

Romance in the South Seas

Cover Sheet

Adventure by Jacqui Smith

01/01/93 - 22/03/93

Player Characters

Aqualina	Water	Female	Human	Scribe
Kryan	Illusionist	Male	Human	Leader
Gar	Fire	Male	Orc	Mil Sci
Valium	E&E	Male	Human	
Grendel	Mind	Male	Human	
Tussock	Air	Female	Hobbit	

Plane

Elushia

Places visited

Novadom

Little Davy's Island - near Novadom

Atui - Aqualina's home island group

Aumatangi - Aqualina's home village on the island of Takatea

Kalua Kona - nearby island sacred to Pele, goddess of fire

Mercy of Pasifika

Sunken human city of Pasifika

An unknown island at the other end of a portal

Major NPCs encountered

California Smith - Archeologist at the Gentlefolks Exploration Society at Novadom

Roderick Tarquin - Captain of the 'Wandering Star'

Ezra Spindleshanks - Hobbit chef on the 'Wandering Star'

Mariri Arika - Chief of Aumatangi

Hemi Kupe (John Cooper) - Aqualina's father

Aketaire - Aqualina's mother

Tuamuri, Kana - Aqualina's brothers

Inutoto - Aqualina's younger sister

Ona Kaikino - Shaman at Aumatangi

Itimanuka - The Sage of the Sea

King Kierl - Merfolk king at Pasifika

Princess Annelsie - Kierl's eldest daughter - an E&E mage

Mission

A holiday. Kryan & Aqualina's Pasifikan wedding and honeymoon

ROMANCE IN THE SOUTH SEAS

Adventure Summary

01/01/93

My wedding to Kryan and subsequent celebrations.

02/01/93

Kryan missing. Turned out that some people had crated him up and posted him to Novadom. Rounded up the rest of the party and boarded our ship.

05/01/93

After a stern chase we managed to catch up to the ship with Kryan aboard. It was being attacked by a pirate ship, commanded by a tall red-headed woman. Defeated the pirates but the captain and her first officer air mage escaped. After retrieving the captain's strongbox and the crew, we left the ship to sink.

Some of our cabins had been disturbed. We had a hobbit stowaway who was soon caught with doughnut bait. The pirate captain's chest contained a map to a sunken treasure ship off Little Davy's Island, not far from Novadom.

06/01/93

Arrived at Novadom and spoke to California Smith of the Gentleman's Exploration Society. He described the sunken city he had explored. Afterwards went shopping for armour and weapons.

07/01/93

More shopping, this time for clothes. Had to delay our departure because a party member was having a curse removed. Finally got away late that afternoon. During the evening a storm brewed up.

08/01/93

Reached Little Davy's Island. Attacked by a group of natives led by a necromantic shaman. Finally beat them off with only one casualty. I managed to paralyse myself with a backfire.

09/01/93

Paralysis lifted late that afternoon so we went looking for the sunken ship. Caught several lobster for the ship's larder. Found the ship and discovered that it was inhabited by a small kraken. We retreated to the ship.

It was decided to try and break the sunken wreck up by using harpoons to catch hold of the hull then tear it apart. As we did the kraken rose and attacked, using its tentacles to sweep the decks. We fought back and managed to vanquish it after a long struggle.

Swam down and retrieved some of the treasure.

10/01/93

Went and retrieved the rest of the treasure - a large chest. Discovered that someone had forgotten to supply charts for the islands so had to return to Novadom.

12/01/93

Back at Novadom. Some treasure items divinated.

18/01/93

Crossing the Line ceremony. Much gaiety and fun.

21/01/93

Sighted volcanic island that wasn't on the charts. Changed course to investigate. I went and explored the reef while the others went mountain climbing. They discovered a small pool with cursed water. Anything living going in it turned to gold for a week.

29/01/93

Arrived at the island group of Atui and landed on the island of Takatea where my home village of Aumatangi is. Challenge and Welcoming rituals were performed. Met with the Chief, Mariri Arika, and explained to him that Kryan and I had come to be married, Pasifikan style.

He told us that they had a current problem with the Followers of Pele who were demanding tribute and threatening to awaken Pele and destroy the island by erupting nearby Maungatake. They had already attacked once and the local tribes were still recovering. The only way to break the Goddesses power was to find a certain amulet and fling it into the sacred volcano on Kalua Kona. The first thing to do was to find the Sage of the Sea. She would know where it was.

Boar hunting that afternoon and festivities that night. An attack by the Followers of Pele was repelled. Two were killed so they were left with our shaman, Ona Kaikino.

30/01/93

Yesterday I had asked some dolphins where we could find the Sage of the Sea and they reported back saying they did know and they would guide us. Strange fog blankets the village but nothing to be alarmed about. Couldn't leave immediately as Valium was having a curse removed after last night's attack.

Afterwards Ona spoke to the spirits of the dead warriors. The Pelians were led by a Fire Mage and an Earth Mage who, together, had revived forbidden rituals. Their temple was located halfway up Malua Loa, the sacred volcano. A plan was devised to sneak in and dispose of the two mages while a party of warriors caused a diversion.

31/01/93

Had a visitation from the Goddess Itimanuka, the Sage of the Sea. She told us that the amulet was held at the merfolk city, some distance to the west. Only the eldest daughter of the merking knew where it was.

Set off towards the mercity, with the assistance of a magical wave and arrived in it's location after dusk. Met by party of mermen and conducted to see King Kierl. He told us that his eldest daughter, Annelsie, had been captured by the Followers of Pele and he feared that she was going to be used in a ritual.

Headed off at speed towards Kalua Kona.

01/02/93

Reached the island and made our way up the mountain to the temple. Tried to sneak in through the front way but were discovered and had to retreat. So we tried a concealed entrance around the back. Worked our way through the temple and found the shackled merprincess in an underground lake.

Managed to break her chains and make our escape to the ship before heading off. Kryan discovered that the amulet had been stolen by bunch of adventurers from it's place in the sunken city of Pasifika. They had escaped through a portal.

02/02/93

Arrived back at the mercity. Much celebration. Presented with rewards from the King.

04/02/93

Annelsie came with us to the site of the sunken city. Down below we could see the top of the central pyramid, 20ft down. Most of the city was on a 70' deep plateau but on one side it sloped to the 200' mark. This was where the portal was.

Descended down and discovered a square courtyard with a road from it leading to the pyramid. Two trilithons were on each of the other sides. Only one had a shimmering silver curtain across it, the rest were inert.

Went through the curtain and appeared next to another trilithon on an island beach. The sky was overcast, the sea very calm. On the other side was a mountainous area with sparse vegetation.

Attacked by four pterrys. Tussock was grabbed and carried off. The rest of us vanquished the flying reptiles before going up the mountain to rescue Tussock. Found the amulet in the ptery nest.

06/02/93

Back to the mercity, dropped off Annelsie, then headed for the fire island.

07/02/93

Reached the island. Tussock and Kryan were made Unseen and they ascended the mountain. Once there Tussock threw the amulet in. A few moments later the volcano stopped erupting.

08/02/93

Back to Aumatangi. Kryan and I were married followed by feasting and dancing. We honeymooned for a week on a remote island.

16/02/93

Departed for Novadom

06/03/93

Arrived at Novadom and picked up dresses, weapons etc that had been ordered.

11/03/93

Back home at the Guild.

ROMANCE IN THE SOUTH SEAS

Aqualina (Hinemoana)

31/12/92

Ever since I got back from that adventure in Glorantha, I've been a very busy girl. Not only did I do HEAPS of training, including learning new spells, and skills, (and having to spend 600sp for a curse removal as I was having nightmares about sharks) I've also been rather busy preparing for a wedding - mine. Kryan and I decided to tie the knot properly. First, a Raphaelite wedding tomorrow with most of the Guild to witness then a boat trip to my home islands to do it in traditional fashion. Already some people reckon we're having a bureaucratic wedding - getting married in triplicate.

I announced at the Guild meeting today, my intention of having a trip down south and would anyone like to come for a holiday. Unfortunately there were quite a few adventures going out as well so many of the people I would like to have come couldn't make it. Jhiselle for instance, or Flamis. Or even the orcs.

I did get the following though. Kryan (of course), Gar, Valium and Grendel. For some reason Guild Security insisted on the standard contract and clauses. Kryan became the party leader and I became scribe (no-one else wanted to do it). I suggested Gar be the military scientist - just in case.

That night I was dragged around the local 'entertainment' establishments by several of the Guild women, including Flamis and Jhiselle. I lost count of the number of glasses of various alcoholic beverages I consumed. I do have some recollection of jumping on the table and dancing with a male courtesan who insisted on removing his clothing.

01/01/93

The next morning dawned overcast and very bright. About nine that morning there was a knock on the door. It was Flamis. I told her to go away, punctuating it with a sock thrown in her general direction (Gar later commented that, with other colleges, spells are more likely to be thrown.) Finally she got me out of bed and helped me into my wedding dress, white with silvery blue trim, topped off by a special pendant Kryan had given me which enhances physical beauty. Flamis wants to borrow it for her wedding. She was wearing the red dress she got in Britannia.

We finally made it to the church in an open top carriage, about five minutes late. I was feeling very nervous. Fortunately it was a quick service, hosted by a local Raphaelite monk. The church was packed. I'm sure most of the Guild had turned up. Kryan was looking more handsome than usual.

As we left the church I tossed the bouquet and managed to get it to land somewhere near Flamis. We were supposed to take the carriage to the hall where the wedding feast was (catered by Alphonses) but Kryan reckoned it wasn't safe. Knowing some Guild members, there was bound to be a ward or two on it. I was still rather nervous about wards so I agreed. We decided to walk instead.

After a short distance we discovered it was raining rice. Someone had levitated some rice and set up a counterspelling ward which we triggered. Kryan reckoned we'd better avoid the bucket of

water someone had set up further down.

Once we got there, the party was in full swing. There were lots of wedding presents - the usual items although, among the more unusual was a set of iron manacles from the orcs and a large wooden coffin. Inside the coffin was a large spiked club. Kryan looked rather nervous about that, especially when I pointed out that a club plays a large part in an orcish bonding ritual. I finally decided to use it as a hat stand - which cheered him up. Did he really think I would hit him with it? It turned out to be from Gar.

After a while we managed to slip out and off to a cottage where we could have a few hours alone. Guild Security had been guarding the place making sure no one had done anything to it.

That night, some of Kryan's friends collected him for another party while I went out for a more sedate party this time.

02/01/93

The next morning, I managed to drag myself out of bed and got things organised and packed for the trip, then waited for Kryan.

Noon came and went, and still no Kryan. So I went looking for him. He wasn't at the Guild so I went down to his old place. He wasn't there but I found Gar, Haarn, Grendel, Valium and Kree all in a drunken heap on the floor - completely dead to the world. A pile of Kryan's stuff was in the corner - but no Kryan.

I demanded to know where he was. First off, they didn't seem to recognise me, thinking I belonged to Haarn. Then Gar muttered something about rescuing Kryan from the clutches of a she-devil. That did it. I told Gar that if someone didn't come up with a sensible explanation in the next few minutes I would throw a bucket of water over them. They didn't so I did. Gar copped most of it.

So there was little ol' me staring down this huge muscly orc who towered over me. Finally he backed down. I think swearing at him in orcish did the trick. He finally admitted they had packed Kryan in a crate and put him on a ship north to Novadom. I sternly pointed out that Novadom was south. Finally we all went up to the Guild to get a map. I finally proved my point, after convincing Gar that he had the map upside down.

Fortunately the ship we were going on, the Wandering Star, was also dropping in on Novadom on the way. I discovered that the ship Kryan was on was the Pride of Seagate, which had left about 4 that morning. We weren't departing till nearly half three.

I left the others to get themselves sobered up and organised (with a stern warning to be on time) and I went down to the ship. I saw the captain, Roderick Tarquin, stowed my gear and explained the situation. He thought it was mildly amusing. By now I was beginning to see the humorous side of it. I also suggested to him that he hoists full sail after we leave as I had a distinct impression that we were going to get a favourable wind. He looked me up and down and wanted to know if I was an Air, or Water Mage. I finally admitted it and promised not to alarm the crew with blatant displays of magic. Then I supervised the loading aboard of my outrigger canoe.

By now the others had come on board. Gar reckoned my surfboard was an oddly shaped paddle.

Shortly we set off. True to my prediction, a wind did spring up from astern. The Captain pointed out that it would be better if it was shifted 20 degrees to catch the sails at the best angle. I did so and we nearly flew over the ocean. The captain also requested a Ship Strength which I obliged him with.

The rest of the day went by uneventfully. We were served an excellent dinner by the ship's chef, a hobbit by the name of Ezra Spindleshanks.

03/01/91

The next full day was cold, wet, windy and overcast. I decided not to use a Mage Wind that day. Gar reckoned Grendel was down in the hold practising magic on the rats. I supposed he should be safe enough but if matters got out of hand he could always borrow my manacles.

04/01/93

Today was better weather so I started another Mage Wind to help us along. Some of the sailors were commenting about how lucky it was that they kept getting just the right wind. In fact by midmorning, it had got warm enough for me to change into my two piece swimsuit and lie on the top deck, using my cloak as a blanket. Lunch was served on deck. I think I spent the rest of the day dozing. No sign of any dolphins though.

05/01/93

Early that morning, we found ourselves encased in a cold clammy fog. It was so thick and wet that I decided to just wear my swimsuit, the Sash of Defence (just in case), boots, and a Resist Cold (nothing worse than damp, soggy clothing) and went up to the bow to look ahead. Then I used a Water Breathing (and tripled) so I could see better and enhanced my vision with the ClearSight talent. Up ahead I could just make out the running lights of a ship. I notified the captain.

.2.

Fairly soon we could all see it as we came closer. However it wasn't alone. Another ship was nearby, showing no running lights. This did not look good. Suddenly we saw a flash of light leap from one ship to the other. Also, we could hear the clash of sword against sword.

As we closed we could see other flashes of light. Soon we could see what we suspected. A merchant ship was being attacked by a pirate ship. I raced downstairs and got my crossbow and daggers. By the time I got back we could see the pirate captain, a tall redheaded woman (the red-headed bint according to me). Next to her was a hunchback man who appeared to be a mage of some sort.

We started our attacks. I let fly with the crossbow at the woman while Gar let fly with firebolts. Suddenly we were both bathed in a blue electrifying aura - lightning. That guy must be an Air Mage.

I decided to duck behind the railing as we continued to close. Meanwhile Grendel and Valium were also preparing their attacks. Grendel was using a larger crossbow while Valium was attempting to use spells.

By now we noticed that the pirate ship was listing towards us - as if it was taking on water. I

wanted to dive over the side, enlarge the hole and attack from the inside but Gar wouldn't let me. Instead he wanted me to cast a Ship Strength on the pirate ship in an attempt to stop it sinking. I didn't think it would do much good but I did so.

It didn't take too long before the battle was over. Many of the sailors from our ship had boarded the pirate ship as had several from the merchant ship. Most of the pirates had surrendered but there were still pockets of resistance. Gar and I, closely followed by Grendel clambered aboard. There was no sign of the red headed bint or the mage.

Just then I saw a sight that gladdened my heart. It was Kryan. We raced towards each other in a joyful reunion. Gar waited a minute or so while we kissed then interrupted us with the reminder that the ship was still sinking. I spent a few minutes casting Water Breathing on them all then we did a rapid search of the ship. All we found of interest was a small chest in the captain's cabin. A larger chest contained some garish clothing. We managed to retrieve the chest, the clothing, the ships sextant and chronometer as well as the charts and logbook.

Just then I spotted someone leaping over the side. I quickly told Gar then raced after him. I dived over the side, but what with the fog and everything, visibility wasn't very good. I couldn't see him at all. So I swam back to our ship and got hauled aboard.

The others had already got back on board by now. As I climbed over the railing, Kryan rushed up and wrapped a blanket around me. Thanks Kryan but it wasn't that cold.

While we were otherwise occupied, Gar had attempted to open the chest and failed. Also the merchant ship captain had given us a bolt of woollen cloth and a bolt of fine pale blue silk as a reward. Meanwhile Valium had gone back to his cabin and noticed that the contents had been disturbed. He reported it to the others. Grendel attempted an ESP to see just how many minds were on board. He detected 31, but the captain said that there were only 29 on board. One of the extras was my semi-sentient staff but the other turned out to be a half starved hobbit. As a treat, Ezra was cooking doughnuts for all so Gar acquired one and went fishing for a hobbit.

The smell of doughnuts had also aroused us. By the time we emerged, Gar had caught a hobbit. A female one. 4'6" wearing black clothing and carrying a backpack and rapier. She claimed her name was Tussock and she recognised me. I hadn't seen this hobbit before in my life. We conducted her to the Captain.

Well we soon sorted it out. Tussock was a fellow Guild member and had accidentally sneaked on to the wrong ship while on a retrieval job. So I invited her to join us on our holiday. She was so half-starved that she went through an entire plate of doughnuts in nothing flat as well as some of my chocolate. I offered some more to the cook for doughnut toppings.

Later on Tussock attempted to open the small chest. Mindful of what happened when we encountered the camouflaging chest (which Kryan now had) Kryan and I watched from behind a shield. There was a click...

Next thing I knew I was being shaken awake. I was feeling very tired. It turned out that the act of opening the chest had activated a magical ward. Kryan, Tussock, and myself had been knocked out. It turned out that the chest contained the pirate captain's journals, some other miscellaneous documents and a piece of wood. On closer examination the wood was found to have a map of an

island drawn on it with an X just off the coast. Could be a treasure map. The Captain reckoned it was a place called Davy's Island and wasn't far from Novadom. We resolved to investigate.

Later on that afternoon, Grendel was telling the story of their trip to the moon that he and Gar had been on. He said that the helm thing that had flown the ship had been found in a sunken city called Pasifika. But I pointed out that was the name of the island grouping. He also said that Haarn's golem spoke a strange language. Just on a hunch I said a few sentences in my native language and asked him if it sounded something like that. He admitted that there was some resemblance. He also remembered that the place on the moon was called S'Aviiki. Now that was getting odd as our legends said something about our ancestors coming from a place called Avaiiki which no one knew exactly where it was. Could there be a connection? I was getting all excited over this and was telling Grendel some of our ancient legends. Grendel finally suggested that we have a chat to California Smith once we arrive at Novadom.

06/01/93

We weren't due to reach Novadom until the afternoon so I spent some time starting to instruct the others on the Pasifikan language. Also Tussock wanted some training on daggers. I agreed if she could give me the basics on picking locks.

Once we reached Novadom Kryan and I followed Grendel and Gar onto a nearby ship called the Eagle. Gar spoke to someone on board who told him that California would most likely be at the Gentlefolk Adventurers Club. So we found our way there. Kryan kept a hand on my arm protectively. I was glad of that. Novadom was so crowded and much bigger than Seagate. Meanwhile Tussock and Valium went shopping for a bird. Tussock purchased an untrained blue parrot for 50sp.

Once we arrived at the club we inquired of a servant, California's location and was told that he was indeed in and would we please wait while he went to see if he was available. Soon we were ushered into his presence. He was a tall, rather rugged looking individual wearing a leather jacket and a felt hat.

After introductions and drinks we finally got down to discussing the lost city. California rolled out a map and pointed out the location. To my delight it wasn't far from my home, about 100 miles west. I pointed out the little dot on the map to Kryan which was my home island group of Atui. I then indicated where I was going when I got caught in the storm. He seemed amazed that we did long ocean voyages in small canoes as a matter of routine.

I was very interested in what had been found in the city and expressed a desire to visit it. California showed us the library so I plowed through the books - mostly looking at the pictures.

After a while we bade California farewell and headed back to the ship.

.3.

There was still quite a bit of afternoon left so I asked Kryan whether or not we had time to visit the armoury as I had decided I'd better get some leather armour. We were wondering where the armoury was when this small boy came up and asked us if we needed a guide to the best armourers in town. We decided to accept.

Our guide wanted to take us through an alleyway as a short cut but Gar decided against it. He reckoned it was a trap. So our guide took us the long way round. On the way we had to press against the wall as some black, muscly, men carrying a palanquin went by. According to our guide, inside was the Lady Cassandra. All we saw of her was the occasional glimpse of an arm.

Finally we reached the armourers. While I was examining the armour, Gar and Kryan were looking at the weapons. Kryan was especially interested in some of the swords, even though they were too heavy for him to use effectively. Meanwhile Gar was examining some sort of three bladed throwing thing. Finally I settled for some tan coloured soft leathers. They still needed adjustments to fit my female form ('not much demand for armour for women') so I was taken out the back to be measured up. They would be ready later that night so we arranged for them to be delivered to the ship. That lot cost me 200sp.

Kryan was still having fun with a sabre, then a rapier while the armourer attempted to convince him to stick to a shorter sword. I had to duck a couple of times. The armourer reckoned Kryan needed more manual dexterity but Kryan disproved that by producing a flower out of thin air. I put it in my hair.

Finally we left the armourers and headed back to the ship. I got into an argument with Gar and Grendel over something or rather finally calling Gar a silly git in orcish.

Finally we got back. Kryan suggested we go for a stroll along the dock to kill time before dinner. We got to the end of the dock and started heading back. Suddenly we heard a crash and a bucket dropped to the ground in front of us, water pouring out of it. Kryan picked it up. Printed on it was that name of our ship 'The Wandering Star'. Trouble is, we were over 800 metres from it

We picked it up then, arm in arm, we headed back. About halfway back another bucket crashed to the ground. This one was close enough to splatter water all over us. I caught the brunt of it. Again, upon investigation, it proved to be a bucket from our ship. After Kryan used dry cantrips on our clothing, I cast Waterproofings. Then we headed back to the ship.

Once there we reported what had happened to the others. Gar was very suspicious of the catapult but discovered it was still lashed in position. He then concluded that magic had to be involved and started grilling the rest of us. Tussock and Valium had been down in the galley with Ezra which basically left Grendel. He finally admitted doing it with the aid of a teleportation device and claimed that I had called him a stupid git. I apologised, explained it was meant for Gar and I didn't know that Grendel knew orcish. I think the hug convinced him.

My armour arrived just before dinner so I went below to change into it so I could wear it in. It fit very snugly and didn't seem to hamper my movements at all. I even did a cartwheel across the deck.

07/01/93

We got woken up by Tussock throwing a bucket (fortunately empty) into our room. However I definitely want to know how she got past the lock. I was quite sure I locked the door securely last night. Anyway she was under the impression that we were going shopping again and she wanted to come too. I don't remember saying any such thing but hey, why not.

So that was what we did. I reminded everyone that we were scheduled to leave on the 1pm tide

so everyone needed to be back by then. We had decided to head off to Little Davy's Island and see just what was there. The Captain was agreeable to a slight detour.

So Tussock, Kryan and I found ourselves at a rather expensive seamstress. Tussock ordered a complete new outfit, the finest money could buy. Kryan reckoned I should get something really good too - for more formal occasions. However I told him I couldn't really afford it as the wedding and the ship hire had drained most of my finances. So he offered to pay for it. So I finally settled on an elaborate dress with matching shoes etc. Both outfits would take a while to make but would be ready for us to pick up on the return trip.

By the time we got back to the ship, it was nearly time to go. However we discovered, to my dismay, that Valium and Grendel were missing. Gar reckoned they had gone back to see California Smith. Apparently Grendel was practising on seagulls that morning and reckoned he had backfired. I was NOT pleased. Meanwhile Kryan went downstairs and asked not to be disturbed for an hour. I assumed he was purifying.

After an hour, there was still no sign of Grendel and it was getting to the stage that if we didn't leave soon, we'd lose the tide and have to wait another day. Just then a thick fog sprang up around us. Most unusual.

It was finally decided to sail the ship out, but leave my outrigger in its place. It should be safe in the fog. Kryan and I would stay behind to paddle it out to the ship once we found our missing companions. I was a bit dubious about that idea as the outrigger is only really designed for one person. I can squeeze three at a pinch. Four could be a bit too much. I hoped we didn't swamp it. However it was the best idea anyone could come up with.

So we decided to go with it. The Captain was instructed to wait for the last possible moment in case they returned before casting off. Kryan and I hurried through the fog (which had the dockmaster really puzzled) and towards the Adventurer's Club. On the way we saw Valium on the way back. He told us that Grendel was in a curse removal ritual and wouldn't be free for another four hours. Great! Stupid idiot! So much for being nice to Grendel for a while. I told Valium to head back to the ship and stay put.

So with four hours to kill, we windowshopped, then headed off to the Club. By the time we got there, Grendel was just coming out of curse removal. Apparently he had insomnia. I reckoned that one was not worth delaying the ship for and I was going to give him a piece of my mind.

By the time we came out Kryan grabbed him by one ear, I grabbed the other one and we rushed him down to the dock. The fog had dissipated by now. We bundled Grendel into the canoe and paddled off after the ship. We were certainly riding low in the water. Once clear of the dock area, I raised the sail and summoned a mage wind to blow us along. Hopefully the ship had hove-to outside the harbour, waiting for us.

.4.

The canoe was riding rather low in the water and some of it was sloshing in. I handed Grendel a half coconut shell and told him to bail. Meanwhile Kryan was busy gesturing. Soon, another outrigger appeared next to mine and Kryan clambered on board. I was amazed. I didn't think it was possible to sit on an illusion.

Finally we reached the ship. Kryan dispelled his illusion and he and Grendel were hauled on board. I secured lines to the outrigger then, after being helped onboard, helped get the outrigger on board and secure. The Captain reckoned we were a couple of days away from Little Davy's Island so I put up a Mage Wind, then went below to have a bath.

After an hour or so there was a knock on the door and a voice saying that afternoon tea was being served in the Grand Cabin. So I dried and dressed then went to join them. When I got there I discovered Grendel was being attacked by Tussock's parrot. It turned out that he had attempted to mind-control the bird and failed. The bird took exception to this and pecked his nose. Tussock had already stalked off to sulk.

Grendel managed to grab the parrot and prevent it from harming him further. He refused to hand it over to Ezra, who had offered to return it to Tussock - even after Gar hit him a couple of times. Finally we convinced him to give the bird to Ezra, then accompany Ezra to Tussock's cabin.

During the fight, Kryan had attempted to cast a flash of light spell but had backfired, turning his skin bright blue. He decided to go up on deck. After a while he came back down saying that the weather was turning nasty. I went up for a look. Sure enough it looked like a storm brewing.

By dinner time it had reached us. I just stayed put in my cabin, being terrified as the ship tossed and the lightning flashed. I HATE storms!

08/01/93

The day dawned, bright, clear, and calm. I woke up bleary eyed, late that morning. The Captain reckoned that was only a mild one. If that was mild I'd hate to be in a big one. However the storm had blown us in the direction we were going and we should reach the island that afternoon.

Sure enough we spotted the island about mid afternoon. We came in slowly, looking for reef outcroppings that could tear the bottom of the ship. As we rounded the point and approached the area where the X was we spotted a group of natives on the beach. Suddenly they leaped into canoes (5 of them) and began frantically paddling out. By the way they were chanting and waving their weapons I did not think this was a welcoming committee. Their leader looked like a shaman, and was decorated in bones and small skulls. I went below to prepare for combat, including the possibility of having to fight them in the water.

I was just coming back on deck when the shaman made his first move. Suddenly we were all struck with a feeling of fear. I felt wary but some of the sailors ran off in panic. We quickly came to the conclusion that the shaman was a necromancer.

Those that were left quickly retaliated. Gar and Kryan fired firebolts while Grendel wound up his crossbow. Meanwhile the ship's ballista was being brought to bear.

Just then I spotted a fin coursing through the water. I used my enhanced vision to get a better look - and immediately wished I hadn't. It was a zombie shark. Suddenly I felt great fear and next thing I knew I was quivering in the Great Cabin. My semi-sentient quarterstaff was most annoyed about this as it wanted to kill something. I could feel its desire for blood hammering into my mind. Finally it was enough to overcome the fear and I headed back up again.

I had missed the noxious vapours attack but the Wall of Bones was still bisecting the ship. Already

a couple of the canoes had been sunk and many of the sailors were still fighting on. Grendel looked like he was fearful as well. Kryan had set up a pattern of illusionary spikes around the ship to discourage any potential borders.

I was just getting ready to leap off the boat and attack the shark when the necromancer let loose with another mass fear. I found myself in the Grand Cabin again. Gar was attempting to hide, but Kryan had been driven into berserk rage and was throwing everything he had at them. Also Grendel used his teleportation trick to drop a barrel over the necromancer, knocking him out. Well done Grendel!

After ten minutes or so, it was all over. The necromancer was dead and the savages had been either killed or scared off. One sailor had been killed by the shark before the necromancer's death had de-animated it. There were quite a few wounded so I started creating Waters of Healing. I had done one for Kryan and another for Gar and was creating a third one when my entire body went limp. Kryan just caught me. When I realised that I had backfired and paralysed myself I was NOT happy. Valium had to put me to sleep to stop the cursing. Gar also reckoned I needed more practise with the orcish language as I was repeating myself only after a few minutes. Finally the others put me to bed.

.5.

09/01/93

I woke up the next morning and still couldn't move. Kryan came down with breakfast - fresh lobster. Ezra had been fishing early that morning. Kryan stayed a bit to keep me company. He suggested I attempt to purify. He had to be kidding. The first hour was a complete waste of time.

Suddenly we were surrounded by fog. It was even in the cabin. Kryan suggested that I try again, so I did. It must have been the fog that did the trick. A little later on I drifted off to sleep again.

When I woke up, about late that after noon, I stroked some hair from my eyes then suddenly realised what I had done. I could move again! With a shriek of delight, I gave Kryan a hug, then realised how stiff I was. Kryan gave me a back rub.

After a little while I started some agility exercises to loosen up my muscles. I was in the process of attempting to turn myself into a pretzel when the door burst open and Gar, closely followed by Grendel, came into the room demanding to know where the monster was as they had heard a scream. Fortunately for Kryan's piece of mind, I was reasonably covered.

Kryan managed to calm them down and explain that the shriek had been me. Gar just muttered and lowered the axe he had been brandishing around.

Shortly I went up on deck. The fog was still floating around and there had been no sign of the savages. Gar reckoned we had scared them off but they could still be lurking on the island. Fair enough. I wasn't planning to go ashore anyway. The water was much more inviting - and I desperately wanted to go for a swim. Plus there was that X on the map to check out. Also the staff wanted blood - to make up for yesterday I suppose. So I suggested a fishing trip. Ezra thought that was a great idea.

Finally Gar, Kryan, Grendel and myself were in the ship's boat while it was lowered over the side (I wanted to use it as a diving platform). Unfortunately Tussock was feeling rather unwell and

Valium wasn't interested.

Once the boat hit the water, I cast WaterBreathing and Resist Cold on us all and Floatations on those who needed it i.e. Grendel and Gar. Then I divested myself out of my outer garments revealing the two piece and the sash, then unrolled a bundle I had been carrying. The others didn't seem too perturbed as I pulled a mermaid's tail costume on over my legs. Guess they've seen stranger sights on adventures. Then I rolled into the water. The others soon followed.

It was great to be in the water again. There were lots of little fish around the place and soon I was amusing myself by chasing them. Meanwhile the others had found more lobsters and were throwing them into the boat. I was on the lookout for shark but the only large fish around was barracuda.

Grendel swam over a little later on and started waving his hands around. To my delight, I discovered that he knew sign language (not many adventurers do). In fact he knew it better than I did. His message was to start proceeding towards where the X was. So I swam off. Because of the tail I was soon outdistancing them.

Soon I saw a dark shape on the bottom. I was about to get closer when I suddenly realised I was about to swim into a cluster of jellyfish. Not a nice idea. So I turned around to warn the others.

Once we met up we all surfaced to plan. Kryan reckoned we should do something about dinner first before continuing. So we cooked up this plan to catch barracuda by the other three heading them towards me while I was using my Water Form as camouflage. So that was what we did. I managed to spear one while the rest scattered. Gar managed to get another one. They were fair sized too. Ezra will be pleased.

We headed back to the ship. Some of the sailors had already got the lobsters on board. Someone remembered that Tussock's porthole was near the waterline so we went over to see if she was all right. Ezra was intending to break into her cabin if necessary and check up on her (he was a Healer). As we watched through the porthole Ezra did just that. It looked like she was asleep. Also I noticed that her parrot was back in her cabin. It must have got back safely.

Ezra did whatever Healers did, and pronounced that she had been suffering from hypothermia and some effects of the storm. We decided to wait to see if Tussock wanted to join us to investigate the X.

Shortly she came on deck. It took a little bit of persuasion but soon we were helping her into the boat. Anyway we got our catch on board the ship (Ezra was delighted), then decided to go and investigate the X. Kryan and I started to row but one of the sailors reckoned we were doing it wrong. Tussock's idea of a swimming costume was nothing at all - much to Kryan's annoyance and my amusement. Kryan grabbed my cloak and wrapped Tussock in it. Tussock went to the rear of the boat and dangled her feet in the water. I decided to do the same with my tail.

Soon we were over the spot and entered the water. Tussock stood up in the boat, held her nose and jumped - nearly sending the boat over. Soon we were at the bottom - about fifty feet down. No sign of jellyfish. What we did find was a sunken ship. It was covered with weeds and other things. Kryan spotted something on the bottom so he went and had a look. It turned out to be the figurine of a mermaid. I saw the place where it had been and decided to pose in that spot. Kryan

thought the sight was rather amusing.

It was then I noticed that Tussock was no longer with us. Instead she was on the bottom, surrounded by little fish, and trying to strike at them with her rapier. Somehow she managed to hit one then swam up to the surface with her 'prize'. I'm really beginning to wonder about that hobbit.

I then joined Grendel and Gar who were exploring the decks. I decided to go looking for the Captain's cabin but all I found was a moray eel. I cautioned Grendel to stay clear as they're harmless unless provoked.

Soon we had searched one end of the ship and found nothing that even looked like treasure. What we did find was a hole, leading to the lower sections. Unfortunately there was something in there - something rather large. We decided to surface to discuss our next move.

It was finally decided that I should have a 'chat' to the moray. So I did. It was very friendly - especially when I fed it and patted it. Anyway it reckoned the hold was inhabited by a very nasty monster. Also there were some "shiny rocks" in there. I reported that to the others who immediately jumped to the conclusion that they were rather large gems.

So we went down to persuade the 'monster' to allow us to retrieve them. Uh huh! No way! It turned out to be a rather large squid or a small kraken who reckoned that the whole area was its domain and no way were we going to get what it had. Suddenly I felt mana impact.

We headed back to the ship. Gar reckoned we didn't have much chance of fighting the creature in the water so we had to get it out. Once we got back, we persuaded the captain to move the ship over the wreck, then to use harpoons to attempt to break it up.

As the sailors attempted to do so, a tentacle grasped the side of the ship, quickly followed by a second, then a third. Soon the kraken had crawled part-way up the side and was using its tentacles to sweep the deck. A few sailors got knocked over.

We let fly with every missile weapon we had. Gar reckoned it was too dangerous to get too close. He found out when one tentacle lashed out and sent him spinning over the deck. I used all my Water Bolts from the staff, Gar was firing firebolts while Grendel was having a go with a crossbow - Gar's I think considering the size. He scored some good hits too,

My staff wanted blood so I charged in nimbly evading a tentacle. Gar wasn't so lucky. He ended up stunned on the deck. Meanwhile Kryan had put up a Wall of Bones using an invested item. When the kraken touched it, it went crazy. I decided discretion was the better part of valour and got out of the way.

Finally the kraken decided it had enough and began to retreat over the side. I didn't want to let it get back to its lair so I charged it. As it hit the water, I leaped after it, and plunged the staff deep into it. After thrashing around a bit, it was still. I felt very pleased with myself.

Just then the end of a rope began flicking nearby. It was Kryan. The way he was flicking it indicated he wanted me back on board RIGHT NOW! So I grabbed it and was hauled out of the water. Once on the ship I had to endure an earbashing from both Kryan and Gar about putting

myself at risk. Oh well. Sometimes a girl has to do what a girl has to do.

.6.

It was close to sunset by now but there was probably still enough light to have a quick look to see if there is any treasure in the wreck. I gave Gar another Waters of Healing then he put a firelight at the end of his spear. Tussock refused to come with us. Apparently she hates water with a vengeance. Boy is she on the wrong holiday. Valium decided to come but rather reluctantly.

We swam down. I decided not to use the tail this time as I didn't want to get too far away. Instead I stuck close to Gar - and the light. Soon we found the ship. Inside, Gar spotted the remains of a skeleton draped over a brass bound chest. There was a ring on one of the finger bones. Meanwhile Kryan found a cutlass lying around and tried to hide it - rather ineffectually.

The bottom part of the ship was full of bones drifting about and some manacles were attached to the walls. Guess this was a slave ship. There was nothing of interest down here.

Gar didn't want to move the chest as he reckoned it was warded. Fair enough. I wasn't going to touch it. Instead we decided to wait until Grendel had recovered enough fatigue to teleport it back to the ship. So with just the ring - and an oddly shaped fire elemental Kryan had conjured up - we went to the surface. I disbelieved the fire elemental, especially after what Flamis had said about water and fire magic. I reckoned he had the sword in it. It was confirmed when the 'fire elemental' clattered when he threw it in the bottom of the jolly boat.

10/01/93

Another foggy morning. Ezra served up something really odd for breakfast. A combination of fish and rice. I didn't like it, especially the rice. Neither did Tussock. She reckoned they reminded her of maggots. That was it. I had to make a dash for the rail. For some reason I wasn't feeling well. Kryan helped me back inside and to a chair.

When I felt a bit better, I attempted to cast the necessary Water Breathings but for some strange reason I couldn't get the spell to work. Finally I managed to succeed on myself, Kryan, Gar and Grendel.

We rowed out to where the ship was. On the way out we spotted some fins cutting the water. As the creatures came closer I could see they were porpoises. However Gar and Kryan decided they were sharks and took up offensive positions. I quickly cast a Speak to Animals and warned them off. It was a bit of a shame though. They only wanted to play. I then berated the others and tried to explain the difference between a shark and a dolphin.

Finally we went down to the wreck. The moray eel was still there so I produced some food from somewhere (Kryan later wondered where I find room to put things in my swimsuit) and fed it. I asked it whether or not anything had moved in to take over where the kraken was. It proudly announced that it had.

Kryan made signs that he wanted to pat it as well so I moved aside. He started petting it then, to my horror, grabbed it just behind the head and yanked it out of its hole. At the same time Gar stabbed it with his dagger. I couldn't bear to watch so I swam off over the ship and into a bed of kelp where I curled up for a good cry.

It was a few minutes later that Kryan found me. I tried to hit him but he managed to grab my wrist and pull me towards him. I just clung on, feeling very depressed, as he headed for the surface. Once there I was literally poured into the boat.

When I saw Gar, I just saw red and went for him, managing to score a good hit in the eye. He tried to strike back but I dodged. I was going to try again but Kryan got between us, yelling at us to stop.

Finally we put our fists down and I snarled something at him in orcish. I think I got a word or two wrong as Gar reckoned I just challenged him to an axe duel. I was so mad at him I probably would have gone through with it even though I was meaning barehanded combat. Kryan made me retract the challenge and insisted we apologise to each other. We even shook on it.

It turned out that they thought that the moray was controlling me. Stupid idiots! Don't they think I know what I'm doing? In my own element? I've been interacting with sea creatures before I could walk and I used to befriend morays in the islands. Grrr!

When we got back I discovered that Grendel had managed to get the chest on board. There was no point in hanging around so I asked the Captain to set sail for the islands. However, one major problem. He didn't have any charts either.

Tussock reckoned that she had got a good look at California's map at Novadom to draw a good likeness but we didn't sort of trust it when she described the place as looking like a plate of hamburger and chips - even though it looked reasonably accurate to me. So it was finally decided to return to Novadom. I set up a Mage Wind then went below to get Ezra to tend my sore wrist. I don't think I'll be doing any troubadour practise for a while.

After a short while, Tussock had the chest open, and got caught by a needle trap as well. Inside we discovered some bags of coin, a small box, and a copper tube. Valium used telekinesis to open the box. Inside was a round glass disk with a loop of fine chain attached to it - some sort of pendant. We all had a look through it but it didn't seem to do anything unusual. Kryan and Tussock then proceeded to open the copper tube by grabbing an end each and twisting in opposite directions. The tube popped open and Tussock ended in an undignified heap on the floor. A bundle of papers scattered all over the floor. They turned out to be slaver records. Tussock reckoned they'd be worth money - to the right people.

I skipped dinner that evening. Ezra was serving up moray.

With a combination of my Mage Winds and Tussock's Wind Whistle, we made it back to Novadom in two days. We arrived in the middle of the night.

12/01/93

Just after dawn, Tussock, Gar and Kryan headed off for the Adventurer's Society. I suggested they take some of the stuff we found for California Smith to look at. Valium put Grendel to sleep to make sure he didn't wander off.

It wasn't until after lunch that they got back. Tussock had managed to prepare an accurate copy of their map which the Captain reckoned would do. Also they discovered that the glass object was a device that detected whether an object was magically warded, cursed or trapped. Great! Just

what I always wanted. A ward detector. Kryan made a show of presenting it to me and putting it around my neck.

There hadn't been time to divinate the other items but California had managed to determine that the sword had preservation magic on it, a shell disk with a merman carved on it (that Kryan had found earlier) also had some sort of preservation magic, and the ring was non-magical. Someone reckoned the stone matched Tussock's eyes so she was given it.

18/01/93

It was six days later and we were making good time, owing to magically enhanced winds. Kryan was up on deck early and saw the Captain fiddling with the sextant. He reckoned that we would be crossing the equator shortly after lunch. Kryan went below to get his sextant and charts to compare notes.

That morning I was trying to convince the others that the Equator is a black line crossing the ocean that you have to lift up and over a canoe but I don't think they believed me.

Shortly afterwards we were notified that there would be a ceremony and all those that had not crossed the line before had to take part. It involved being ceremonially dunked in the sea as an offering to King Neptune. I admitted I had crossed the line before but that had been while stormtossed in a canoe. Besides the ceremony sounded like fun. Plus I had an idea to spice it up a bit. I guess I wasn't the only one as Valium asked for a WaterBreathing shortly afterwards.

Grendel had already crossed the line so he was exempt. Also two of the sailors were also to be ritually dunked. We soon found out we had to 'walk the plank' and jump into the sea. The jolly boat would be standing by to pick us up. Even better. I spent the rest of the morning rehearsing.

Just after lunch the ship was halted. I came up on deck wrapped up in my cloak. Kryan was wearing his swimming shorts and some red boots.

A few minutes later this strange figure, carrying a trident, and covered in seaweed came out on deck. It turned out to be the Captain in costume. The first mate introduced him as King Neptune then gave a short speech about the King of the Sea and how all who sail upon the sea need to pay homage.

'King Neptune' then welcomed us all to his domain then invited the first initiate to step forward. Valium did so. He stepped to the end of the plank, jumped into the water - and didn't come up. The sailors shrugged. I guess they figured out what he was doing - hovering several feet below the water.

Gar was next. Two of the sailors were dressed up as King Neptune's attendants and were armed with tridents. Gar seemed reluctant to get on the plank so they poked at him. Gar had decided that if he was going in, then he'll take at least one of them with him. So he grabbed at a trident and pulled a surprised sailor over the side with him. The rest of the crew thought that was hilarious.

I stepped up next. First thing I did was to drop the cloak revealing myself clad in nothing but my two piece swimsuit. I could see some of the sailors giving me appreciative looks. Kryan was looking a little shocked but I guess he figured I knew what I was doing. Then I produced a short length of rope and proceeded to wind it around my wrists while my hands were behind my back.

Kryan completed the job of tying my wrists. So with my hands bound securely behind my back, I stepped on to the plank, wriggled my wrists to give the impression they were secure then jumped. Once I hit the water I began to work my way loose. After a couple of minutes of squirming I was free.

I quickly checked up on Valium then waited a couple more minutes, spending the time waving and pulling funny faces at him before swimming to the surface. I got a round of applause when I popped up and waved one hand with the rope in it.

I swam over to the jolly boat but told the sailors in it I would prefer to wait in the water, in case something went wrong. I also reassured them that Valium was okay.

Next over was Kryan. To everyone's amazement - including mine -he stepped off the plank, walked down what must have been invisible stairs, touched the water, then walked up again. He got a bigger round of applause than what I did. Oh well. He is a higher ranked troubadour. He later explained he had cast a tactile only illusion of steps and that those boots allowed him to walk on illusions. Neat trick.

Next was supposed to be Tussock but she refused, reckoning she had done it before. So Gar picked her up and threw her in - completely unprepared. As far as I'm concerned that's a definite nomination for Stupidest Adventurer if not endangering the life of another party member. I dived after her as she sank. Valium wasn't far away either.

Soon I caught up and put a Water Breathing on her. It didn't work! Uh oh! I must have backfired as that spell either works or something odd happens. I didn't feel any different so I put up another one which worked. Oh well. If anything odd happened I guess I'll find out if it's important. Knowing my record with backfires it's probably Insomnia.

Soon Valium and I had an unconscious Tussock back on the surface and into the jollyboat. As soon as she was on board ship she stalked off into her cabin and refused to come out. By now the two sailors had jumped.

21/01/93

Well it wasn't insomnia. In fact I still don't know what it was. Guess it's not important then.

I had to cast all the wind spells, since the ceremony, as Tussock was still refusing to come out. In fact she was refusing to speak with anyone and was having her meals brought to her cabin. If she wants to sulk, let her. Darned if she's going to ruin my holiday.

About mid morning we sighted an island that wasn't on any of the charts. Odd that, but not unusual. It had a volcanic peak on it. Maybe this will snap Tussock out of it. She did want to go mountain climbing. Also we needed fresh meat and water.

However as we approached the island I felt a feeling of dread. This island seemed strangely familiar somehow.

.7.

We had picked up a pod of dolphins on the way here (the same ones that were at Little Davy's Island) so I got them to guide us into the lagoon. The sailors and Captain were quite happy but

Gar and Kryan were still suspicious.

While we sailed in, Kryan and I went down to tell Tussock about the island and mountain. Without a word, she flung the door open, marched up in the deck and sat in the jolly boat with arms folded. The sailors were about to lower it in the water to check the path ahead.

Kryan also started using his magical boots to walk along an illusional path. to check the path ahead. We could see his path, it looked like a castle wall, complete with ballista and turrets.

Suddenly, while attempting to reboard the ship, he slipped and fell into the water. Even though I was wearing a long, white, cotton dress at the moment, I went in after him. To save time I asked a dolphin to give me a lift. However, by the time I got there, Kryan had cast another illusionary path and had climbed on it. He was getting rather ribbed by the crew as well. Kryan reckoned that I looked better swimming in this dress than in my swimsuit. Granted it looks good flowing in the water but it gets a bit clammy out of it. While he climbed back on board the ship, I rode the dolphin back and got hauled up. Then I went below and got out of my wet clothes.

When I got back up, we had dropped anchor. Tussock was still in the jolly boat, waiting to go ashore. The captain was sending a landing party ashore to gather fresh water and fresh food. The rest of the party decided to join Tussock on a mountain climb. However I decided not to go as I still felt nervous about that island. It reminded me of a legend of an island where people went - and never came back. So I decided to go a swim, to play with the dolphins and hunt for some pearl bearing oysters. Just in case, I lent Kryan the ward detecting pendant, Once they were ready they went out in the jolly boat. I escorted them most of the way with the outrigger.

Once the others got ashore, Tussock led them towards the centre of the island. Kryan nearly got hit on the head by a falling coconut. Meanwhile I headed away from the beach and the ship, while escorted by a bunch of happy dolphins. Once I found a promising spot, I anchored the canoe, put the tail on, then rolled into the water.

A short while later the landing party found a small pool, at the bottom of a waterfall, that had a gold statue in it. Tussock tried to form some ice around the statue to lift it up but the ice wouldn't form. Ice that was created above the pool melted instantly as soon as it touched the water. Tussock talked to a parrot and was told that the pool was death. They noticed that the statue was a fully detailed human male, dressed only in a pareu.

Kryan examined the pool through the pendant and discovered that the water was magically cursed. After the water left the pool, the curse dissipated. While Grendel went hunting for a lizard, Tussock skipped stones into the pool. Nothing happened to them.

When Grendel returned with the lizard he managed to control it into immobility. Gar then tied a string to it and dropped it into the pool. The lizard turned to gold. The gold even started creeping up the string.

Once they got it out, with everyone's help, they discovered that the lizard was solid gold (it was certainly heavy enough) and, once it had been dried, there was no curse on it. There was no effect when a leaf touched the lizard, or even when Tussock touched it. Grendel ended up carrying it up the hill in his backpack. Gar refused to.

After a while, they had passed the tree line and the going was getting steeper and rougher. Loose scoria rock impeded their progress. After several bad slips, Gar and Valium decided to give up and wait. The others continued and soon reached the summit.

Tussock felt GOOD. She then put up a 30 knot wind. After an hour, Kryan created a fog. Down below Gar thought it was smoke so he and Valium decided to vacate the area rather quickly - in case this was the sort of mountain that explodes and eats people.

After a while Tussock created a cushion of air and they slid down to the ship. She dropped off Kryan and Grendel then went sailing on it.

Kryan had joined me in the water and a little later on we spotted Gar and Valium on the beach so we rode a dolphin each to the outrigger and rowed in. Gar mentioned the pool. On the way back they had passed a stone statue with some eldritch runes carved in it. I reckoned they could be of religious significance and suggested drawing a copy of them as our tribal shaman might know what they are. Also I was feeling thirsty so I found a coconut, knocked the top off, and had the best tasting coconut milk I have had in ages. Kryan tried some but the others wouldn't. Then we rowed back to the ship (I wanted to get changed into my armour) and fetched Tussock and Grendel.

Once back on the beach we trekked inland, found the statue - which looked something like one of the old gods and copied down the runes. I reckoned they were some sort of warning about danger and death. When Gar mentioned about the gold lizard and the pool, I got very worried in case we were going to suffer some sort of divine retribution. I recommended leaving the area - quickly.

Back on the beach, I spotted a reasonably large conch shell lying in a pool. Perfect.

Once aboard the ship we set sail. I had managed to find some pearls and the captain reckoned I had enough there to pay for the ship hire. Great. That's one less worry. The lizard ended up in Kryan's chest, after everything else was taken out of it, and the chest securely fastened. The rest of the day I spent sleeping.

28/07/93

One of the sailors managed to carve a suitable hole in the end of the conch so that it could be blown through. Kryan had some previous experience with wind instruments so he practised on it. After a while he managed to get a reasonable sound out of it. Also that morning we spotted a pillar of smoke to the south. I suspected that was coming from Kalua Kona, an island with two active volcanos and sacred to Pele.

Later on we went down to our cabin. Suddenly we were aware of a scrabbling sound, and it was coming from inside the chest. After a while it stopped. Grendel was fetched but he reckoned he couldn't detect anything in it.

29/02/93

About lunch time I spotted a familiar looking peak on the horizon - a very familiar one. As we got closer it got more and more familiar as the central volcano of Atui - Maungatake. Soon I could make out the atoll surrounding it and recognised it as being home.

It didn't take long before we reached the outermost reef and sailed around before beginning our approach towards the largest of the sandy islands in the atoll, Takatea, where the home village of Aumatangi is. I told Kryan to blow the conch. Twice he blew it then an answering note sounded. Before long a group of people were gathering on the beach and a bunch of canoes were launched. I was overjoyed when I recognised my eldest brother, Tuamuri, in the lead canoe, occupying the position of honour.

Soon we were at anchor in the lagoon. The jolly boat and outrigger were launched and we went ashore. As we stepped on to the sand the line of warriors began chanting a haka. Then one stepped forward and placed something on the sand, stepped back and brandished his taiaha.

I had already instructed Kryan about the proper protocol, so without hesitation, he went and picked the feathered emblem up. At that point the chief, Mariri Arika, stepped down and began chanting a welcome as we advanced up the beach.

There was quite a welcome and pressing of noses, after which we were led to the Council hut. There we explained to Mariri that Kryan and I had come home to be married.

However a wedding couldn't be arranged immediately. There was a current problem with the Followers of Pele, who were demanding tribute otherwise they would awaken Pele and destroy the island by erupting Maungatake. Already they had attacked once, leaving devastation. The tribes were still recovering. Gar immediately began working out defence plans for another attack.

Mariri told us that there was one way of breaking Pele's power and put the goddess to sleep. That was to find a certain amulet and throw it into the volcano. Tussock was overjoyed as she had always wanted to do something like that. The first thing we had to do was to find the Sage of the Sea.

.8.

While the others went for a wander in the village, I went to find my family. I was soon having a joyous reunion with my mother, Aketaire, my father, Hemi Kupe (formerly John Cooper, an ex-Sanctuary pirate), my brothers, Tuamuri and Kana, and my younger sister, Inutoto. Naturally they wanted to know whether Kryan was a brave and strong warrior. I told them that he has his own abilities which make him as powerful as any warrior.

I was told that the pearl beds were stripped owing to the recent storms and the demands of the Pele people. So Inutoto and I went to have a look. On the way down to the canoe, we noticed Tussock sitting on the beach surrounded by the local children. Every time one went close she'd tell it to 'bug off'. The children thought it was highly amusing.

Inutoto was right, in fact it was worse. Those beds would take a while to recover. I had a chat to a passing dolphin and he offered to see if the pod could find a new set of beds otherwise we'd have nothing to trade for goods from the mainland. I also asked them to find the Sage of the Sea.

When we got back, Tussock was amusing herself making sandcastles. The others were discussing strategies with Chief Mariri. Gar was attempting to heal the burnt warriors from the last attack. He managed to do so but in the process he backfired and was instantly surrounded by hundreds of dragonflies. Somehow he must have summoned just about all of them on the atoll. Grendel was

using his wand of insect control to pick them off one by one, but Kryan went for the mass kill - with an illusionary fireball. The few that was left, Gar took care of with pyrogenesis.

Afterwards, Gar went back to the ship and returned with a large box containing his weapons, a battleaxe, great axe, a large crossbow, two spears and a scimitar. The warriors were impressed.

The chief had ordered festivities to mark our arrival so the women started preparing the umu - earth oven. Meanwhile a group of warriors were preparing to go pig hunting. We offered to join them. I changed into leathers and got the quarterstaff. Soon three warriors accompanied us into the bush.

After half an hour of walking we flushed out two boar. Tussock and I stepped to the sides, her to the right and me to the left as the boars charged. One boar went for Tussock and she got trampled. I was able to get in a good shot with the spearpoint from the staff. Gar was also pitching in as were the warriors. One boar died. Another keeled over and started snoring. Grendel and Valium argued about who should get the credit since both their spells worked. After giving some Waters of Healing to Tussock we headed back for camp. For some reason Tussock drank some of the boar's blood while Kryan finished off the other boar.

Hunting was thirsty work so I expressed a desire for a coconut. Kryan was only too happy to oblige and did something that caused the tree to fall over. It just missed him. I then told him that's the sort of thing that happens if you don't say the proper prayer to Tane - God of the Forest. Kryan then used one of his illusionary spears to shatter the coconut. I decided to use a more traditional approach then shared the coconut around. The boars were carted off to the village.

When we got back to the village beach, Tussock decided she was going to have a go at climbing a palm. It was difficult work - even for her but she managed it. Kryan then conjured up an illusionary spiral staircase and walked up another one. Meanwhile I decided to find Inutoto and get some dance practise. (She's a lot better than I am)

After a while Tussock was berating a seagull for pinching the palm crab she had caught so Grendel decided to control it. That got Tussock in a huff again and she stalked off.

The menfolk were getting ready for the nights festivities by getting attired in ceremonial grass skirts. Kryan reckoned they looked too revealing so he conjured his own. Meanwhile Valium and Gar were dragged into the mens hut to be suitably attired.

Kryan went looking for me and found me in the family hut. I had also changed into ceremonial costume i.e. grass skirt, coconut bra, leafy bracelets and anklets, a circlet of leaves and a necklace of flowers as well as the orchid behind one ear. He reckoned I looked too revealing and hexed me with another grass skirt illusion. Unfortunately he got it wrong and the 'skirt' started behaving as if it had a mind of its own. He was looking rather fatigued by now but was able to dispel it - before I got too mad with him for stuffing up my premiere.

The dancing preceded dinner. Grendel and Kryan did very well. There was still no sign of Tussock, even when the umu was opened and the smell of cooked food filled the air. Oh well. I decided to put some aside for her.

After dinner, and the kava ceremony, we were startled to notice that a hut had caught on fire. We

were under attack by the Pele warriors. While our warriors rushed to get their spears, I headed to the family hut to get the quarterstaff and sash. As I got the hut, another enemy grenado set a corner of it on fire. Other huts were also starting to burn.

I managed to use a bolt to put the immediate fire out but none of the other bolts succeeded in activating. I even felt pain when triggering one of them. Even the geyser stream wouldn't work.

The attackers had been using hit and run tactics so, after throwing granados, they charged back into the bush. Valium headed off after them. The rest of us got busy and put the fires out. We were able to save all the huts bar one.

Kryan then raced off while Grendel and I launched my canoe in an attempt to cut the attackers off - even though it was dark.

.9.

On the way out, something buzzed the canoe. Grendel was about to try and shoot it down but I recognised it as Kryan with shadowwings. He wanted us to follow him to the beach. As I did so, I thought I could hear a faint call for help - or was it the wind.

When we got there, we definitely heard someone yelling. Kryan was being ultra-cautious, in case, but we soon ascertained it was Valium. He had managed to paralyse himself. So while Grendel and Kryan walked back, Valium was placed in the canoe. On the way back I spotted the drifting canoe with the dead Pele warriors in it and decided to take it under tow. Maybe our shaman, Ona Kaikino, could talk to their spirits.

By the time we got back it was all over. I got some help to take Valium up to the shaman's hut. Fortunately he was still up. When he saw Valium, and I explained what had happened he reckoned Valium was too young to use magic. We left him with Ona.

30/01/93

I woke up early and assisted with the usual chores. Later on I headed for the beach. Kryan joined me there and, together, we launched the canoe to go fishing. Some dolphins turned up and wanted to play however Kryan wanted to meditate for a while. So I slipped over the side and swam off with the dolphins, after warning them to leave Kryan alone.

I managed to ask them whether or not they had managed to find the Sage of the Sea. They think they know where she is but we would have to go to her. I told them that we should be ready to leave about lunch time.

After an hour of cavorting in the water, I was suddenly surprised when a fog descended. Very unusual. The dolphins didn't believe it and, after a minute, neither did I. I decided to head back in. Kryan was looking pleased with himself - again.

The fog was blanketing half the village and half of the villagers were attempting to convince the other half that the fog wasn't really there. Then I found Kryan and Gar telling Mariri that the fog was caused by a taniwha. What utter rubbish. There hasn't been one around here for ages. What are they trying to do? Scare everyone? As if we don't have enough problems already.

Ona was still attempting to remove the curse on Valium so I went and told the dolphins that we probably wouldn't be leaving till tomorrow morning. First we had to find Tussock.

After a few hours, Valium was cured. Outside the shaman's hut, he attempted to cast a Locate. It failed. The second one created a small cloud over his head which rained on him. Ona commented that Valium had been blessed by Tangaroa.

Finally he got the Locate working and we followed Valium until we reached the base of a tall palm. According to the Locate, Tussock was up there. Gar asked her to come down or be chopped down. Tussock refused so Gar started swinging his axe, causing the palm tree to sway violently. Tussock decided to come down. She didn't look very well so Valium used his Healer empathy and cured the infection she had picked up. I wonder what she had been eating?

When we got back Ona invited us to come to the marae (the sacred area) and watch as he spoke to the dead. However we were not to cross into the stone circle where the dead bodies had been put. After some questioning, we found out that the Pelians were led by an Earth mage and a Fire mage, who had together revived forbidden rituals. They were well guarded by many warriors and could usually be found in the stone temple of Pele located halfway up Malua Loa on the island of Kalua Kona. It was quite conceivable that they would now be wanting utu (revenge) for the deaths of their warriors too. Fair enough. We wanted utu too.

We planned our strategy. A full frontal assault would be suicide but Gar reckoned we should sneak in and kill the two mages. However we would want to borrow some warriors for a diversion. Ona replied that there could be enough volunteers and warriors from the other two villages would also help, since they were also having problems. A full council of the united tribes was going to be held that night.

As the sun neared the horizon, two large canoes arrived. While the chiefs talked we met with Ona and the other two shaman. One was a woman decorated with a glittery shell necklace, across her otherwise bare breasts, and equally as iridescent shells around the top of her grass skirt. The other shaman was decorated with wooden disks. We figured she was a Wicca and he was Rune. Also we noticed that the woman was carrying a lizard.

I translated for the others. Basically Gar's plan had been agreed to and the volunteers from the other tribes had come in the canoe. If it was possible to remove the influence of the two mages then it would be possible to rehabilitate the rest of the followers. They were mainly dissatisfied warriors wanting recognition. The two fetishes we had found, she identified as Luck and Resist Fear. She then looked at me and said "Tangaroa may be calling you young one, but you aren't yet ready." Huh? What? The others wanted to know what she said but I told them it was personal. We were then given the blessing of Tangaroa (a three month Lesser).

31/01/93

Just after midnight, Tussock shook me awake. Standing in the doorway was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. She was completely naked and I could not tell what was illuminating her. Also she smelt of the sea. For some reason I felt at peace with this individual.

She introduced herself as Itimanuka, the Sage of the Sea. I got quite a shock from that but recovered quickly. In fact I was feeling very honoured. I explained the situation and was told that the amulet was at the merfolk city, some 3-400 miles to the west. Only the eldest daughter of the

merking knew where it was. She must have been talking to the others simultaneously as she suddenly said that Gar had requested assistance in the form of some Waters of Strength, a spell which I had intended to learn but had not yet done so. Itimanuka looked strangely at me and I swiftly became aware that I did know the spell. She had given it to me, at Rank 6, for the duration of the mission. I thanked her. She then said 'I would have you for mine own, child, but you must study. Learn of the sea'. She then disappeared. I think I'm going to have to take up philosophy even though I wasn't too keen on the idea of going over dry tomes.

That morning, over breakfast, we compared notes. Grendel looked like he had a severe case of infatuation, much like I had when I first met Cystennin. The rest had just been mildly awestruck. Gar had been given the same information as I had. Kryan nearly choked when I asked what he thought of me being pacted to Itimanuka. I then left to pray to Tangaroa and Itimanuka as well as leaving gifts of flowers.

Soon, with some volunteer warriors aboard (including my brother Tuamuri), and a war canoe, we set off. Tussock was about to cast a spell to summon the wind when we felt the ship lift as we suddenly picked up speed. Looking below, we realised we were being pushed along by a rather large wave. I wanted to get my surfboard and ride the wave but Gar wouldn't let me.

A little later on I decided to see just how good the Waters of Strength was so I tried making some. The first attempt didn't work but the second looked right, so I asked Kryan to drink some then armwrestle Gar. Kryan managed to win.

.10.

Finally we coasted to a stop, just after dusk. Soon, a party of three mermen, armed with tridents appeared. Their leader, a handsome chap by the name of Hudageron, wanted to know what we were doing here and if we were the ones that they had been told to expect. Fortunately I knew the language (a bit) and explained our reasons. He told us to follow him down to their city to see King Kierl. So I cast Waterbreathing on the party (except Tussock), waterproofing on Kryan, then we swam down to see the King. I decided not to wear the tail - just in case they took offense. Instead, for a change, I wore the light, white cotton dress - suitably waterproofed (now why didn't I think of that earlier).

We swam down to an area that looked like a sunken atoll. It turned out to house a very large mer-community of over a hundred inhabitants. Hudageron led us towards a structure that looked like it was made from white stone. Coral rock I presume. Two guards were at the entrance. When we approached we were challenged but Hudageron answered the challenge and we were allowed to pass.

We swam down a corridor, past more guards, then into an open area. At the far end, the King, wearing a circlet and holding a ceremonial trident, was seated on a semicircular shelf. I attempted to sink to the floor and curtsy. The rest made appropriate gestures of respect.

Because of some magical effect, we were able to speak, despite the effects of the WaterBreathing. The King knew the common tongue so we let Kryan do the talking. The King told us that we had been expected and may be able to help them rescue the merprincess Annelsie, his eldest daughter. She was kidnapped by the worshippers of Pele, about seven days ago. He wasn't sure of their intent but he feared that his daughter was to be sacrificed as part of a ritual.

We agreed to help and Kryan mentioned the amulet and asked if the King knew where it was. Unfortunately, the knowledge was passed from eldest daughter to eldest daughter. This meant we had to rescue the princess before we could get the amulet to throw in the volcano to put Pele to sleep. Gar muttered something about wanting to get the Pelians for spoiling his holiday.

Before we left, King Kierl mentioned a reward if we were successful and that he would help us get to Kalua Kona quickly. We were escorted back to the ship. Once aboard, another wave started up and we were rapidly propelled towards the Pele's island.

We had a council of war. Kryan requested that we started acting like a Guild co-ordinated team. We came to the conclusion that the merprincess would be held in the mountain temple, so while Kryan, Tussock, and Valium would sneak in Unseen to rescue her, the rest of us - along with the warriors would provide a diversion, I was also asked to provide 12 Waters of Healing and 2 Waters of Strength. Before going to bed, I managed to do four Healings. Meanwhile Gar was using the kitchen fire to give us all Protections from Magical Fires. I also checked my weapons and discovered that the staff was fully charged again, even though I had drained it two days ago. Usually it took a week. I suspected Itimanuka's influence and told Kryan so.

01/02/93

I got up early, managed to make six more Healings before feeling too tired to do any more. As dawn broke the cabin boy came in to report that they could see the island ahead. It was erupting and they could see lights on it. I requested that our running lights be doused.

Soon we could see a double cone island. One of the volcanos was active. Two streams of lava was flowing down the side, with the temple in the middle. Clouds of steam was pouring up where the lava met the sea. We could also see a village nestled near the shore. Little lights were moving from the village to the temple.

Finally we stopped a mile out, with the rising sun behind us. We had a hot breakfast then I went over the side and created a Waters of Strength. Kryan requested that I save the rest of my energy to power the staff.

After the warriors did a haka, we all boarded the war canoe and paddled to shore. Once there, Valium made us all Unseen and we followed the warriors up the scoria trail to the temple. When we got closer we could see it was a pyramidal shaped stone building with a large fire on top. Two warriors were standing by the main doors, one on each side.

Part of the plan was for Tussock to create a storm by backfiring her airy spirit ritual, which she reckoned had a good chance of happening. But it didn't this time and she did create the airy spirit. Oh well. It might come in useful.

Tussock, followed by Valium, went up to the large double doors and they automatically opened. The warriors looked startled as the doors seemed to open and close for no reason. Meanwhile I came to the conclusion that, if they were keeping the merprincess alive, she would had to be kept in water. So I used my dowsing talent and managed to locate water somewhere under the temple. I also considered looking around the temple for another entrance. Somehow I reckoned using the main entrance was a big mistake.

Soon they came out. Tussock reported there was a corridor, beyond which was a large room

supported by four pillars. Exits were in each of the other three walls. A large fire was burning in the centre and a statue of Pele was on the back wall. She had created a thirty knot wind inside. Great. Now they know something is up. The discrete approach was becoming less and less possible.

Kryan went visible and entered, trying to frighten them by convincing them he was a powerful magician and that Pele had no power to harm him. He was using a Projected Image to hassle them. Gar got the warriors to follow then we took the rear. Tussock dispelled the wind.

The opposition had vacated the large room by the time we entered. Suddenly grenados are being thrown from the side doors, which are quickly shut again. We could see glimpses that told us there were three warriors on the other side of the door.

Tussock was hit by a grenado and she had to rapidly remove the burning sticky liquid. Since it wasn't magical fire, it hurt her - a lot. Kryan created illusionary warriors to confuse the defenders some more. Also someone bumped into Tussock causing her to appear. I was beginning to feel this wasn't going to work.

.11.

We decided to valiantly retreat. Once outside, Valium and Kryan headed to the top of the pyramid, while the rest of us searched around the sides. Shortly Tussock and I spotted a concealed entrance along the left hand side, near the back. When the other two came back down, Kryan examined the area around the entrance with the monocle and spotted something odd about an eye in one of the carvings. It was warded. Gar put a counterspell on the ward then Kryan pressed the button. The door slid open. The corridor beyond smelt of something Gar called brimstone. My nose wrinkled in distaste.

We carried down the corridor and encountered another door. There was a clear spot at eye level and it was possible to look through it. On the other side was a room with a circular Pele glyph on one wall. It too was warded. Gar put a counterspell over it and Kryan put an illusion over it as not to alarm the island warriors following us.

We went into the room. Using the pendant, Kryan spotted another ward indicating a button in the opposite wall. We went through into a corridor, then into the next room. That had two doors, one on the left wall, the other straight ahead. We decided to go straight ahead.

The next room was full of glyphs and wards. The entire room could be warded. We soon found that it was as Kryan stepped in then ran back down the corridor, as in fear. Unfortunately he dropped the monocle in the room. Tussock tried to retrieve it but was also affected by the fear ward. Her perceived place of safety was behind Gar. In doing so she touched him causing him to appear. Finally Grendel teleported the monocle out.

We backtracked to the previous room and took the other door. It opened, revealing a stairwell. The smell of brimstone was stronger. Meanwhile Gar retrieved the monocle off Grendel and examined the door below. According to my divination, the water source was still below us. Also it was neither fresh or salt water which had me perplexed.

The room beyond had a door to the left and one straight ahead. Gar went straight ahead and we followed. By now Kryan was behind the warriors. The short corridor beyond led us to a room

with a hot floor. The next room was even hotter. Thank goodness I wasn't in bare feet. The corridor beyond was cooler but the room beyond had a red hot floor. It was decided to leave the warriors in the rooms upstairs on guard.

Gar cast a Protection from Normal Fire on himself, Tussock, Valium, Grendel, and myself. To do this, he had to touch each one of us, rendering us visible. Kryan used an illusion to cross the room. Also the air in there was stifling with the smell. Kryan dropped a scarf which I was able to catch before it hit the floor. I soaked it in water and pressed it to my nose and mouth. The others were doing likewise.

The next room was completely full with fire. Grendel did an ESP and detected several entities. Some were in playful moods but he did detect one below us in distress. It had to be the merprincess. Kryan finally consented to have a Protection from Normal Fire on.

I was rather apprehensive as I stepped into the flame. However it didn't hurt. This I'm going to have to tell Flamis about. I've been in her element now. Pity she's so reluctant to come into mine. Fortunately the Clear sight protected me from the glare and I could see that the fire was coming from little holes in the floor. Meanwhile Kryan had discovered a button on the left hand wall. The water source was now below and behind us.

The next room was warm but not too hot. Tussock reckoned she couldn't find any traps so Gar put one foot into the room. "Did it go click?" asked Tussock. "No" replied Gar. "Did it go clunk?" "No" "Are you dead?" "No" "No traps then". So Gar put the other foot into the room.

As he did so the floor dropped out from under him. Fortunately he was able to grab the lip. We could see boiling mud, at least 50 feet below. Between the rest of us we were able to haul him out.

Just then we heard a sound. It was the merprincess Annelsie. She definitely sounded like she was in distress. Kryan took the monocle off Gar, then used an illusion to walk across the pit. What was left of the floor was a ledge running around the pit. It was decided that the most dexterous among us were to try and shuffle along the side to the door. That was Tussock and I. Tussock made it, but I slipped. Fortunately Kryan grabbed me and, with Tussock's help, hauled me out. Thank goodness. I didn't fancy a mud bath.

Kryan then explored the wall with the monocle and discovered a circular object which he fiddled with. The pit closed. Tussock stepped on the floor and it remained firm. The rest of the party joined us.

The next room also had a trap. This time there was a pool of boiling water below us. The merprincess was definitely closer. Kryan created another illusion and walked down. He found himself in a cavernous area, connected to several other caverns. The merprincess was off to one side chained to a rock.

I wanted to jump down and help her. So I uncoiled my rope and Gar lowered it down the hole. Then I slid down the rope and dropped the rest of the distance. Kryan helped Tussock get down.

The water tasted and smelt horrible. I swam over in Annelsie's direction. Meanwhile Tussock wasn't having any luck. There were no locks on the Annelsie's manacles. Instead the firemage had

bonded the join together. Once I got there I discovered that her arms were spreadeagled and chained to the rock and the base of her tail was also chained and attached. The bands was too tight for her to slip her wrist through and marks on her wrists indicated she had already tried. She looked like a young, wellshaped, Polynesian woman (from the waist up) with long dark hair and brownish skin and was just a bit taller than I was. There was a hint of elvish features as well i.e. her ears were slightly pointed. She wasn't wearing any clothing. From the waist, her tail was a silvery blue colour.

Annelsie was feeling very tired so I fed her a Waters of Healing while waiting for the others to arrive. She didn't know why she was being kept alive but reckoned it was for some purpose. I decided not to tell her that I suspected that she was going to be sacrificed to Pele.

The manacles and chain were composed of iron so none of her abilities would work - like changing her tail to legs - nor any of her spells - she was an E&E mage. So while we waited I kept watch and tried to make her more comfortable.

Soon Gar paddled over and together we set to work. I remembered Flamis heating a metal door until it got soft and brittle then the orcs bending the door open. So we tried it with the manacles. I created another Potion of Strength and drank it while Gar heatproofed Princess Annelsie. Then he heated up each manacle. Once Gar got it hot I bashed the end of the staff against the metal until it broke. Soon she was free.

She immediately transformed her tail to legs and used a Levitation spell to get us to the corridor above. The only thing that marked her as a mermaid was a band of scales around her waist. Once we were up, Kryan wrapped a cloak around Annelsie's nude body while I lent her the sash to help protect her.

We then made our way out the way he had come as quickly as we could. Fortunately we encountered no opposition. Once we collected the warriors we headed for the beach, into the canoe and paddled back to the ship as fast as we could.

.12.

Once on arrival, Tussock summoned up a ten knot wind and we sailed off. Annelsie was feeling rather tired. I was originally considering putting her to bed but she reckoned she would prefer sleeping in merform. So the best thing I could come up with in a hurry was to fill my canoe with saltwater. She immersed herself and transformed to merform. Then she immediately fell asleep. I created another Waters of Strength - for the practise then curled up on the deck nearby. I was soon asleep as well.

I was woken up, about late afternoon, by the sound of Kryan talking to Annelsie. He had found out that the amulet had been stolen by a bunch of adventurers (way before the Guild was started) from its place in a temple in the sunken city of Pasifika. The adventurers had escaped through a portal. Some merfolk warriors had attempted to follow them but they never returned. Annelsie offered to take us there.

After Kryan had finished, he went to inform the others. I took Annelsie down to my cabin and helped her freshen up. She selected one of my dresses to wear - the long white cotton one while I changed into something a bit more casual. Once we had finished, she looked really stunning.

By the time we were finished, it was time for dinner. I think Annelsie was rather bemused with some of the comments we were making about some of the other Guild adventurers. Afterwards I went up on deck to summon a dolphin so I could get a message to the merking to tell him his daughter was safe. I managed to get a whole pod. After summoning some fish for them, they agreed to do it. I then noticed that we were now cruising on a normal wind. I was considering asking for a few hours stop so Annelsie could stretch her tail (and I wanted a refreshing swim too) but Gar reckoned we should get a move on. He even started calling on Itimanuka to grant us one of her waves. To my utter surprise (his too I bet) the ship was suddenly hoisted aloft on a wave and rapidly carried on our way. So much for that idea. So I set up a bed for the princess - in a waterfilled jollyboat.

02/02/93

I was woken very early in the morning by the ship coasting to a stop. So I quickly dressed then went up on deck to check on Annelsie. She was already up and preparing to leave. She said that she'd be back in the morning with an entourage. I watched as she dove over the side. As she disappeared below the waves I contemplated going for a swim myself but Kryan came up with an even better suggestion. So he led me downstairs.

At dawn we were all assembled on deck as an entourage of merfolk arrived with Annelsie in the middle. I quickly went below, changed into my swimsuit, and lowered myself over the side. Meanwhile the others were looking for Tussock who was flatly refusing to come out. Kryan and Grendel eventually found her sulking in the bilges. It was finally decided to leave her behind. Kryan then had to explain to Annelsie why Tussock wasn't coming.

After one of the mermaids did Water Breathings on the others we swam down in a group surrounded by merfolk. Annelsie led the way. As we entered the city our way was lined by a cheering and waving crowd. I waved back. It was just like the celebratory parade at Britannia. One merchild started crying and hid behind his mother at the sight of Gar.

Finally we were led before the King who stood up and welcomed us back and thanked us for bringing back his most prized jewel. Some bearers swam forward and presented us with gifts. Kryan and I were presented with a belt of merform each. I put mine on immediately vowing to try it out at the first available opportunity. It was a inch wide strip of silvery blue scaled skin which merged with my skin as soon as I put it around my waist. I thought it looked rather good and matched well with the silvery blue two-piece I was currently wearing. That also had a scaly pattern on it. Meanwhile Gar was presented with a net of entanglement, Valium with a necklace that put a bubble of air around his head, and Grendel was given a special gift, courtesy of Itimanuka. It was a carved wooden statuette. Grendel studied it and blushed slightly. When it was explained that Tussock had not come with us because she refused to enter the sea an amulet was provided for her which would protect her against the fear of the sea.

A breakfast buffet banquet had been provided in our honour. We helped ourselves to all sorts of spicy fish and seaweeds. Grendel and I were even lucky enough to find a pearl each in our oysters. King Kierl explained that this meant the two of us had been especially blessed by Itimanuka. My pearl was black, while Grendel's was a pinkish colour.

While we ate, we watched a display of a celebratory mer-dance. It turned out to be rapidly changing complex patterns of synchronised merfolk. It looked beautiful and I wanted to learn it. However I knew my swimming and dancing skills weren't that good.

After breakfast, Grendel was taken by the mer-priest to have the statue attuned to him while I took the opportunity to attempt the change to merform. A couple of Annelsie's attendants took me to a private chamber where I was instructed on how the belt worked, what to do, and a warning on not to stay in merform too long or I could be stuck with it. Only a Remove Curse could fix it.

I concentrated on the change. My legs began to tingle, like pins and needles, then I lost all feeling below the waist. I watched, fascinated, as my legs began to meld together and fill out. At the same time my feet flattened and expanded into a tail fluke. Once it had finished, and I had feeling back, I was transformed into a mermaid with a beautiful, iridescent, silvery blue tail, complete with scales. Fortunately the bottom part of my swimsuit was absorbed in the process and would presumably reappear when I changed back. The change took a while - a lot longer than Annelsie had done.

It felt weird at first, not like wearing the other tail at all. For one thing it was more flexible. I could bend the whole thing, not just at the knees. That meant I found that with just one flick, I was propelled much more rapidly. With the attendants help, I soon got the hang of it - at least I stopped crashing into the walls.

Once I felt I was ready I swam out looking for the others. Soon I found them (except Grendel) talking to a sage about the portal. Kryan gave me a rather appreciative look. He said later I made a very comely mermaid. Annelsie thought I looked rather good as well. Since we had some time to spare, she suggested that I get some dancing lessons from her attendants. This I did. It was great fun.

I had just managed to master the basic strokes when the others arrived. They were ready to go. So Annelsie and us (she was going to show us where the portal was) swam up to the ship. Once in open water, I decided to do some speed trials and managed to leave the others far behind before going back and swimming rings around them.

When we reached the surface the others clambered on board while I waited in the water while my tail changed back into legs. Much to my relief, the bottom half of my swimsuit reappeared, completely intact. All that was left was the scaly strip around my waist.

Once I was aboard, we set sail westwards. I spent some of the trip practising my mer-language with Annelsie. She seemed rather surprised and pleased that a 'land-dweller' had taken the trouble to learn the true tongue of the sea. She also pointed out, between giggles, that I had an outrageous accent.

04/02/93

We arrived at the site of the sunken city. Down below we could see the top of the central pyramid, 20' below. Most of the city was on a plateau, 70' down but, on one side, the plateau sloped downwards to the 200' mark. The portal was on that level.

Tussock attempted a ritual to provide a bubble of Bound Air to keep her dry. Before she started, I put WaterProofing and WaterBreathing on her - just in case her bubble burst. Since her ritual took an hour, Kryan started one as well. This time he was trying to get an astrology reading with Raphael's help. What he got was 'The Lands of Joy are borne on the Bosom of Love'.

To everyone's surprise - including Tussock, her ritual worked. We had been spending the time preparing the ship for a storm - in case she backfired. So I did WaterBreathings all round (a double for Grendel) and we went over the side. I was considering going to merform but Annelise thought that would not be a good idea considering we had to enter a portal. There was a good chance that there was air on the other side.

It was rather dark down there when we reached the bottom. Fortunately Gar had already provided some Firelights. What we found was a square courtyard with a road leading to it on one side. The other three sides had two stone arches each. I later found out they were called trilithons. Only one of the arches had a silvery curtain across it. The others were inactive. Fish were swimming through them. Also the active one was the only one glowing purple with the ward detector.

Tussock, still inside the bubble, went through, closely followed by Gar and Grendel. Valium was next, then popped back in to show us it was okay. Finally Kryan and I followed.

We found ourselves next to another trilithon, on a beach. The sea was very calm. On the other side was a mountainous area with sparse vegetation. The sky was overcast.

Suddenly four flying creatures appeared from the mountains and swooped down on us. Kryan grabbed me and propelled me into the trilithon while following close behind. Soon the others followed - except Tussock. (We later found out she had been grabbed, carried off, and dropped).

Gar and Grendel went though the portal to do battle. I prepared the staff, popped through the portal and dashed for the sea in an attempt to use the water as cover. I found out to my chagrin that the beach was a very shallow slope and I was only up just past my ankles when I was attacked. It looked like a flying lizard. Fortunately it missed and I was able to get a geyser stream running from the staff and hit it with the powerful jet of water. Meanwhile Gar fireballed another one. There was no sign of Tussock.

.13.

On their next pass I got sideswiped and fell over. Something must have been wrong with it as it plowed straight into the side of the trilithon and lay still. Grendel pounced on it. The other bird also swooped at me and managed to grab and carry me up. In the shock I dropped the staff. Suddenly it was attacked by another one. In the resulting melee I was dropped, back into the water. Unfortunately it still wasn't deep enough. After scaring off the first 'bird' the one that attacked was hovering over me. I just lay there feeling very scared. In a blink, it vanished. I then realised it was one of Kryan's illusions, protecting me.

While I made a dash to hide under the now dead 'bird', another one splatted into the sand, leaving one in the air. Once I crawled under the leathery wing I drunk my last Waters of Healing. Immediately I felt a bit better.

Soon, it was all over. Kryan had already headed off after Tussock (who had been picked up and dumped into the nest on the mountain), on an illusionary red carpet, and the others were preparing to follow. He had knocked the last one out of the sky by flicking the edge of the carpet at it.

After finding the staff, I regarded the terrain and suddenly realised that I was in bare feet and the ground was rather rough. While Grendel and Gar headed off after Kryan, I searched the skeletons

lying around. The ones near the trilithon were obviously mer, but the other three further on were humanoid. I didn't find the amulet, nor did I find anything metallic either. With the aid of some twine lying around I was able to salvage enough of a pair of boots to be serviceable. Feeling more suitably clad I headed off after the others.

Finally I met them coming back. Tussock had been dropped in the nest and told us there were two large creatures and three baby ones. She had escaped by jumping out of the nest and rolling down the slope. Also there were quite a few shiny things at the bottom of the nest. Metallic items no doubt. So we headed back up the slope.

It was decided we had to take the birds out so we stopped just inside Gar's fireball range (and my Water Bolt range). Kryan created a fog to blanket the nest and we disbelieved it. Then Gar let fly with a fireball, followed soon after by another one. Cries from the nest indicated that it was doing a lot of damage. One of the big birds tried to take off but I hit it with the water bolts a couple of times and it collapsed. They'll be eating no more merfolk.

Inside the nest, all the inhabitants were dead. We found a few rings, a couple of amulets (including the one we wanted) and a pair of odd silvery gloves. Tussock tried eating one of the barbecued chicks and pronounced it delicious. I tried a bit. It was. Meanwhile the others were trying to collect as much of the leathery skin as possible to make armour of. I was more interested in one of the skulls as I remembered a guild necromancer paying good money for interesting skulls. Dramus I think it was.

Finally we carted our treasure, including some skulls and a couple of the wings, back through the portal and made the ascent to the ship. Annelisie looked very bemused at our trophies.

06/02/93

We arrived back at the mercy and said our goodbyes to Annelisie and her father and thanked him for the presents. I also expressed a wish to come back and visit. The King said that we'd always be welcome.

On the trip back to the fire island (again with Itimanuka's assistance, after Gar yelled at the sea) I was asked to make as many Waters of Healing and Strength as I could. I managed to come up with five each.

07/02/93

We reached the fire island - which was still erupting - and sailed around the back. Valium made Tussock and Kryan UnSeen and they went off while we waited.

They encountered no resistance climbing the mountain and soon reached the top. The bottom of the crater was glowing bright red from the liquid lava. In the centre of the crater a fountain of fire erupted. It gradually shaped itself into a flaming humanoid figure. Tussock hurled the amulet at it, followed by a ring she was carrying - just for the sheer joy of it.

As the amulet flew towards the lava, the figure moved to intercept it, and they heard a voice thanking them for returning what had been hers. Tussock's response was 'Hobbit medallion retriever at your service' before deciding to beat a hasty retreat. Gods aren't very fond of flippancy.

The figure then sank into the lake which very quickly cooled to black. At the same time the eruption ceased. Kryan followed Tussock down.

Once we saw the eruption ceasing, I lead the warriors in an appropriate chant/song giving praise to the spirits. Come to think of it I think this whole episode is going to end up as a song and maybe a dance. Hope I get to see it.

Once we picked up Kryan and Tussock we headed for home. We had to pass around the front of the island and noticed that the fire on top of the temple had gone out. Bet that's put a crimp in their plans.

08/02/93

We finally arrived back at the home island and had a joyous reception. Plans were immediately made for a celebration. Also Chief Mariri began organising the wedding celebration, to take place that afternoon. Kryan and I were led off (in different directions) to prepare.

It was a standard ceremony which basically involved the exchange of gifts, a short blessing from Ona (the other two shamans were also there) then it was into the feasting and the dancing. And someone had already composed the story of our exploits. Finally, as night fell, Kryan and I were led to a canoe and taken out to a remote island. It was traditional for the new couple to be left alone for a while.

09/02/93

We stayed there for a week. Every morning food would be left for us. All we had to do was relax - and after that adventure we certainly needed it.

16/02/93

Finally we were picked up and taken back to the main island. The others were ready to go as well so after many goodbyes, we set sail. I promised to come back some day.

The trip back was uneventful, apart from a brief stop in Novadom to pick up some dresses, weapons, and to get California to look over the items and to tell him of our adventures.

06/03/93

Left Novadom that morning.

11/03/93

Finally arrived back at Seagate and had everything examined. I finally got the ward detecting pendant. Also one of the rings turned out to have Walking Unseens in it. Could be really useful. I decided to go for that as well. After that it was time to set about training. I decided if I'm going to have to read lots of books I'd better get on with it. Personally I'd rather be swimming.

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