

The Ship That Flew

Cover Sheet

Adventure by Jacqui Smith

01/07/92 - 22/07/92

Player Characters

Brightflare	Fire	Human	Male	
Spandex	Fire	Human	Male	Leader
Dramus	Necromancer	Elf	Male	
Haarn	Binder	Human	Male	
Grendel Beetleknos	Mind	Human	Male	
Gar Og Nadrak	Fire	Orc	Male	
Phaeton	Solar	Human	Male	Scribe

Plane

Elusha

Places visited

Luna - Elushia's moon
City of Serendip on Mare Serentatis
Insect hive next door

Employer

California Smith

Major NPCs encountered

Captain Jacques Pierce - Commander of the 'Eagle'
Amy Fisher - Healer on board the 'Eagle'.
Fletcher Robbins - First Mate
Bash'em - Marine Sergeant Orc
Patrick - Cabin boy and trainee Water Mage
Perriot - Rag and string golem - Bardic mage
Ren & Stimpy - two ex-slaves

Mission

To boldly go and take one small step on Luna

The Ship That Flew

Adventure Summary

30/06/92

Adventure introduced by an archeologist, California Smith, who wanted a party for a strange journey. Went to the docks and boarded the ship, the Eagle. Noticed a magical chair on board - something to do with propulsion.

Sailed out to sea. Found out that the ship could fly with a mage seated in the helm and we were on the test flight. All of us tried to fly it.

01/07/92

Started pre-programmed flight. Took off and orbited Alusia a couple of times before we headed off in the direction of the moon.

02/07/92

Encountered meteor storm.

03/07/92

Saw black swirly thing and retrieved a strange object that appeared out of it.

04/07/92

Encountered wreckage of another ship like ours. Found two human corpses and an insect leg.

06/07/92

Moon looking really big. Spotted anomolous shadows in Mare Serentatis. Landed there in dustbowl next to top of two pillars and a temple with two silver doors and a gold door.

07/07/92

Headed out to look at temple. Three doors, white, gold and black. Silver doors at the back. Gold doors remove any running magics. Went inside. Two ornate thrones and two statues, one representing Light, the other Dark. Had to shelter from a dust storm. When it stopped the ship was gone.

Explored back of temple. Discovered armoury and the golden heart of a golem.

08/07/92

Golem activated. Identified itself as Pierrot, a Bardic Mage. Told us there had been a city here but was now buried under the dust. Explored some more of the temple.

09/07/92

Found a stairway down. Destroyed animated statue. Found alchemist room, Dark mage casting chamber, the remains of a library (one room had preservation magics), Light mage casting chambers and a Healer's room. Also a room opposite the library with two minds, patiently waiting.

10/07/92

Defeated the two wraiths. Room with large pool.

11/07/92

Still no sign of the ship. Perriot told us that the Lunarians (the humans) had created an insectoid sentient race, the Selenites. Went to where wraiths were and found another room containing the remains of each priest-king. Found another starwell. Went down. Remains of living quarters. Attacked by large ant-like creatures.

Questioned the survivor with Pierrot translating. There were several types of insects in the hive - workers, gardeners, soldiers, builders, nurse, drones and a queen. We had captured a builder (a golden brown carapace). There were several workers lying around (dusky brown carapaces). None of the insects were telepathic except for the builders which were partially (only under stress), the drones (which had some sort of telepathic communication net) and the Queen. The builder also said that the Hive had captured something large and wooden. Probably the ship.

12/07/92

Builder controlled to take us to the ship. Led us into hive. Reached circular room with junk in it, some of which was magical. Attracted a party of bugs. All of us escaped except Spandex and Dramus.

13/07/92

Went back down and started exploring the hive. Encountered a builder insect and two human slaves. Slaves drugged. Controlled the insect. Brightflare captured. Managed to control a firemage drone. Found underground cavern with lake. Ship in middle of it. Big fight ensued. Got onboard and found teleport device to surface.

14/07/92

Brightflare escaped and arrived back.

18/07/92

No sign of the other two so we took off to get a rescue party.

21/07/92

Splashed down in the ocean.

22/07/92

Started organising rescue party.

CALIFORNIA SMITH AND THE SHIP THAT FLEW

Phaeton

30/06/92

Two interesting adventures at the Guild meeting. One about a suddenly appearing village and another, introduced by an archeologist, who wanted to take a party on a strange journey.

I started off by checking out the one about the appearing village but that one seemed rather popular so I decided to see what this archaeologist had in mind. This party was rather small - but three firemages. Last adventure it was three air mages. Looks like I'll be studying Fire College this trip.

The archaeologist's name was California Smith and basically he wanted a group to go with him on a voyage of discovery. Last Guild session it was the South Seas. This time when asked, he just pointed his finger to the ceiling and smiled.

Once we were in the meeting room (#5 it was) he told us we were going by ship but by a rather unusual method. It would be easier for him to demonstrate rather than explain so we agreed to meet him on the docks in an hour. The pay would be 1000sp per month.

After he left, we introduced each other. My fellow party members were:

Brightflare - a 6'2" tall human weighing about 13.5 stone with average looks. He was wearing black leather armour, and a black cape with touches of red. I noticed blue eyes and short blond hair, as well as a sword, dagger, a rather unusual crossbow, and some odd armour pouches. I later found out they contained grenades. He told us he was a firemage and a reasonably high ranked Healer. He also wanted to know how good the rest of us were with weapons and wasn't pleased with the answers he got. Looks like the rest of us are all pacifists. Brightflare had, until recently, had the reputation of being a reckless firemage.

Spandex - This was the firemage who was currently regarded as the most foolhardy firemage in the Guild. I could see bits of black hair sticking out from underneath a red helmet with an 'S' on it. He was a 5'10" 140# human wearing orange clothes, and a slightly singed dark blue cloak. For weapons he was wearing a bandolier of grenades and carrying a large fish-shaped object he called a 'bomb'. He was a firemage and a trainee alchemist. I bet he's into explosives.

Dramus - A necromancer. A 6'8" elf wearing 2 inch high heels. I couldn't see much of him, apart from the four skulls floating in midair, until he removed his cloak of blending. The skulls turned out to be hanging from his neck. He was wearing green leather and brown trousers and had very long blond hair. For weapons he was wearing two short swords.

Haann - He was a Binder, a recently established College and one I know little about. He was 5'8" and skinny at 120#. A rather average looking bloke who was all 'angles' (elbows, knees, and nose). He was wearing a leather apron complete with a belt full of implements. He was also wearing leggings, knee high boots, as well as a small hat with a feather stuck in it, topping shortish, bowl cut brown hair. There was a crossbow and scimitar stuck in the belt as well.

Grendel Beetleknos - A 5'9" weedy looking human, with streaked shocking white and flaming red

waist length hair. He had one green eye, one blue eye and wearing tatty old clothing that looked like ex-astrologer robes. I could see a short sword. He told us he was a beginning astrologer and mind mage.

Gar Og Nadrak - An orc, an obvious orc. He's 6'6" but looks 5'8" because of a permanent stoop. He's got red eyes, black hair, green skin and wearing black leather armour with a flame motif, green leggings with dull red swirls and a yellow tunic with red and purple swirls. Needless to say, he's the third firemage, and a beginner at that. His canine teeth were well grown and one of them was sticking out of his mouth.

Finally I'm Phaeton. 5'3" with tanned skin, short blond hair and blue eyes. I was wearing my usual outfit, yellow tunic, blue trousers and my rainbow cloak. I told the others I was a Solar Celestial mage, mid rank Healer and philosopher of magic.

We then voted on party leader, military scientist, and scribe. Party leader was between Dramus, Brightflare and Spandex. Spandex won the vote. He also became the military scientist. I managed to become the scribe (again).

Brightflare offered to come with me down to the docks. We soon found California sitting on a pile of crates. He showed us to a ship parked near the end. I could see that the ship's name had been recently changed. It had been the Marianus but was now the Eagle. While we waited for the others Brightflare put a rank 15 Protection from Magical Fire on me. With Spandex around I was going to need it.

When the others arrived we were introduced to the ship's Captain, a Jacques Pierce. He was a short, balding and distinguished gentleman who spoke with a faint elven accent. He had the aura of an Air Mage around him. It soon became apparent that he knew half the party as they had been with California on his last voyage.

Cabins were allocated next. I ended up with Brightflare. We were then shown around the ship. I noticed two anomalies. First, there seemed to be fewer crew than normal, the second was a large ornately decorated chair, looking like a throne, mounted on the deck just behind the wheel. Brightflare said that it had a distinct magical aura about it but the most I could work out was that the effect had to do with propulsion.

After a couple of hours (some of the party had to go ashore to get 'essential' supplies) we cast off. California said we need to go out of sight of land before he could conduct the demonstration. The trip out wasn't too smooth either. For some reason the swaying of the ship was making me feel rather strange. Even lying in the sun didn't help.

It took both Dramus and Brightflare to prise me away from the rail and conduct some healing. I was feeling very ill. After this I'm staying to terra firma, the more firma the less terror. Shadow-wings is nothing like this. Next time I fly. I was going to lie down in my cabin but Dramus reckoned that wouldn't be a good idea. Instead I was positioned, leaning against the main mast, soaking in the sun.

After a while, California sat in the ornate chair. Nothing seemed to happen for a while, then I noticed that the ship was no longer swaying. The rest of the party had already moved to the railings (except for Dramus - for some reason he was nowhere in sight). I staggered to my feet

and wandered over. To my surprise I noticed we were now moving rapidly, at least one hundred feet off the surface of the water and the ship's shadow could be seen clearly below. As we watched we rapidly descended and hit the water with a definite thud. It skipped a few times before it finally came to rest. California rose out of the chair looking rather tired. According to my empathy he was at a state as if he had cast a few special knowledge spells.

Later on we all assembled in the wardroom. Dramus was escorting a young, fair haired lady dressed in uniform. He insisted on introducing her to me. She was the ship's Healer and one of the officers. Her name was Amy Fisher. The Captain introduced the rest of them. The First Mate, Fletcher Robbins, was a tall, dark haired man with a beard. (Dramus had already warned me not to play poker with him as he was GOOD!) The Marine Sergeant, Bash'm, was a rather large and strong looking orc. Not a person to mess around with. There was also a cabin boy, Patrick, serving drinks. He refused the silver penny that Dramus offered him, prompting Dramus to tell him about the first rule of life - Never turn down any silver pennies offered.

California then explained what the situation was. On his trip south, they had found the ornate throne. After several divinations, he had determined that, once fitted to a standard ship, it had the ability to make the ship fly. So far they hadn't gone very high but they had noticed that the ship was carrying it's own air supply as there didn't seem to be any problems at high altitudes. Spandex was surprised. He commented that usually the air became too thin to breath the higher he flew. Basically California wanted us to test fly the ship as it needed a mage to sit in the 'helm' and provide magical energy. They also wanted to know whether or not differing Colleges had any effect.

After that we all had a go. I found that when I sat in the helm (as they called the throne) that my perception increased to surround the ship. It was sort of like I was the ship and I could move it by willpower. When I tried though it seemed to be very sensitive, more so than with any of the others. Even an attempt to gently lift us out of the water sent it hurtling through the air. At one point I had it tilted at a steep angle when attempting to make a turn. Curiously enough it didn't feel like we were tilted. Down was still towards the bottom of the ship. When I brought it down I did so very gently and succeeded in a feather like touch down, one of the best landings of the day.

Some of the others didn't fare so well. Someone managed to send the ship skipping across the water before it finally stopped. Also many of them decided to indulge in acrobatics - Dramus especially. We were hanging upside down for a while until the captain ordered him to desist. His landing was also well controlled. I was checking them out with a non-tactile empathy and noticed that using the helm was like casting special knowledge spells as far as fatigue loss was concerned.

.2.

Poor Grendel didn't fare too well. He attempted an aerobatic stunt and managed to make himself sick. Dramus hauled him out of the helm and took over. Meanwhile I set to work tending Grendel.

During this time Spandex was pacing the ship by using a firelight. (Curious. His corona is blue). As Dramus brought it down for a landing, Spandex decided to fly under it but managed to misjudge and clipped the surface of the water. This caused the firelight effect to stop and Spandex hit the water. Within seconds he was totally obscured by a cloud of steam since the corona was still active.

Brightflare had a pair of boots of levitation so he floated out with a rope. First problem - how to stop the rope from being burnt by the corona. Brightflare did a Prot. Magical Fire on one end of it. Second problem - how to attach it to Spandex, given that we couldn't see him in all that steam. Brightflare could just see Spandex and lowered the rope. Spandex grabbed it but then it was discovered that the Spandex's weight, plus the bomb, was too heavy for Brightflare to lift.

Just then I had an idea and asked the captain for permission to take the helm and use the ship to pull Spandex out. Since the other end of the rope was tied to the railing this should work. The captain agreed so I tried it. Brightflare also called out that we should move the ship away in case the heat caused the bomb to explode.

So I tried to lift the ship and move it sideways at the same time. Unfortunately it didn't work. Somehow I managed to tilt the ship at a very steep angle causing the sails to touch the water. To make matters worse Spandex was under one of those sails and a hole was being burnt in it. Frantically I attempted to rectify the situation and, with the help of a calming influence from Dramus, managed to right the ship. Gar put the fire on the sail out while Dramus and Haann went up to repair it.

By now Brightflare had just come back on board and asked whether anyone could swim. Instantly Patrick put up his hand. Dramus then told Patrick about the second rule of life - don't volunteer for anything.

It took me several tries before I managed to lift off. But by now Spandex was nearly unconscious and hadn't the strength to hang on. He disappeared beneath the waves.

Meanwhile Patrick had stripped to the waist and jumped over the side. (I later found out he was a trainee Water Mage with a reasonably ranked Water Breathing. He had been learning off the Water mage/Second Officer who was no longer aboard). He swam over the Spandex and was able to attach the rope. Soon Spandex was hauled out of the water. As soon as he left the water, the firelight kicked in. Brightflare cut the rope, before Spandex was wrapped around the ship. Spandex zoomed away, fortunately missing the ship, then turned and came in for a landing. Patrick was hauled in as soon as the ship landed.

By now it was getting close to sunset. I came up a few hours later and started a Reading the Night Sky ritual in order to determine where we would be going. My usual trick of casting a Light and lying in it didn't work as the ship was moving. Consequently the pool of Light kept sliding away. To help my chances the fire mages offered to cast FireLights. Brightflare managed to cast one on his head. I think he backfired. Gar did exactly the same thing straight afterwards. I wonder if that was deliberate.

Fortunately the ritual was successful first time. The reading I got was:

I met a sailor from distant Lune
Who said: Two vast and topless towers of stone
Stand in the dust. Near them, on the ground
Half sunk, an ancient temple lies, broken
And destroyed, and still not unbound,
For within lies the hidden paths of the dread,
Which yet survive, concealed below these lifeless things,

The jaws that click, and the hard ones tread:

And from the portal these words you hear:
My name is Serendip, City of Kings:
Look upon my ruins, adventurers, and beware!
Nothing besides remains above. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level dust stretches far away.

My first thought that it referred to a ruined temple on a desert, somewhere in the Lunar Empire but Dramus reckoned it was the moon. He challenged me to put money on it but I declined. Knowing my luck lately I'd lose (just as well I didn't as it turned out).

After doing that, I went to bed. In an attempt to forestall anyone from doing strange things to me while I slept, I cast a Walking Unseen on myself and slept in a patch of Darkness.

Later on that night I was woken by a noise. Brightflare was still sound asleep. Through half-lidded eyes I could see that a gap had appeared at the top and bottom of the door. Just then the corridor light went out as the door was slowly pushed open. I quick cast a Light which must have scared off what ever it was, then dispelled it again.

However it proved impossible to get back to sleep. There was a lot of noise out in the corridor. Finally I had enough of this and sneaked out, still Unseen, and slept on deck, somewhere where I wouldn't get in anyones way.

01/07/92

I woke up with the rising sun and purified for the next three hours. After breakfast, we were all summoned to the quarterdeck, near the helm. California showed us some depressions on the arm of the helm and informed us that they seemed to be triggers for going to various destinations. Unfortunately they couldn't determine exactly where. I tried DA'ing one but the best I could do was to determine that the destination was a very long way off. Much longer than usual distances around Alusia. The distance was so long that I was having trouble visualising it.

Following that the captain told us that we were going to take off. Soon we were flying high above Seagate, heading eastwards towards the sun. I cast a Resistance to Light so I could look at it without harm. Down below we could just make out the Guild complex. Some party members were wondering what would happen if we threw something over the side. Dramus did toss over a few coins and we watched as they dropped towards the ground.

As we passed over the Guild, I cast a Bolt of Starfire - a green one. I wonder what anyone watching would make of that. Spandex and Gar both reckoned they could do better than that and tossed out some fireballs. Exhibitionists!

As we continued to gain height we noticed that the sky was getting darker, also that the stars were becoming visible even though the sun was still in the sky. I could see a beautiful soft reddish glow around the sun. Down below Alusia was beginning to take on the shape of a disk as we passed over Kinlu. The sight was breathtaking. The others didn't seem that interested. There was no sign of the turtle that some philosophers maintain that was holding up the world. Also the world seemed more like a sphere, than a disk.

A few hours later and Alusia had dwindled to the size of a dinner plate. I could also make out the thin crescent moon below the sun and it soon became apparent that this was where we were going. Thank goodness I didn't take that bet with Dramus.

As far as I could tell I was getting the full benefits of the sun, even though it looked like it was night. The Captain reckoned that it felt like it was enclosed. Also we had no way of knowing how fast we were going.

Later on I was 'persuaded' to sit in the helm, just to monitor the situation. Suddenly I felt a short, sharp sensation, as if someone had pricked me. It turned out something had whizzed past and punched a hole in the sail. Dramus went to fix it.

.3.

02/07/92

Midmorning on the second day of our epic voyage. The sails of the ship had been furled by now as they weren't much use out here. I was doing another shift on the helm. All had been going well until I felt something hit the ship. Then a short while later, another one. Soon we were being peppered. It was like being pinpricked. Not uncomfortably but just enough to be annoying. Already some of the spars and supporting ropes had been cut and there had been impacts on the hull. I tried slowing down and steering us out of the path of what ever it was, but that only made things worse. All I could do was to attempt to get as much speed out of the helm and ride the shower through.

Grendel had decided that if one mage in the helm could make the ship travel then maybe two mages would do better. So he attempted to sit in the helm as well. However his attempt caused the ship to drop to tactical speed, lurch rather violently, and also pushed me out of the helm.

I felt rather fatigued by now so decided to go below and get something to eat. (I had missed lunch). So I headed off to the galley where the cook (a rather large plump human male) put together some stew. I was happily eating that when the others came in (except Grendel). Now the galley is rather small so it was rather cramped. Apparently they hadn't realised lunch had passed either. The cook was rather annoyed with them (at least I had a legitimate excuse) and pointed out that lunch was served at six bells i.e. when he rings the galley bell six times. So what does Haann do? Animate the bell and cause it to ring by itself. The cook was rather frightened and rushed off, muttering something about 'evil spirits'. He came back with the Captain who began sternly lecturing the others about unnecessary spell casting and scaring the crew. During this, I slipped out to my cabin to study fire-magics and to have a nap.

When I got there, I noticed that there was a patch on the outside wall. Evidently whatever had been hitting us had punched a hole in the wall. Thank goodness nothing was missing. Then I saw a piece of rock, about the size of a pea, embedded in the door. That must have been what hit us, or at least part of it. I got my dagger out and levered the piece out. As it touched my hand, I got a nasty shock. The rock was COLD. So cold it burnt my skin. I let it fall to the floor then picked it up with a scrap of cloth. Then I applied my Healing arts to the burnt bit before settling down to sleep.

After a few hours the ship lurched again, nearly throwing me out of the bunk. What had happened that Grendel had seen one of those pieces of rock in the mast behind him so decided to get out of the helm and retrieve it. He got it out but was soundly told off by the Captain for abandoning

his post.

An hour later, I got tired of studying, and went up on deck and borrowed the Captain's telescope for a while. I also noticed that Dramus had got a bit of wood and had warped it around Grendel, ensuring he stayed put in the helm. So I spent the rest of the afternoon observing and making notes. The skies are certainly a lot clearer here.

Dinner, in the Captain's wardroom that evening, was delicious. Roast pork with apple sauce - my favorite. I even got some of the crackling. Dessert was just as good - chocolate covered strawberries. Dramus was passing around a bottle of special wine but I declined. I had been told that serious mages should stay away from alcohol. I had first thought that Grendel had been freed from his restraining wood but it suddenly appeared around him during dessert. Just as suddenly it broke and fell off.

Somebody must have been attempting to cast a spell during dinner as the Captain suddenly stood up and announced that if anyone else was caught casting unnecessary spells, especially ones that affected the crew, that there would be severe discipline. Something to do with scrubbing the decks.

03/07/92

Next morning, Haarn was on the helm while I had the telescope on the forward deck. Suddenly I spotted a black swirly thing ahead and to starboard. I pointed it out to Haann and also to the Captain. We decided to stay on course but to keep an eye on it.

Soon everyone could see it as we got closer. It seemed to be a spinning spiral of black. I was considering an attempt to analyze it's aura but it was too far away. Fortunately we weren't heading straight for it.

The Captain ordered a flaming arrow fired at it. The flame went out about 200 feet from the ship. Brightflare offered to cast a spell on the next arrow so it would keep burning. The Captain agreed. So the flaming arrow was launched and disappeared in the object. Meanwhile I fired a bolt of Starfire to one side of the object. To our surprise the bolt veered towards it. The Captain reckoned we'd better hold our distance unless we got pulled in.

Just then something came out of the blackness, which disappeared soon after. It was a roughly spherical object with two rectangular panels sticking out of it, one on each side. At the moment it was tumbling. Grendel tried to cast an ESP spell at it to determine if there was any intelligence in it but backfired - with amnesia. According to his aura it would take ten days to fade. Great. Just what we needed.

Brightflare levitated out to retrieve the object. Grendel decided he was going too and jumped over the side. Fortunately, an effect of the local gravity caused him to bob up and down alongside the ship. While the rest of us hauled him back, Brightflare brought the object in. It was about six feet in diameter with some lettering on it. It read CO then two smudges followed by AT 4. I couldn't detect any aura from it. Brightflare managed to open a few panels in the thing but only discovered racks containing sheets of curiously marked metal with bits and pieces stuck on them. We decided to store the thing below. Somebody came to the conclusion that it was some sort of elaborate coat hanger.

05/07/92

The moon is looking very big now. The territory looked very rugged. I could see lots of hills, valleys, mountain ranges and lots of craters. Some of the flat areas could be seas but I couldn't tell for sure. Grendel was no better, despite suggestions to hit him on the head to see if his memory returned.

The Officer of the Watch spotted wreckage ahead which looked to have been part of a ship like ours. There was bits of deck, rigging, broken spars, and the odd sail fragment as well as miscellaneous flotsam and jetsam. Brightflare floated over to have a look. Shortly he returned with two corpses and what looked like a large insect leg which was a reddish, brown colour. There was a three fingered claw arrangement at the end. But if it was an insect, the thing must be at least six feet long.

The corpses themselves were human but were unusually tall and thin. Also the corpses had been dead for some time. They were very dry. Their clothing fell apart at the touch and their skin felt like dry leather. The outlines of the bones could be easily determined.

One of the corpses was wearing boots with preservation magic on them. Also it had an odd looking sword with a serrated edge. Gar grabbed it before Brightflare could stop him. Fortunately it wasn't cursed. Both of the corpses were wearing rings with a spider design on them. Also in their pockets were a few octagonal coins.

.4.

06/07/92

The moon was looking really big this afternoon. I was using the telescope in an attempt to discern any surface features that could be an indication of intelligent life. So far I hadn't found anything. Dramus asked to borrow the 'scope so he could have a look using his elven eyesight. However he couldn't find anything either. So I had a second look. Still nothing. When I lowered the scope again the others started laughing. I soon found out why. Someone had smeared charcoal around the eyepiece.

After cleaning that up I resumed looking. Shortly I spotted what appeared to be anomalous shadows in Mare Serenitatis. The Captain had a look but he couldn't find them. I couldn't find them again either so I concluded it must have been a trick of the light. That was until I saw them again, just as the ship was being buffeted. So the moon has an atmosphere after all. What I could see was two tall objects and a shorter one between them in a featureless plain. Soon someone reported that he could see the ship's shadow below and it was soon apparent that we were descending rapidly and heading towards those objects.

We landed with a THUD, about a mile away from those objects, and a cloud of grey stuff billowed out around us. Some landed on the decks. It turned out to be very fine dust and we appeared to be floating on it. It was nearly as fluid as water. The Captain created a wind and blew the dust off the decks.

The sky was a very deep azure blue and the air seemed rather thin, like we were very high up. One of the sailors was having trouble breathing so he was taken below. Also we seemed lighter. One step and we were nearly falling over.

Once the sails were hoisted Gar volunteered to see how solid the dust was. So he went down a ladder, stepped on the dust, and promptly sank - just as I suspected. We hauled him out.

Meanwhile the anchor was lowered and it was discovered that the dust was 100ft deep at this point.

By this time the cook came up on deck complaining to the Captain. It turned out that he was trying to boil water but it wasn't hot. Odd. So we all trooped down to investigate. We came to the conclusion that it was something to do with the thin air so Dramus rigged up some sort of pressure cooking arrangement.

Some of the other adventurers were trying to use Spandex's fireflight corona to toast their food. As far as I could determine from the aura, the reason his corona was blue was due to a curse. Spandex attempted to counterspell his corona but must have backfired, deactivating his Protection from Normal Fire instead, as he suddenly took off with a 'Yeowch'. I'm not surprised. The metal plate he was on was HOT. He must have decided to do some exploring while he was up there as he began spiraling out. Soon we lost sight of him.

A while later we spotted a hump of dust heading straight towards us at high speed. Brightflare fired a bolt of fire at it just as whatever it was erupted from the sand and took off into the sky. I also managed to hit it with a yellow bolt of Starfire. Just then someone recognised it as being Spandex. I shot a green bolt into the sky in an attempt to tell him it was safe to come down but he stayed put. We had to wait for him to come down on his own accord. When he finally came down Gar healed his burns while I gave him back some fatigue. Finally I started a night sky reading which didn't reveal very much.

07/07/92

I completed three hours of purification then joined the others on deck. They were preparing to explore the object between the two pillars. California reckoned it was some sort of temple. Spandex commented he had found some plant life in a crater in the other direction. Some sort of algae he reckoned.

We rowed over in the longboat. The dust had no aura in itself but, a little further on, I did detect some form of plant life mixed in with it which had a Generic True Name of Dust Scum. It was non-sentient with an indeterminate lifespan.

Finally we reached the outcropping of rocks where the temple was located and we beached the boat and 'waded' ashore. I cast a witchsight on myself. The temple front had three doors, a white one on the left, black on the right, and an ornate gold door in the middle. The gold doors had dispelling magic on them. Also the white door had a stylised sun above it while the black one had a dark patch.

.5.

California instructed the two sailors that had come with us to start clearing the sand from in front of the doors while he divinated the gold one. While that was going on, Gar, Haann, and I went for a walk around the back. All we found was a set of silver doors which weren't magical.

Just then a blue fireball went off. Had to be Spandex. As we headed back Brightflare came around to meet us. He told us there was some sort of dust storm coming and we had to take cover. Fortunately the silver doors had been cleared and opened so we ducked through them.

Inside was a large room with three doors in the front and a silver door in the back. The roof had a large hole in it. Two large statues were at each end of the room with a throne each. The throne on the side with the silver door was marked with a sun symbol, the other with a dark circle and stars. Both were magical.

At this point the sand started pouring in the roof. Brightflare and Dramus disappeared behind a wall of bones while I rapidly unpacked my parachute and ducked under that. Don't know how the others got on.

Once the storm passed I crawled out from under the parachute and repacked it. Then I went to examine the statues. They seemed identical except one seemed to represent Dark and the other Light. Since I was a Celestial Solar i.e. a Light Mage, I wondered what would happen if I sat on the Sun Throne. So I did. As I gathered up some mana, Brightflare noticed that the sun motif was glowing and told me to stop doing it. So I did. However the motif continued to glow until I got off the throne. It hadn't seemed to have done me any harm so, after Brightflare used his empathy to confirm that, sat on it again. I soon noticed that my spell casting was enhanced by another 20 points. It seemed logical that the other throne would do the same thing for a Celestial Dark or Shadow mage.

Meanwhile Grendel was climbing up the statue. Suddenly he fell off it and fell to the ground, twisting his ankle. I started to soothe pain on him and splinted his ankle while Haann conjured up a crutch. Dramus then wandered over and completed the ankle repair.

By now California had completed divinating the gold door and discovered that it cancelled any existing magics including enchantments, curses, and anything else that was permanent until death. So we got Grendel to walk through it. As soon as he did, he had his memory back.

Brightflare was looking rather exhausted so I gave him some of my fatigue then we all went outside. To our surprise the ship was gone. Hopefully the Captain had taken it up in order to get away from the storm.

I had a short nap in the throne - the Light place of power, while the others debated what to do next. Just then someone realised that this room was not as big as the exterior of the temple. There had to be another room behind the silver doors. Somebody woke me up and we went to have a look.

The room behind the doors was dark until I tossed a Light in it. There was an arch leading to passages on both sides and another set of silver doors ahead. The archways were warded, both with Celestial spells. I was unable to determine what the one to the left was but the right one contained Whitefire. California counterspelled it and we proceeded into the corridor - except for Dramus.

There were six doors in the corridor, three on each side, all locked. Grendel tried ESP but detected nothing. Neither California, or myself, spotted any other wards as we progressed down the passage. Once we reached the end, we started checking doors. The first one was a 50,000 year old armory. Most of the non-metallic bits had crumbled into dust. We got a glimpse of a skeleton in the room opposite before it crumbled into dust. The only interesting things in there was a Golden Heart which had been enchanted by a rank 14 Binder, and a small enchanted drum. It was of the Bardic College and the nature of the magic was Communication. I had never heard of that

College, but logic dictated that there had to be an identical drum somewhere else and a message tapped on one would be repeated on the other.

Grendel detected multiple minds behind each of the two middle doors so we decided to proceed cautiously by Haann casting Transparency on part of the door. He tried it and part of Brightflare went transparent. It was rather interesting having a look inside Brightflare and seeing how he worked. Haann finally succeeded on the door and I tossed a Light through it. We could see nothing moving so Grendel opened the door and Spandex tossed a fireball in. Once everything settled down we cautiously entered. Grendel found a chest in one corner which he opened. It was full of centipede type things. Dust worms according to their aura. A barrel nearby was full of red dust which turned out to be dried grape.

Haann ended up with a virulent skin disease before he managed to make part of this door transparent. This time the Light showed a pile of rags which was moving. Also the place was full of cobwebs. Just then an insect leg appeared from under the rags and Grendel went berserk trying to get at it. Gar sapped him - with my sap.

By now we were all getting tired so we headed out. I curled up in the throne and went to sleep while Haann started constructing a rag and string golem.

08/07/92

By the time I woke up, feeling very refreshed, Haann had completed the golem and activated the heart in it. It turned out that the golem was a Bardic Mage so I was asking all sorts of questions about it's College until the others told me to desist. Where's their sense of curiosity? I resolved to continue the discussion later. Also the golem's name was Pierrot. We also found out that this was the temple of the two Priest Kings - one for the light and the other for the dark. The people who had lived here were Lunarians and there had been a city behind the temple. Guess it's under the dust.

Now that we were rested, we went back up the corridor, after California temporarily deactivated the ward. There was nothing of interest in the other two rooms - mostly priest stuff. I had to cure Haann of a migraine as well.

This time I did the Counterspell (Celestial special) on the other ward. The corridor here was identical to the other one with the six doors. In one door we found some glass vessels. One contained a powder which, according to California, had been Mind Cloak potion. I wonder what would happen if we add water ...

Another room was another armory. While the other one had contain silver coloured weapons, these ones (what was left of them) were black. One set for the light, one for the dark I suppose. I managed to get infected by some poisonous mould, but with Brightflare's help, I was soon cured.

The other rooms contained assorted religious artifacts and priestly raiments. Nothing of interest - unless you're an archeologist.

By the time we got back up it was close to evening. Well we weren't sure but we all were a bit tired anyway. I used what was left of my fatigue to fix up Grendel, then continued discussing Bardic College with Pierrot. Finally I put a small darkness around the Light Throne before curling up to sleep.

09/07/92

Brightflare spotted a secret door in the righthand back corner in one of the frescos. Given the symmetry of the place, I reckoned that there should be an identical one in the left side. Well it seemed logical to me. However when we looked we couldn't find it.

Meanwhile California was having a really tough time getting the other door opened but he soon had it done. To ensure that it didn't close after us we wedged it with a piece of fallen ceiling. We could see steps descending into darkness. While I put a witchsight on myself, Spandex managed to make himself blind. Grendel wanted to push Spandex through the gold doors but Dramus wouldn't let him. Instead he reckoned it would wear off soon and that he would stay behind as well.

The stairs wound down in a tight leftwards square spiral before terminating at a door. California opened it and we saw a long corridor heading away from us. Another corridor went to the left. A humanoid statue, carrying what appeared to be a staff or a club, was in a recess in the corner ahead of us. Neither California or myself could detect any magic on the statue so Brightflare stepped through the door. As he did so the statue started moving in a rather aggressive manner. Oops! We forgot to check for wards on the floor.

Gar fired his crossbow as the statue swung, narrowly missing Brightflare. I rapidly prepared a Bolt of Starfire (who cares what colour) and hit it. Another one followed in quick succession which appeared to do something to it, not so in the case of Brightflare's fire bolt. Meanwhile it was rapidly advancing (for a stone golem) towards Gar who was going into the attack as well. Grendel bravely rushed in with his sword as well but the statue swung an arm and sent him flying against the wall.

By the time we managed to turn said statue into a pile of rocks we were all utterly exhausted. So we called it quits and went back upstairs to rest.

When we got back up, we noticed that Spandex was sitting in a circle which also had a pentacle drawn inside it. Also a candle had been placed on each point of the pentacle around the circle. Dramus looked like he was engaged in some sort of ritual. As I watched it seemed to look strangely familiar, like one of Robinton's curse removals, but Robinton had never needed such elaborate preparations. When I asked Dramus about it later he reckoned it was some sort of new Healing ritual. Since he's a higher ranked Healer then he may be right but I still have my doubts.

After about six hours or so, we felt ready to try again. So we descended and started exploring the straight-ahead branch. The first room we encountered was the remains of a washroom. The next one contained jars of coloured powders. An alchemical room perhaps? Grendel picked up a bottle of oily liquid. Somehow Brightflare must have come to the conclusion that it was an explosive and rapidly ducked out the door. Either that or he thought that Grendel was a jinx. Just in case he was right the rest of us followed - just as Grendel dropped the bottle. Fortunately it didn't explode but the liquid splattered against his boots. He had to rapidly remove them as large holes began appearing and his feet started burning. Fortunately we found some powdered healing potion that

did the trick.

When we reached the next room, Grendel attempted to cast an ESP to determine if there was anything behind the door. However he backfired - with creeping selinity. So, while we waited, he went up to the gold doors. While he was gone we discovered that the door was warded so California neutralized it, before opening it. After all that, the room was bare.

As far as I could tell from the aura on the next door, it was safe. So I touched it. Next thing I remembered was Brightflare picking me up and shaking me awake. It transpired that I had been zapped by a mental attack ward. Once the door was opened we could see a short corridor with three door on each side and one on the end. Each door had a dark room behind it - and I mean dark - magical darkness no less. The one at the end had a Rank 20 Darkness in it. Casting chambers for Dark mages obviously. Pierrot used his 'Bat Sight' to check each room out but all of them were empty, although he did find some black rags and a bone in one.

At this point, the main corridor turned left. There was only one door visible on the right side wall that we could see. Grendel cast an ESP but, to his chagrin, it didn't work on him but on Brightflare. Brightflare managed to detect another mind ahead and slightly to the left.

The door wasn't trapped and opened easily, revealing what used to be a library. All the books had disintergrated into dust. California found a bookcase in the left wall which opened revealing another room with more damaged books. Another bookcase in the far room led into an identical room with still more decayed books.

We soon found another concealed door in the far wall. However, this one had a ward on it. Celestial - special - fear. I attempted to Counterspell it and backfired, fortunately only losing fatigue. The second attempt failed but the third succeeded. The room had preservation magic in it and, to California's delight, the books here were in excellent shape. We attempted to take one out of the room but it immediately crumbled as soon as it crossed the doorway. Great! A library where you can't take the books out. Meanwhile Grendel had just completed the second attempt at an ESP (the first one failed) and discovered two minds to the left. They seemed to be patiently waiting for something (We later discovered that the first attempt had been a reverse effect backfire and they had detected us). Also, according to Gar's map, we were moving parallel to the corridor and were now halfway along it.

After examining the books, none of which we could read, (California reckoned the language was a more ancient form of the one found in the sunken city in the Southern Ocean) we concluded we'd have to get a party of linguists in here. Also, given the symmetry of the place, we expected to find another secret door on the other side of the room, leading to three more library rooms with decayed books. After a quick search that was exactly what was found. The final door took us to the other end of the corridor.

We backtracked through the library then started moving down the corridor itself. Soon we discovered two ornate double doors on the left wall, one side dark, the other light. Grendel detected the same two minds on the other side, still patiently waiting. We decided to skip that door for now.

The rest of the trip on this level was basically a mirror image of the first half. We soon found the Light casting chambers with a Rank 20 Light in the far room. I cast a Resistance to Light and had

a quick look inside each one. All were empty.

The corresponding room to the alchemical lab on this side proved to be a Healer's room. Brightflare managed to find six scalpel blades with preservation magic on them. We also found a Healer store room and clinic.

As we suspected, we found another statue in the corner so California counterspelled the ward and we went through. The corridor turned to the left. There were two teaching rooms with a large room containing several stone benches in it. The only difference between the two teaching rooms was that one had a white wall and the other had a black wall.

The corridor met up with the one we had originally travelled down so we decided to call it quits for the day. After ascending the stairs we discovered that Spandex could see again.

.7.

10/07/92

After a 'nights' rest I purified for an hour then went outside. There was still no sign of the ship so I left a blue patch of light to serve as a beacon. I also noticed that Alusia was showing a different face, but was still in the same place in the sky - not so the sun. Could Alusia be a rotating sphere?

Once the others were ready (including Dramus and Spandex) we trooped down to the ornate double doors. We had previously concluded that behind them was some sort of holy place - a sanctuary of the two Priest-Kings. But when did that stop a band of adventurers - or even one archeologist. When he got back he successfully cast the spell and I tossed a Light in. The room was empty. Most of the floor was taken up by a sunken area. So we opened the door.

The sunken area turned out to be a pool of water. The walls were magical with some sort of teleportation so the water was circulating and fresh. So we filled up our water bottles and quenched our thirst. Thank goodness. All of us had been getting very dry throats because of the dust in the air. The plane of origin of the water was Alusia but that didn't mean that it came from the planet as the moon was also part of this plane.

There was another set of ornate double doors on the other side. Haann put a Transparency on them but I couldn't get the Light spell to engage. It was soon revealed that there was magical darkness on the other side. Grendel's ESP revealed that the two minds were also on the other side still patiently waiting.

Because of the magical darkness, Dramus was speculating that the minds actually were Greater Undead such as wraiths or wights. He was NOT going in there as such creatures were highly dangerous. I guess he knew what he was talking about as his College specialises in such things.

So we went back upstairs. Dramus summoned some undead insectoids - which caused Grendel to go catatonic and Spandex to run off. However he soon discovered he couldn't understand them so he dismissed them.

We came to the conclusion that a direct frontal attack was suicidal so we decided to attack from above. With the aid of Grendel's ESP, we found a point above the minds and Haann cast a Transparency. Brightflare then cast an Incineration and managed to vapourise one.

As part of our preparations, Spandex had cast Fireflights on each one of us in case we had to make a speedy getaway to escape the retributive strike. He took off with Brightflare close behind. The rest of us took cover and waited. After a while nothing had happened so we cautiously came out. Guess it didn't know what hit it.

The transparent hole had gone by now but it didn't take long for Haann to cast another one. Unfortunately he reversed it which meant that whatever was below could see up to where we were, so I quickly covered the area with my cloak. Two attempts later, Haann had created another one just as Spandex and Brightflare returned. We still couldn't see our target because of the magical darkness so Brightflare and Gar bombarded the area with fireballs. Grendel cast another ESP and began broadcasting his thoughts (another backfire) so we quickly shoved him through the gold doors in case the creature below had survived. As it turned out it hadn't so we went down to have a look. Sure enough we had managed to ash both of them. What we found were two rings, two circlets and two wands. We took them back upstairs.

.8.

Pierrot asked Grendel what sort of magic he did. When Grendel replied 'I'm a Mind Mage', everybody else laughed. While California began divinating the items, the rest of us rested and relaxed. I continued my observations of Alusia.

11/07/92

Still no sign of the ship. This is starting to get rather worrying. We could be stranded here. I managed to get in a few more observations of Alusia, and two hours purification before finding out what the items were. There was a ring that helped cast Light spells, another for Darkness spells, a circlet that reduced fear checks, another for Awe checks and two wands of insect control. Pierrot had previously mentioned that the Lunarians (the humanoids) had created an insectoid sentient race (the Selenites) as slaves. I was appalled and said so. I wore the two light items while Dramus wore the two dark ones. Haann held one of the wands while Grendel had the other one.

After a while we all trooped down to the wall where the wights were. We found a door in the back wall with a Celestial Fear spell on it. I counterspelled the ward but the door was still locked so California got to work on it. Guess who forgot to check for traps first. He managed to get hit by a poison needle. After I neutralised it, he had another go and succeeded.

Once the door was opened we could see two shadowy forms inside. I got a formally living, GTN Selenite from one while California picked up that the other had some sort of animation magic on it. So I tossed in a Light spell and we saw two large armoured humanoid figures. Shelves lined the walls, one side with dark amphorians, the other side with white ones. All of them had illusion magic on them. California touched one and a voice told him that it contained the remains of Tama the 15th of S'Avaiiki, followed by a brief description of his achievements. (Pierrot was translating). Obviously each urn contained the remains of each priestking and this was the memorial room.

Our attention turned next to the statues. They turned out to be basically empty suits of chitinous armour - like the exoskeleton of a crab. They also had three daggers each which had some sort of magical aura on them which was similar to a Light spell.

The suits of armour had animating magic on them which would be triggered if they were touched. I didn't see the point of risking ourselves to get those daggers but Grendel was adamant. So we

put a Binder Counterspell on one and Gar started hacking away at the suit's legs. Soon it tumbled over and the same technique was used on the other one. Grendel retrieved the daggers while Dramus spread the bits of armour about. It didn't look like it would fit any of us. i.e. being too tall and spindly - even for Dramus.

There were two side doors, both with Fear spells on them. One special knowledge Counterspell later, we had it open. Inside was a small room containing a Rank 20 Darkness. Therefore the other had to contain a Rank 20 Light. So I cast a Protection from Light on myself and Dramus (he wanted one too) and went in. Inside we a desk and chair which disintegrated when touched. We also found a secret door which, upon opening, revealed a corridor (containing normal lighting). So the rest of the party were instructed to keep their eyes tightly closed while we guided them through.

The corridor led to a stairwell which we descended. No auras were detected on the stairs. However the fourth and fifth steps looked crumbly and unsafe. Spandex triggered his fireflight corona.

We stepped very carefully around the crumbling bit and reached the bottom. Down there was another door. California couldn't detect any traps so Grendel opened it ... and stepped straight into a Fear Ward on the other side. He immediately started attacking the door. The others restrained him while I attempted to Counterspell the ward. However it resisted my efforts so California did the job.

The corridor went to the left and right and we could see some doors. In front of one of the doors we could see some scratches that appeared to be caused by an insectoid. The door led into the remains of a dormitory. There were remains of beds scattered about. Other marks indicated that something large had been here. We continued following the scratches to a locked door which California opened. That led into another bedroom.

The door on the other side went into what had been a bathroom, containing marble sinks and bath tubs. Dramus decided he wanted a sink. Blowed if I know why but soon Haann was attempting to get one out by using binding magic. Dramus healed his resulting migraines then Haann succeeded in getting one out and animating it. Soon it's following him like an obedient puppy.

The opposing door led us to a corridor with a door on the other side. We entered that door and found ourselves in the remains of a kitchen. The party decided they wanted the kitchen sink. Why not? They were collecting everything else. However they decided that one sink was enough. The next room was a pantry and had an odd smell in it. Dramus started collecting discarded pots and pans and piling them up in the animated sink. I guess he's setting up a house. We found the cool store next. Still cold but nothing interesting in it and no way out. So we started backtracking.

We went through another set of doors from the kitchen and found ourselves in what remained of the dining hall. Dramus collected some more pots, pans, and added cutlery to the collection. Just then we heard a clicking sound coming from another door. Grendel cast an ESP and started wearing a puzzled expression. He wasn't sure what he's got. Meanwhile Dramus used a cantrip to tie Grendel's shoelaces together. Grendel fell over. As he untangled himself the rest of us prepared to meet whatever it was behind the door. I got 'volunteered' to open it. So I did so. What we saw was several large ant like things on the other side. I quickly closed it again.

We prepared to meet the onslaught. Once we were ready I yanked the door open again and hid behind it. Dramus must have acquired one of the wands (Grendel's - he had gone catatonic) and managed to control one. Meanwhile Gar managed to drop his crossbow. Fortunately it didn't go off. Brightflare fired off a firebolt. One insect slipped around the door so I drew my dagger and attempted to stay out of its way. I'm a Healer not a fighter. However I got hit and fell over - unconscious. Brightflare hit that insect with a firebolt.

Haann had controlled another and was using it to block the door. Meanwhile Dramus had put up a Wall of Bones, cutting five of them off from us.

By the time Brightflare brought me back to consciousness with a ten point Healing potion the battle was over. Only one insect was left and it was under Haann's control. Dramus took over control while Haann fixed Gar's crossbow.

We questioned the survivor with Pierrot translating. There were several types of insects in the hive - workers, gardeners, soldiers, builders, nurse, drones and a queen. We had captured a builder (a golden brown carapace). There were several workers lying around (dusky brown carapaces). None of the insects were telepathic except for the builders which were partially (only under stress), the drones (which had some sort of telepathic communication net) and the Queen. The builder also said that the Hive had captured something large and wooden. The ship? Seemed very possible. It was still okay.

I discovered that the insects were Dark Aspected. Meanwhile Dramus used Warp Wood to lock the insect's upper limbs in manacles before we took it back up to the upper level with us. Then we also secured its lower limbs and wrapped it in a Wall of Bones while we rested and planned what we were going to do next.

.9.

12/07/92

Pierrot made the mistake of calling Gar a human and was knocked around the temple. Meanwhile I created a small scintillating ball of light - with a cantrip and managed to hypnotise Grendel into not fearing the big insects. Brightflare also suggested that Grendel buys us a round of drinks at the first pub on our return.

In order to avoid having light sources with us - which attract insects - Pierrot cast Batsights on Brightflare, Spandex, Gar, and Haann while I did Witchsights on the rest. Then I did Walking Unseens all round. Grendel gained control of the builder while Dramus released it from its restraints. Grendel then ordered the bug to take us to the ship by the least travelled route. So we headed down to the third level, turned left at the corridor, and went through a broken door into the remains of a bath house. A sink had been shoved back from the wall revealing a circular hole which we entered.

The tunnel wound down passing several intersections but we continued following the builder. Every so often we encountered translucent stringy curtains across the corridor. It seemed to be made out of masticated rock.

Finally we reached a circular room with a pit in the center containing assorted junk. A worker was dumping more junk in it. Somehow Grendel stumbled and made a noise. Fortunately he didn't touch anyone. We all froze. The worker stopped and looked around, antennae waving. However

it can't have detected anything suspicious as it continued with it's work and left. We breathed a collective sigh of relief.

We were about to go on when Brightflare spotted a magical salt cellar - nature of magic, neutralisation. Gar was getting impatient to go on. However the others wanted to retrieve it.

Dramus animated a skeletal snake. However he failed to warn us first. Grendel, Pierrot, and myself ran back down the corridor while Haann went into screaming hysterics and Spandex leapt into the pit to attack the snake. The builder also ran but Brightflare grabbed one of the rods and re-established control. Gar knocked Haann out. Meanwhile Dramus had retrieved the saltcellar but in doing so had uncovered a magical rope.

Just then crossbow bolts started firing at the remaining party members from the tunnel we were about to go down. I was just resting and deciding whether or not to go back down when Gar and Haann rushed past yelling that they were being chased. So I put up a Wall of Starlight across the corridor, then renewed my Walking Unseen, just as the bugs hit the Wall and bounced off it, taking damage. I beat a hasty retreat to the room of Light on the next level, rested a bit, then made my way back up. On the way up I met Brightflare. Turned out he had teleported to the temple with an Invested. Dramus and Spandex were still down there.

We headed back to the temple to plan what to do next. Brightflare came to the conclusion that, if the insectoids got the ship, then there must be a cavern nearby. Maybe we could sneak down there. So he cast fireflight on Gar and himself and they zoomed off for a look. All they found was a crater with grey insects working there - gardeners - and four small openings, none of which were big enough for the ship.

After a while of deliberations we were rather startled because the little drum that Brightflare had found started banging on it's own accord. Pierrot explained that the drum must be one of a pair of drums of communication and someone was tapping on the other one. I wanted to tap back but Gar didn't think it was a good idea, in case there was an insectoid at the other end. We couldn't make any sense of the drumbeats and Pierrot didn't think it was in any code he had heard of, until Haann suddenly recognized the pattern as the tune of a Gloranthian drinking song, namely 'What do you do with a drunken Trollkin'. It had to be Spandex. However the tune started to get slower and fainter. Something was definitely wrong. But there was nothing we could do about it.

13/07/92

While the others purified I did some astrology readings. It took me two attempts to finally get something but when I did, I wished I hadn't. The question I had asked was 'is Spandex and Dramus still alive'. The reading was:

Saved from death
Unhappy yet happy
Beware of happiness
Beware of the life that grows within
Beware of she which dwells below
Trust her not
Tis YOU she wants.

It wasn't nice, especially the emphasis on the word 'you'. I went back in and informed the others.

We went down to the room of Light and I cast Witchsights and Walking Unseens. The astrology reading must have been still unsettling me as some of the spells took two attempts to take hold - even with the rank 20 Light to help. I was feeling rather exhausted at the end of it.

Once that was done we made our way to the circular room with the pit then continued where the builder would have taken us. The tunnels here were very rounded - rather like tubes, and every so often we encountered more of that translucent filmy stuff. It wasn't sticky fortunately. Also we noticed that the air was getting warmer and denser.

Shortly we reached a T intersection and could hear clicking sounds and other movements. Cautiously we went right. A little way along we reached a 20 foot opening on the left. A group of workers were inside weaving on looms. We crept on. Brightflare whispered that he reckoned the corridor was gently curving to the left.

The next room we encountered had two builders and several workers working away at something that looked like a forge. We needed to capture an insect, preferably a Builder, to act as a guide but it could have been a tad suspicious here. So we left them alone.

A little later on we encountered a a builder, accompanied by two human males, wearing nothing but loincloths, who were carrying a large object. It had no aura but we soon deduced it was a weaving frame. The aura on the two humans told me they had magical aptitude, but no willpower. Also the Healer empathy was telling me that they were very happy but it was caused by some sort of drug. That explained part of the reading.

Grendel used one of the rods of control to take over the builder. Meanwhile I whispered the information about the drug to Brightflare. Shortly afterwards someone, I can't remember who, christened the two humans Ren and Stimpny and reckoned they were affected by 'Happy Happy Joy Joy' drug.

We got the builder to deliver the frame, then got it to lead us to where the ship was by the safest route. Ren and Stimpny tagged along as it would have looked suspicious leaving them behind. Also the noise of their passage might help disguise our own.

We kept following the curve of the corridor then turned left and travelled down a radial passage towards the center. At the end of it, two warriors stood. Fortunately the gap between them was wide enough to sneak past which was what we attempted to do. Unfortunately Haann tripped over the lintel of the doorway and the resulting noise put the warriors on alert. We immediately froze in position. I was convinced that they would be able to hear my heart pounding.

After a short while they relaxed and we continued on. We were now in the central atrium which was 50 feet across and consisted of a hollow core. We could see several levels of hive, above and below us all connected by stairways. Above was a ceiling comprising of the spongy stuff, like the curtains. It also looked like it was recently damaged as if it had been hit. Below us was the top of a dome. Also above us there was quite a bit of insect activity.

We continued down, following the builder. Just then we saw an unknown type of insectoid with a multicoloured carapace, heading in our direction. Also two warriors were now blocking the entrance to the level we wanted. Brightflare had the other wand and managed to get one of the warriors to step aside. Suddenly he collapsed. Fortunately he landed in such a way that it was

possible to Haann to get the builder to command one of the slaves to knock the wand out of Brightflare's grasp. Grendel picked it up. We hurried on. Behind us the unconscious form of Brightflare was being picked up.

We proceeded along the radial corridor then turned left into the ring corridor on this level. Haann asked the builder where the ship was and received an answer that it was on this level. Just then we encountered another of those unknown coloured insectoids, working alone on what looked like a forge. Also it was holding the hot metal in bare pincers. Only a firemage could do that.

Grendel tried to control it but failed. So he handed me the wand and I attempted it. Success! It was a bit odd having contact with an insect mind, and having it under my control, but I soon found out that the multicoloured insectoids were the drones and they were all mages. This one was indeed a firemage, and the one that got Brightflare was an ensorcerer with a sleep spell. Also all the drones had telepathic communication with each other, sort of like the Mind Mage Mindspeak spell. I 'ensured' that this one did not try anything to warn the others by telling it that I was a mage too, and I was very knowledgeable in magical theory so I could make it cast a spell and automatically backfire. It didn't like that idea at all. I hoped it didn't call my bluff. It was also rather interesting, picking it's mind for information on fire magics.

So we continued on, with two insectoids and two humanoids for company. Soon we found an exit to the right, heading outwards. We followed it and found several warriors at the other end, facing away from us. The drone said that they were assigned to guard the hive from some 'abominations'.

We could see a huge cavern behind the warriors. Fortunately it was possible for us to sneak past them so we did. The cavern turned out to be an underground lake and the ship was floating in the middle of it. There was also a short jetty which looked as if it was human constructed. Some more insectoids were on it, manning what looked like a ballistae.

From what the drone said, they had managed to bring the ship down here magically but when they tried to capture the crew, a big gust of wind blew up from nowhere and blew the ship away from the wharf. Now they were in a standoff situation.

We somehow had to clear these insectoids away so the ship could come in and pick us up. A fight soon ensued. California managed to get another insectoid with compel obedience and get it to fight for us while I managed to get the drone to blast it's fellow creatures with Dragonflames. Fortunately these creatures don't register so much on my empathy. I wasn't enjoying this but it was a case of us or them and I didn't want to share the others fate.

A fog suddenly formed around the group at the ballistae. It had to be the Captain. Already the ship was coming in closer so it could fire it's armaments. The Captain was also firing lightning bolts.

At this stage we could hear the sounds of reinforcements coming down the corridor so I got the drone to put up a Wall of Fire then continue blasting away with DF's while it still had fatigue. Soon it was under attack by another insectoids.

After a few minutes, but it seemed like forever, it was all over. All the insectoids were dead except for the drone. The ship came alongside and we clambered on board. We also decided to take Ren and Stimp with us as it was hoped that we could find an antidote to the drug in their

systems as we would need one for Dramus, Spandex and Brightflare.

The drone told us that to get the ship to the surface, we had to pull a lever on the wharf. That would activate a teleport to send it back. They had captured it the same way. Gar then killed the drone. The resultant empathy shock sent me unconscious.

.11.

14/07/92

The ship was currently hovering above Mare Serenitatis, so that we wouldn't get caught in the teleport trap. We had the remains of the temple under observation in case the others managed to escape. The two sailors we had left there had already been picked up. Apparently I had missed the sight of the longboat literally skipping from point to point under the weaker gravity as the sailors rowed as fast as they could.

Just then I noticed the Captain and ship's cook come out of the galley with some sort of pink mush. It had a magical aura - type of magic, ice creation. Turned out the Captain had been creating raspberry flavored mushy ice as a dessert treat. It was ok - but not desirable.

Later on I went and found the orc marine sergeant and asked his advice and opinion on the situation. He reckoned that it would not be advisable for us to go and rescue them as the hive has been alerted to our presence and there were too few of us. It would be best for us to get a rescue party. The first officer agreed. Gar pointed out that the potential salvage should be enough to fund such an operation and I also remembered that the Guild makes provision for that sort of thing. It was agreed that we would continue to wait for a few more days until the start of lunar night before we left. I guess I'd better talk to the Guild Council - even though I still felt that by leaving them to their fate in the meantime was still in violation of the Guild contract. I decided to go up to the crows nest to meditate and wait. I must have been rather unsettled as it took nearly half my fatigue to get off a Resistance to Light spell. Not even a prayer to the Powers of Light brought any inspiration.

Just then Brightflare suddenly appeared. According to my empathy he seemed okay. He told us he had woken up in a hexagonal room with a couple of slaves that had tended to his every whim. I decided not to ask what that meant. Also he had discovered that the food and drink was indeed drugged. He had brought back a few samples.

18/07/92

We had waited five more days but there was no sign of Spandex or Dramus. The light level had dropped and it was getting decidedly colder. The sun was now bisected by the horizon. Curiously enough, Alusia was still in the same place. Finally the Captain gave the order to take off.

21/07/92

The trip back had only taken three days and was uneventful. We splashed down in the ocean, just half an hours sail from Seagate Harbour. California paid us our 1000 silver pennies. The money for Spandex and Dramus was to be kept in trust until they returned.

The rest of us headed up to the Guild hall but we stopped off at a pub to get a quick drink. Grendel got the urge to buy a round so he did, of milk. I enjoyed it but Gar didn't so I drunk his as well.

Finally we reached the Guild and I set up an appointment with Herkum for the following day.

22/07/92

We had all been divinated and had no ill-effects by the time we were ushered into the presence of the Guild leaders. I explained the situation and asked for permission to organise a rescue. Permission was granted but I had to wait until the next Guild meeting as most adventurers were still out. I just hope that Dramus and Spandex can hold out that long. I wanted to go on the mission but was advised not to as I wasn't powerful enough. The astrology readings also said no.

We also split up the treasure. I ended up with the ring and circlet of Light as well as the surgical scalpels. Dramus still had the Dark items. Gar and Grendel took the insect controlling rods but the Guild wanted to borrow them for the rescue party.

A treasure chest we had found earlier on, the one with the odd currency, also had a secret compartment in it containing two magical bracelets. One told you what direction you were going in, the other told you how far up you were. Brightflare got both of them. Haann claimed Pierrot (of course) with the weapons was split around the others. I think Gar got most of them.

So that was that. Time for training. I also arranged to have that small space rock turned into a pendant.