portal in the middle. The valley was 10 miles across. When we got there, we checked it was a two way portal then, once we were satisfied, we went through.

We found ourselves in the dark, knee deep in sea water. Once we got lights running, we discovered that the portal on this side was diamond shaped. The portal was surrounded by a room of bricks .. as if it was deliberately bricked in. While the others checked the walls, I checked the tiled floor .. and found a hole. I could get through it but Vanderhan could not. We then went back through the portal to decide what to do next.

.3.

12th Harvest

The next morning we went back in. I swam down through the hole and discovered that there was a larger tunnel underneath. So we spent at least half the day enlarging the hole so we all could easily get through. Once that was done, it was waterbreathings all around then we swam down along, then back up again. The undersea tunnel terminated in a pool at the back of a sea cave. We were able to wade to the mouth of the cave before using the boat to head for the nearest beach. It was fortunate it was low tide as we could tell the cave would be mostly submerged at high tide. Algae on the cave wall told us that the name of this plane was Kalimar.

The weather was pleasant and there was only one sun in the sky. It was a nice sandy beach and it did not take long to dry off. Upslope from the beach was grass with a trail leading through it. On the trail we saw horseshoe and booted prints. Beyond the grass was forests. We camped here for the evening and had an uneventful night.

13th Harvest

The horses were unmiced. I had to deal with a rather annoyed Waverider for a bit After a short while we rode along the track. After a few hours we encountered a group of travellers. Also we could see a town in the distance which we later found out was Dralven in the Kingdom of Eldore.

They wanted to hire us as mercenaries as they were representing a local merchant, Brendlin Orth. However, they would not tell us details, preferring to leave that to the merchant. We were taken to a rather large, but run down mansion house. Evidently the owner had fallen on hard times. After a short wait and refreshments, Brendlin arrived.

He told us he had arranged a deal with a mage, Vlondvr, who lived in a local tower to provide a light on the top to provide guidance to his ships. However, there was a recent dispute about the amount of payment, i.e, Vlondvr wanted more, so we were asked to go over there and sort it out as he had ships coming in the next evening. He even offered to pay us more if we had to force entry and deal to Vlondvr, a total of 200 silvers equivalent. We finally agreed to go there first thing in the morning.

.4.

14th Harvest

We went to the tower, which was located on the top of a cliff overlooking the sea, and knocked. No answer. Arwen summoned a mute elemental. He did manage to ascertain that there was a hollow under the tower. We finally forced entry. Inside were wooden floors, some doors leading off and a dining table. Some curdled milk was in a bowl on the table. The first door we checked had stairs leading up which led to an obvious library, full of books. There was also a crystal hemisphere on a stand, an open book on a stand, and another door.

Upstairs from that, the entire level was an alchemical storeroom full of all sorts of stuff, while the level above that was the lab itself. We decided to leave them strictly alone. A trapdoor led up to the top of the tower where

there was a fire bowl and a reflector. The bowl was full of ash so, while the others decided what to do next, I cleaned the bowl and set up the fire. There was enough fuel to keep it running all night.

We headed back down to the library and checked out the door in the opposite wall. It led to a rather messy bedroom with clothes and books scattered about. A large seachest was by the bed and all I found under the bed were large dustbunnies.

Back down to the lowest level and we found the kitchen, pantry and bathroom. No occupant though. We did find a trapdoor in the kitchen which led down to a cavern. Water ran through the cavern out a small tunnel and down into a large pool. Still no sign of Vlondvr. So we investigated the library. Most of the books were in unknown languages but the ones we could read were on alchemy and magic. The book on the stand was his diary and that implied he was engaged in some experiments to do with a race of aquatic beings called kua-toa and he had delusions of being their god. We presumed they were something like sahuagan. The hemisphere was magical with the nature of scrying. The sea chest contained, as well as assorted clothes, a helmet, tube, and a box. The helmet had water magics on it, the tube contained a map and the vials contained waterbreathing potions, rank 12.

That night we lit the beacon.

.5.

15th Harvest

The night passed without incident and three ships were seen sailing past. The firewood lasted all night. The next morning we could see the campsite of the merchant's guards, who had been monitoring our progress. So, we went out to report what we had found. We were taken back to Brendlin who paid us the 200 gold. We also asked him about the Siren's Prize and Kua-Toa. He didn't know much but referred us to a local school teacher who knew a lot about the area. She can usually be found at the Mermaid's Breasts.

So we rode into town. The first inn we found was the Tall Carrot. We had our doubts about this place so we continued on along the waterfront. The next inn was the Pearl and Clam but there was no sign of the Mermaid's Breasts. We ended up asking a fisherman who was mending a net. At first he was rather hesitant but the application of gold soon obtained our answer. This inn was found on a side street. Evidently this was an inn that you had to know about. Once there, we asked the innkeeper and discovered she was at the schoolhouse.

School was getting out by the time we got there. Yes she knew about kuo-toan. They were frog faced evil aquatics, usually found in the underground caverns. This area was riddled with caverns as well. So it was possible that there were some down there. Kuo-toa and sahuagan competed for resources. Usually they used spears for weapons. As for the Siren's Prize that was a ship that had been cursed by the sirens for stealing something off them.

Afterwards we went back to the Mermaid's Breasts and spent the night

16th Harvest

We returned to the tower and, basically spent the entire day cleaning out the contents of the bottom two levels and transferring them to Thorn's tower.

17th Harvest

Finally decided to investigate the basement. Still no sign of the owner but we had found a rough map. So we swam into the underwater tunnel. Unfortunately, some of the turns were a bit tight and I had to leave my trident behind. After a short while we came out in a cavern that was only partially submerged. There seemed to be some sort of crude statue made from bits and pieces here. Some coins and interesting seashells were scattered on the bottom, so I gathered them up.

.6.

We continued following the map. The tunnel forked twice but we were following the tunnel that would lead us to the kuatoa and the treasure. The water in this passage was only five foot deep, just enough to swim. After the

second fork we encountered a gate, made up of several objects tied together. We could tell there were entities on the other side as we could see spear points poking through the lattice.

Arwen created a tunnel that went around the side of the gate and the other three went through to deal to the forces on the other side. I was trying to line up a water bolt but couldn't see anything to shoot up. So, while the sounds of combat continued I assumed the form of water, snuck up to the gate, and started cutting at the seaweed ropes with my dagger. The idea was to create a hole I could shoot through however the entire lattice gave way and the gate collapsed. By the time that happened it was nearly all over.

The water was full of the taste of kua-toa blood, and kua-toa bits floated all around. I really hoped sharks weren't going to show up. Now we had to clean up.

.7.

I was in the process of picking up loose loot when Arwen dashed down one of the side corridors. Seems like some of the kua-toa had gone down there. So we went after them. As we approached the end of the tunnel, three Kua-toa warriors leapt up from below and attacked. I ducked down to allow Thorn to get in and assist with the fight. I was trying to get them with water bolts but wasn't having much luck. During the fight two more arrived while their chief remained in the back giving military science type orders. Arwen was using her rapier until one of them managed to disarm her and flip it where another kua-toa could put their foot on it. So Arwen grabbed a battleaxe and got cleaving while Vanderhand and I swapped places. As the fight raged on, I heard noises back down the tunnel but they soon went away.

Finally they all dropped, including the chief. Arwen's rapier was discovered to be broken, but it would be easily repairable, just a pin had popped out and went missing. A back room had a kua-toan skull on a small island with treasure scattered about, all pearl and silver, no platinum or gold. None of it was magical.

We then headed back to the previous room and checked the other exit. This led to another chamber where we found an island in the water with depressions in it. There seemed no clue to their purpose but we suspected this was where the women and children were and the sounds I had heard earlier was them evacuating.

Backtracking to the next junction then taking the other branch took us to an underground river. Tracks indicated that the remaining kua-toa had headed out to sea, however we went the other way, to an area marked on the map as 'Strange Sounds'. What we found was an underground lake and an eerie green glow coming from a branch tunnel. We went down there and found a cloaked figure who told us to leave. Was this Vlondvr?

.8.

The cowed person was standing on a mound that was covered in seaweed. Arwen Daed the seaweed and discovered it was an illusion. Vanderhand was about to say something but then started attacking something we couldn't see. Turned out to be a phantasm. We backed off around the corridor after he had dealt to it and I fed him a Waters of Healing. We then charged back in. Vanderhand struck the mound and I fell unconscious and slipped under the water.

When I woke up, the others had defeated the cowed man, who turned out to be Vlondvr, and a creature called an Abolith, which had mastery of the Mind College. Arwen's armour is damaged and I had stuff in my lungs, from the surrounding water that was stopping me from breathing air. Thorn moved me to cleaner water in the hope that the stuff would flush out. Meanwhile the others found a prisoner in a nearby dry chamber He turned out to be Simmul, a tailor who worked for Brendlin. He then told us that the lord had kidnapped his wife, Rosla, and was holding her somewhere. He then offered to make us fine clothes.

By the time the others had searched the entire area and found no treasure, my lungs were clear again. We then headed back to the lighthouse with the tailor and stayed there for the next two days while Arwen healed up.

.9.

Finally headed out again. This time we took the boat and headed in the main cave entrance until we found the cavern where the 'Siren's Pride' was. It was planted in an angle and partially submerged. As we approached in the boat, sharks were spotted. However, since the boat wasn't actually sitting on top of the water, they couldn't actually get to us. So I just kept shooting them with water bolts until they went away.

We scried into the hold but didn't see any signs of life. Neither was there anything in the main cabin. However, I did see something of interest, several models of the ships in bottles. And we had previously noted that the merchant had several ships in bottles as well.

So we boarded by climbing up the bow. On top we were attacked by undead. Vanderhand and I were the last up and there wasn't much room. So I got parked on the bowsprit and had to hang on for the duration of that fight.

After that, we headed along the deck and into the main cabin. There was the ghost of the captain. I was so enraged at that I went at him with my trident. Some of the others tried to get in as we'll but there wasn't much room. The ghost tried to possess each of us but failed. I then found I was getting rather scared of the ghost so cowered under the table while the others dealt to it. Fortunately it didn't take long. Scrawled on the wall, in blood, was the message, 'The Sirens Prize await those who think small'.

.10.

Once the ghost was dealt to, the cabin, and the adjoining sleeping quarters were searched. I found three ships in a bottle under the bed, one of which was labelled the 'Siren's Prize'. After that, we went through the entire ship from stern, back to the bow, searching every room we came across. Didn't find much treasure although a lot of stuff was being collected for Thorn's tower, i.e. pewter mugs, tables, chairs, mirrors etc. An earth elemental was summoned to build a stable platform so the tower could be erected.

The last place we visited was the hold, which was mostly submerged. As a consequence I was first in, and was grabbed by a giant octopus, certainly a larger one than I would have willingly tangled with. Fortunately, we were able to deal to it but I was later berated for not being in my armour.

Afterwards we headed back to Vlondvr's tower. Simmul was worried about Rosla. I tried scrying for her and found her in a room in Brendlin's home. So we attempted to use shadows to determine what direction the windows faced. However, during the process, I managed to backfire with a creeping senility. Fortunately it would be at least a week before I would suffer ill effects.

21st Harvest

The morning scry told us that the window faced the east. It was decided to wait out the day then Arwen and Vanderhand snuck out during the night to case the house. They found Rosla on the third floor.

.11.

We spent the day at Simmul's house, preparing for a raid. Also his gear was transferred to Thorn's tower as the idea was to take him and his wife to Alusia as it would no longer be safe here for them.

That night, while Vanderhand and Arwen snuck in by neutralising the guards with sleeping draughts, Thorn and I set up the tower alongside the east wall house and set up a ramp from the top of the tower to the biggest window on the third and topmost level. As well as rescuing Rosla, we ended up nearly stripping the place, ships in bottles, books, snow globes. Sometimes I wonder if some adventurers are obsessed with loot. The tower was completely packed by the time we were finished and I was sure Brendlin was going to get a surprise when he woke up. Thorn even snuck a horse out of the stables as we were going to have an extra passenger, the merchant's accountant, Ruelin, who was going to be the one blamed for this. They also took his stuff as well.

22nd Harvest

We basically bailed off this plane as soon as we could, complete with extra guests. Because there was one to many for Arwen's boat, I created my own boat and was towed in it.

The trip to Paolithica was without incident and so was the trip across it. Basically we retraced our path back to the vicinity of the Khoras portal then used the rune portal to get back to the Alusia portal. Once through that we stopped off at the trading post to pick up our order then went down to the Pacifica docks to catch the ship back home.

27th Harvest

Arrived back at the guild and was divinated, debriefed, and in my case, decursed. The items were also looked over and it was determined that the bottled ship labelled 'Sirens Prize' was extremely magical, probably like the one TDP has. So it was decided to take the bottle down to the 'Sea Goddess Haven' and enlarge it there. However, it was also determined that there were several captured minds in there, many of which had been driven mad. So an assault team was put on standby.

When the bottle was opened and the boat opened, the model ship expanded. However, since it wasn't seaworthy, it began to sink. So a ship strength was put on it while the assault team assaulted the creatures on board.

Once that was done the team retrieved a box that was found on the deck then the ship was allowed to sink. The box was revealed to be a puzzlebox which required a ball to be manoeuvred past several holes. Allowing the ball to fall caused bad things to happen to the person trying to manipulate the ball. After several attempts to open the box, it finally blew up in Vanderhand's face. Inside was a large pearl with attribute enhancing properties but had a major drawback. I decided not to take the risk, however Arwen did.

So that was that. Some of the kuo-toan decorations and a snowglobe did attract my interest as well as the fine clothing Simmul made as a reward.