

"Fairy Dangerous"

Cover Sheet

Adventure by Scott Whittaker

01/01/96 - 27/01/96

Player Characters

Starflower	Mind	Female	Elf	Leader/Mil Sci
Hargan	Non-mage	Male	Human	
Anathea	Witch	Female	Human	
Glod	Earth	Male	Dwarf	
Aqualina	Water	Female	Human	Scribe

Plane

Elushia

The Plane between Planes

The Shadow Planes of Dark, Life, Death, Time and Chaos

Places Visted

Emerald Islands

 Kingsport Harbour

 Widdishin

 A devastated village

A village between planes.

Necropolis - a city on the Shadow Plane of Chaos

Major NPCs encountered

Queen Arwin of the Emerald Isles

Lady Rh'khay-el - a Daoene Sidhe from Avalon.

Shi'Kain of the Royal House of Durban

Mission

To rechain the Dark Lord

"Fairy Dangerous"

Adventure Summary

01/01/96

Met with the representative from the Emerald Islands. Queen Arwin wanted a party to find out why villagers were disappearing from the northern part of the island. All the villages were located in mountain valleys and investigators had reported that even the buildings looked older.

Left Seagate on the 'Sea Eagle'.

09/01/96

Arrived at Kingsport Harbour

10/01/96

Boat trip up river to the capital city of Widdishin. Conducted to guest quarters at the Palace. Met Queen Arwin. She told us that, so far, four villages had been affected with the latest one being last night. As far as she knew there were no faerie mounds or magical areas nearby. There seemed to be several types of magic involved i.e. necromancy, spider, greater summoner, dark fey, and wicca.

The villages were three days away by horseback from the closest portal point and all that the astrologers could determine so far was that it had something to do with the thirteenth sign of the zodiac - a serpent. That led me to wonder if it had anything to do with the serpent cult of slavers I had encountered in West Carzala a while back. So I told the Queen what we had found on that adventure.

11/01/96

Snowed in so spent the day practising skills

12/01/96

Portalled to a military outpost in the mountains. Picked up equipment and horses and headed up into the mountains. Reached a waystation by nightfall.

13/01/96

Arrived at the next waystation. No hut this time but some caves, and a thermal pool.

14/01/96

Reached a devastated village that afternoon. Fought off six orcs mounted on warboars and a Hound of Tindalos. Recovered the body of a Daione-Sidhe. The orcs were wearing spider and snake medallions, just like the ones that the slavers had been wearing in West Carzala. Found out we were being followed by a Daoine-Sidhe in the form of a snow tiger. It had left tracks around both waystations.

15/01/96

Divinations suggested that the slaver base is on an island near the equator. Also that the next village to be attacked is to the north east. So we headed off. Got colder as we got higher. Managed to backfire my Resist Cold spell causing me to start glowing. Found a snow cave to spend the night in.

16/01/96

Found a Chaos Star burnt into the snow outside. Looks like the opposition are aware of us. Continued travelling and found another cave by nightfall.

17/01/96

Entered a high mana zone.

18/01/96

Finally reached the village predicted to be the next target. As we entered the main gate we felt a tingling. Also it was warmer inside than outside. Told our story, and our warning, to the ruling committee and got the impression that they knew who we were talking about and that he had been defeated before.

Just then the sky was lit by flashes as spells impacted against an invisible forcewall surrounding the village. Most of the inhabitants had gone into a trance. All the impacting spells were focused through the same thing - a warpstone.

After the attack ceased we had to wait until the Council recovered. Once we met them again they told us that this place existed on all planes and that the attack came from Alusia, from a being that had been imprisoned there. Just then the snow-tiger entered the room, through the wall, and shapeshifted into a female Daione-Sidhe.

She introduced herself as Lady Rh'khay-el, a guardian inhabitant of Avalon and also a member of the royal family. The Royal family were partially to blame for the present situation. Long before Penjarre one of them had been consorting with powers from the lower planes and an offspring was produced. They believed in giving him the benefit of the doubt for a while but his actions (destroying a village to summon a demon) got him banished to Alushia with bonds that shouldn't have come free. And this was the second time. The first one was during Penjarre and it had taken quite a bit of power to put him back. They weren't sure what had caused it this time but it had something to do with the snake cult. That led us to suggest that their warpstone was responsible. She agreed saying that it focuses, channels and changes mana. There were no warpstones on any of the faerie planes, and for good reason. Such stones could warp the faerie folk themselves, being mana creatures as they are.

Our mission was to help restrain the Dark One. To do this we had to travel to Alushia's shadow planes and retrieve certain items secreted there. She explained that each shadow plane only represented one aspect of the total plane of Alushia. We had to retrieve one item each. Hargan - the Gloves of Laran, Anatheia - the Talisman of Obsidian, Me - The Feathered Cloak of the Ocean, Glod - the Hammer of Beltor, Starflower - The Circlet of Tyranth.

We would be plane-hopping from this village, returning here from each shadow plane. The items together would strengthen the bonds and maybe even slow down the slavers. Resealing the bonds will strip the items of most of their powers. It may be possible to keep them afterwards.

Afterwards Rh'khay-el did a ritual on each of us to enable us to locate 'our' item. She also removed my 'glow'.

19/01/96

Entered the Shadowplane of Darkness, after Anatheia's amulet, and found ourselves in a dark maze

of tunnels and warded doors. Finally reached a portal to the interior of an obsidian block, after deactivating Hellfire and TK Rage wards. Inside the block was a chamber with a puzzle that Anatheia solved. Once she did we realised we were not alone. The chamber looked the same but, along the walls were spaced thirteen humans wearing leather armour and carrying broadswords/shields as well as six seven foot tall creatures in plate mail and helms that looked like dragon wings. Then there was the large throne on the far wall, on which was seated a spider centaur wearing a black outfit. Four severed heads were dangling from a waist band. The odds were definitely not in our favour but we had to somehow win as the amulet was dangling from the creature's neck.

We made a good go of it but were overpowered and rendered unconscious. Upon recovering we found ourselves in a room along with the man in black, no longer a spider centaur. He was also fey but was a Dark Daione-Sidhe. He introduced himself as Shi'Kain of the Royal House of Durban. He agreed to hand over the amulet but only if we'd agree to a geas to do something for him in return. So we did. He then portalled us and himself back to the Council Chamber.

20/01/96

This time it was the Shadowplane of Life in search of Starflower's amulet. We started off in a marketplace where we managed to acquire some interesting items such as Starflower's teapot, my harp that worked as well as on land as it did underwater and some special combs and brushes. Outside the marketplace was rolling hillsides. Camped in the open.

21/01/96

Reached what appeared to be a large walled city by lunchtime. Ahead of us was a gate by which a very large tiger was standing guard. We convinced it to let us pass then went through the gate into a garden. After a short while we felt dizzy and passed out. When we awoke we found ourselves in a small room and had to answer a riddle posed to us by an entity called Pan. (What is the one thing that the multiverse cannot do without - Balance). Once answered we were conducted through a door and into a glade. In the centre was a fountain - the Source of Life. One sip would cause a person's Aspect to become Life, except for a Death Aspect for which it was pure poison. On the centre of the fountain rested the circlet. Starflower was barely able to TK it towards her before passing out.

22/01/96

Once Starflower woke up, and put on the circlet, we started looking for a way out. A divination indicated something high so we headed towards a nearby forest.

23/01/96

Reached the forest and found a tower so we climbed to the top of that. Up top was a portal leading back to the village.

24/01/96

Found ourselves on a battlefield in the Demiplane of Death, on the way to Glod's hammer. The area was ankle deep in mud and gore. Bodies lay everywhere. The smell was horrific. The uniforms and weapons were many and varied. Even the Planes of Origins of the bodies were very varied. After being shot at and nearly blown up we found ourselves in landscapes caused by our own worst fears. Then we found ourselves in a food hall. Hypnotisms had to be employed to ensure we didn't gorge ourselves to death.

Finally Glod led us down a hallway into a large room, at least a thousand feet on each side. Floating in the middle was a crystal block with the hammer inside. When we entered, we found we were climbing up an invisible, bound air, staircase towards the cube. The hammer was insubstantial until Glod used raw mana to summon it. Then the portal back appeared and we went though.

25/01/96

This time it was Hargan's gloves on the Demiplane of Time. First we found ourselves on a featureless plane where we all moved at different speeds before reaching a door. Once through the door we found we were standing on a wharf. Ahead was a decaying city that Nature was trying to reclaim. We recognised it as Seagate, about 3000 years in the future. Hargan led us towards the Guild buildings. It looked like the Seagate we knew but four cathedrals had been added around the town square, each one to a different Power of Light and something had destroyed them.

The Guild was utterly deserted. We headed for the main meeting room. Once there, Hargan soon came to the conclusion that the gloves were in the Vaults. Meanwhile I studied the notice board and discovered that the last entry was 3567AP.

Our next stop was the Library to try to ascertain what had happened. Everything there was well preserved so we leafed through the records. What we did discover was alarming. Apparently the priests of the Powers of Light decided to build the temples then succeeded in summoning the Powers themselves. With all that elan power around, and the fact that the Powers of Light don't like magic, meant that the mana levels immediately dropped to virtually non-existence. In order to regain the Balance an attempt was made to summon the Powers of Darkness using virtually everything in the Vaults to power the ritual. Unfortunately something went wrong and most of the guild were lost while closing the gate. Those that were left fled west to found a new Guild somewhere on Terra Nova.

We found the vaults and the octarine doors were standing ajar. The vaults were bare. All that were left were twelve swords with names like Coinspinner, Woundhealer etc mounted on the wall behind mana walls. On a pedestal in the middle of the room were a pair of gauntlets, one white, the other black.

Hargan picked them up and put them on. Once he did, the doors swung shut and the portal back appeared. When we went through we discovered that each of us had got younger.

26/01/96

Last stop, the Demiplane of Chaos to get my cloak. After going through the portal we found ourselves in the middle of swirling colours. After a while we started growing extra appendages. We passed through a forest of screaming trees and crossed a river of blood before we reached the city of Necropolis. To get in we had to surrender our souls to the demon gatekeeper.

The city was full of mausoleums. Dominating it was a huge black pyramid which was discharging mana. No entrances at ground level but Starflower, now fully transformed into a dragon-kin, flew up and discovered an entrance at the top. So we climbed up.

We had to go through the mana-stream to gain entry. As we did any active magics were removed.

Then we descended down a large flight of steps until we reached the shore of a large lake. After swimming to the bottom we found an island encased in a bubble of air. Located in the middle was a clothes rack. On the clothes rack was a feathered cloak - which was insubstantial and encased in Bound Water. I managed to acquire it with a combination of a talent and a spell.

We made our way out of the pyramid, and after enjoying a pleasant meal with a bunch of vampires we found the gatekeeper and redeemed our souls. Hargan insisted on having a Waters of Strength put on his. The gatekeeper created a portal and we were back at the village.

27/01/96

Now we had all the items it was time to take on the Dark One. The portal was opened and we stepped through. Both Sh'Kain and Rh'khay-el came with us. After going through we were attacked by giant mosquitos. We dealt to them and carried on. Soon we found the entrance to the cave where the Dark One was imprisoned. The two fey did a ritual to release the Companions. They would do the Ritual of Binding while we kept the lesser minions off their backs.

So we went in. Inside were one large fey (the Dark One), two spider mages, two fey mages, a group of deep ones and some ratmen. As the companions took up positions to start the ritual we, and the two fey, prepared for a big fight.

It was long, it was dangerous and it looked very dicey as spells were thrown and combats commenced. Fortunately the Companions were able to complete the ritual and the Dark One was rebound. They reappeared in their items, decidedly weaker.

Rh'khay-el transported us back to the village and we were healed up. Then we were portalled back to Widdishin, reported to the Queen and were paid. A portal had been set up back to Seagate but some of us decided to stay longer to train.

"Fairy Dangerous"

I just had to go on adventure again however there wasn't much on offer this time. The one introduced by the Earth Mage and the Newfoundland dog peaked my curiosity, but the recommendation was for less experienced adventurers. The only other one that looked mildly interesting was an adventure in a place called the Emerald Isles. Hopefully it's warmer there than it is here. I really dislike winter. Just too cold for my tastes.

The party employer for that mission wasn't due to meet with us till 8pm tomorrow but those that wanted to go were conducted to Meeting Room #13.

Glod. A dwarf wearing soft leather and would have been carrying a battleaxe if Guild Security hadn't told him to leave it outside. He's an Earth Mage.

Hargan. Large guy in plain leather porting a couple of crossbows and a valuable harp. He said he was a Rank 4 cook, rank 6 spy, and a rank 7 courtier. Even though he was a non-mage he had managed to learn how to DA since I saw him last. He also liked having extra strength. Guess I'd be making lots of Waters of Strength this time. Since I had last seen him he was missing an eye.

Anathea. A 5'6" tall human female wearing white woollen clothing. She told us she was a non-pacted witch. An owl rode on her shoulder.

Starflower. A tall female elf with long auburn hair and wearing a long green velvet dress. I knew this one well. She was a neuromancer and very deadly with twin tulwars which had earned her the title of 'Elven Shredder from Hell'.

Finally me, Aqualina. Short (5'1") human female with long dark hair, just past my waist, light brown skin and currently wearing something warm. I'm an aquamancer and also swim well, play harp and prefer the dagger/maingauche combination in combat.

It was soon decided that Starflower would be the party leader and military scientist and I'd be the scribe. Hargan then requested that I supply him with a Waters of Strength with his breakfast every morning. Glod cast Lesser Enchantment on each of us.

After that meeting I went up to the library to look up the notes of the previous party who had been to the Emerald Islands. There I discovered Starflower had been one of them.

01/01/96

I just barely made it to the 8am meeting with the party employer. It was in Meeting Room 1 and someone had already laid out an extravagant breakfast. There was even some rather expensive elven wine that Hargan and Starflower were sampling. I was making sure I got my share of the strawberries when the representative from the Emerald Islands entered, a handsome man with coppery red hair.

He introduced himself as the representative of Queen Arwin. King Llywellan was busy dealing to some rebellious barons in the south so the Queen had sent for another Guild party to deal with the problem of villagers disappearing in the north. Investigating parties discovered that even the buildings looked older. The villages are located in mountain valleys. All their astrologers had

drawn blanks about what had happened. The ship to take us was in the harbour and we were to leave on the noon tide. He also mentioned that the island was to the north and it was in the grip of winter. Ice and snow lay in many places.

I went up to the Water College and made two permanent Waters of Healing and grabbed the last Waters of Strength from stock. After gathering my gear I rushed down to the docks, pausing briefly to obtain a supply of chocolate and some coconuts. I also put a Resist Cold and a Waterbreathing spell on me before leaving.

Finally we all assembled at the docks. The 'Sea Eagle' was moored in the middle of the harbour. The representative had arranged for a boat and crew to row us out. Once there we were piped aboard. After checking the amenities I went up on deck to watch the departure.

That night we had dinner in the officer's wardroom followed by music and dancing. There was even some Pasifikan dance much to my initial surprise. It turned out that the Emerald Islands had recently begun trading with Pasifika. So I joined in.

It took nine days to sail north up the coast towards the Emerald Isle and was very pleasant apart from no room to swim and being distinctly cool. I did find the warmest spot in the ship i.e. the herbarium.

09/01/96

Finally arrived at Kingsport harbour. Once we disembarked, Glod did a ground kissing ceremony and we were conducted to a tavern. I was surprised to see Basalic's favourite beer, Bugmans, on sale. He had been complaining that it was difficult to get hold of so I talked to the barman about arranging a shipment for when we left. I discovered they had good quality vodka as well.

Starflower had discovered that there were public baths in the town so a bit later on, we went to investigate. We frolicked in the public pool for a while. It was nice, deep and reasonably warm.

An hour or so later Starflower suggested it would be a good idea to just relax in one of the private pools. So we did so. This pool was big enough for six and was warmer. It was so warm that I let myself slip under the water and just floated, completely relaxed. I had already put a Water Breathing on myself.

I thought I only closed my eyes for a moment but the next thing I became aware of was being prodded awake by an attendant with a pole. It was closing time and the others had already left hours ago. So I clambered out of the pool, dried myself and dressed before allowing the attendant to escort me back to the tavern where we were staying. He explained that they had decided I was better left there. Starflower had already assured them I hadn't actually drowned even though it must have looked it. He smiled and said it wasn't the first time that had happened there.

10/09/96

I was feeling rather cheerful when I woke up the next morning when there was a knock on the door. It was Hargan bearing a tray of breakfast and a bottle of water. Didn't take long to figure out what he wanted with that so I cast a Waters of Strength on it. After breakfast the envoy returned with the news that a boat was waiting at the river to take us to the capital city of Widdishin. So much for returning to the bath house.

The boat trip took most of the day. Nothing really eventful occurred although I was staring over the side of the boat and I would have sworn I saw something swim under the boat that looked more human than fish. The crewman I mentioned that to believed it probably was an Undine, some sort of water fey.

We needed horses for the ride from the docks to the Palace and it didn't take the ostler long to find animals that suited each of us, even one that was used to being ridden bareback for me. Once there we were taken inside and shown to guest quarters, a block of six rooms with two bathrooms. Someone commented 'one for the watermage and the other for everyone else'. We had an hour to prepare ourselves for an audience with the Queen. A selection of clothes had been laid out for us so I selected one, a light blue dress. I think I'm going to have to do some clothes shopping after this job is complete.

At the appointed time we were summoned to Queen Arwin's presence. She told us that, so far, four villages had been affected with the latest one being last night. As far as she knew there were no faerie mounds or magical areas nearby.

Just then a messenger arrived with the results from the team that had investigated the first couple of villages. While the Queen spoke to him Hargan checked her aura and determined that her magical College was Fey. Come to think of it, she did look part Daoine Sidhe.

When the messenger left, the Queen informed us that there seemed to be several types of magic involved i.e. necromancy, spider, greater summoner, dark fey, and wicca. That lead Hargan to comment 'Ah ha. So it's a summoned pactured dark undead spider'.

The villages were three days away by horseback from the closest portal point and all that the astrologers could determine so far was that it had something to do with the thirteenth sign of the zodiac - a serpent. That led me to wonder if it had anything to do with the serpent cult of slavers I had encountered in West Carzala a while back. I remembered they had been nasty but that was about it. So the Queen called someone in to help enhance my memory recall. After a short while I was able to give the Queen the information she wanted, but I was also remembering things I would have rather remained forgotten.

.2.

The interview concluded a little while later which gave us four hours before dinner. Some of us spent the time in the castle library. In a short while I was surrounded by open books on local water life especially sentients. I also checked to see if there was anything about escaping from confinements just in case we got ourselves captured. All I could find referred me to the Bard's library. Meanwhile Starflower was studying maps.

An hour before dinner, I put the books away and went to change into the ballgown that Sh'rel had made for me. It was the first time I had a chance to wear it and I wanted to show off. Dinner was delicious and the entertainment was very interesting. I was especially fascinated by the acrobats. As well as the Queen, the heads of the various Guilds such as the Druids (male mages) the Bandroi (female mages) the Fianna (the warriors) and the Bards were at the table so there were some rather interesting conversations. At one point I got buttonholed by the head of the Merchant Guild about what would be the best trade items to take to Pasifika. I also noticed that a few of the performers looked like Daoine Sidhe.

11/01/96

When I woke up that morning the weather had turned nasty with a snow blizzard outside. Definitely we wouldn't be able to travel today. Hargan turned up for his daily Waters of Strength and Starflower suggested that I borrow one of her spare +2 daggers to use instead of my +1. The Druids and the Bandroi had determined that the next village is due to be attacked in a week.

While the others did their own investigations and practises I headed off to the Bards in order to see if I could get any tips off them in case we did find ourselves captured. I ended up learning some basic contortions and escape techniques. I soon discovered I was only scratching the tip of the subject but I was getting such a thrill out of learning the stunts that I resolved to learn more when we had finished the mission. Mid-afternoon a messenger arrived with the news that Starflower wanted all of us at the Fianna's training area for group weapons practise. In order to help combat the snow glare we would encounter in the mountains we were presented with special glasses, just like the 'sunglasses' the orcs had obtained while we were in Britannia. They wanted these back when we returned. So we did our practises until late when many of us had dinner invitations. I had been invited to go out with a group of Bards that evening.

Don't know where the others were but I ended up at a place that had a bar and an indoor pool. The other bards had provided appropriate clothing. Over the pool was a pole and patrons would take turns to sit on the pole and try to knock the current champion off, using a soft club, into the water below. So I had a go and managed to knock my opponent off then face two more challengers before being knocked off myself. The party then went outside and I was quickly shown how to make snowballs and convinced to take part in a snowball fight. I was having so much fun I wasn't aware it was past midnight by the time I was escorted back to my room.

12/01/96

The blizzard had broken so it was decided we would leave as soon as possible. So I cast Waterproofings on much of our equipment then we obtained some Protections versus Magical Fire that would last for 12 days. We then went through the palace portal and ended up at a military encampment near the mountains. There we picked up the equipment that Hargan had arranged for us. They had provided us with sets of leather armour and boots that had fur on the inside to help keep us warm. Much appreciated especially considering that this place was in the grip of winter and it was even colder than Seagate. And I usually go adventuring at this time to escape winter. Riding and pack horses were also provided. Mine had a saddle as these mountain horses were used to that.

Before we left we had some refreshments in the local inn. Starflower wanted to know more about my earlier adventure with the fey so I gave her the edited highlights. Then she noticed someone else in the inn react rather oddly when I mentioned Tir-Na-Nog. Glod managed to get a quick aura check off before the person left and discovered that it was another Daoine Sidhe.

The trail headed off towards the mountain peaks. Nothing unusual occurred and we managed to reach the first waystation before nightfall. Starflower organised the watches and put me on second between Anathea and Glod. Hargan took the last one. Anathea's owl was able to stay awake all through the night, sleeping on Anathea's special saddle (designed for owls to roost on) during the day.

13/01/96

We had used some of the stacked wood during the night and were preparing to replace it when

it was noted that someone, or something already had. We concluded that it was brownies so I left a half-coconut full of milk as a thank you. The only tracks about were large cat tracks which we determined belonged to a snow white siberian tiger. It had walked all round the way-station for some time and none of us had seen or heard it. Curious too that the horses hadn't been alarmed (or eaten for that matter).

After tidying the place up we set off again. Hargan shot a couple of squirrels for lunch after which we continued heading uphill. Finally we reached the position of the second way station. No hut this time, but there were a couple of caves. Also close by was a thermal pool which I took advantage of before dinner.

14/01/96

Again there were cat tracks all around the place. Hargan had caught a glimpse of it during his watch. Could it have been the same cat? I did three hours of purification in the pool before breakfast.

.3.

While I was soaking myself in the thermal pool, after casting Hargan's Waters of Strength, followed by a Resist Cold and Waterbreathing on myself, I watched Starflower scout around looking for more tufts of snow tiger hair. When she finally found some she got Glod and Hargan to check its aura. What they found was that the tiger was actually a sentient creature. Probably faery according to Starflower. 'Of course it's furry' replied Hargan.

Since I was in the water it seemed an ideal opportunity to do a Waters of Vision in an effort to find out what we would find in the village. What I saw was the centre of a deserted village. Everything was still. The village looked incredibly old. A summoning circle inside a pentagram had been inscribed in the square. Inside was a body surrounded by a pool of blood.

Just then something horrible and demonic looking stared at me straight out of the vision. On instinct, I savagely attacked it. Just then I lost consciousness and slipped beneath the surface of the pool. Hargan had to haul me out. When I finally woke up and calmed down I described to the others what I had seen. It looked like a cross between a lion, a goat, and an orc. For some strange reason though I had the suspicion I had seen one of those before.

Starflower said we really needed a Namer to deal to it. "Don't worry." replied Hargan. "I can DA it". "I think we need more than that" Starflower replied icily. "You mean Namers can do other things?" replied Hargan innocently.

We set off again. It was mid afternoon when we topped a rise and saw the small village below us. There was no sign of life. When we entered the village the place looked incredibly old, just like in my vision. I soon realized this was the same village I had scryed. My ocular detected nothing that was magically trapped, warded or cursed. The last magic to impact on the one of the buildings was 'Spell of Ages'. No College was associated with it.

Glod headed towards the inn which he identified by its sign, 'The Drunken Griffin'. The rest of us were speculating whether the aging effect would have affected the drinks there and made them more valuable. Just then a group of six orcs, mounted on warboars burst from cover and fired arrows at us before charging. As Hargan dragged me towards the inn I was attacked by one of

the boars. Starflower and Glod were covering our retreat.

But as we entered the inn a shape materialised from out of a dark corner. To my horror I recognised it as the taniwha I had seen in my vision. Next thing I knew I was cowering under a table in the opposite corner.

While the battle raged outside the 'thing' headed towards the door. I collected my wits and put a Spectral Weapon on my dagger then attacked the fiend with both dagger and maingache. I got hit by the tail and covered in some blue gunk which was poisonous however we managed to vanquish the thing (and the orcs) with no losses although Starflower had been hit by a magical curse which lowered her magical aptitude. I downed one of my permanent Waters of Healing to neutralise the poison.

Later, I heard that Starflower had almost single-handedly taken down the six orcs and their mounts, then turned on the monster, which was when she was hurt, by its tongue. But it was Hargan who killed it with an arrow, moments after Starflower had dealt it a mighty blow, crushing its chest. She praised me for my part in the combat which made me feel better about being scared. Actually Starflower was the only one who wasn't terrified by the evil beast.

The creature turned out to be a long-lived sentient summonable with a generic true name of 'Hound of Tindalous'. Now I knew where I had seen one before, several adventures ago, on Glorantha.

We then found the body buried under the snow in the town square. It turned out to be a Daenoe-Sidhe and his heart had been torn out. Besides the usual spells the body had Enchanted Sleep cast on it followed by Summon Hound then Bind Hound. The Hound originated on the plane of Yuggoth although that wasn't its home plane. From what we could figure out, this creature inhabited the 'angles of time'. It was a natural time traveller and naturally magical, being able to create gates, summon/bind baatezu (a type of demon), Asgoth's curse, and Powder of Ibnghasy. Anatheia found out all this through her tarot cards, which proved to be a useful method of divination.

The orcs were wearing medallions with spiders on them and their leader also had a very familiar snake medallion. The leader had fought well according to Starflower and his (rather spiky) armour, shield and sword were of good quality. The spider medallions were used to locate each other while the snake medallion is used for communication.

The Hound had been summoned at least 2 to 3 days ago. While we were having dinner Starflower fished out a piece of Hound-hair from the stew. Hargan looked very innocent, and said something about "the hair of the dog that bit you".

We then decided to take the body out of the village so Starflower could perform a proper elvish funeral. I also wanted to sing a waiata. However, when we got outside the village, four white eagles swooped down. They shaped-changed into Daoine-Sidhe, and thanked us for bringing the body out of the village. There was some sort of magical barrier that was preventing them from entering. They then picked up the body and left.

As soon as they had gone, Starflower called out to someone I couldn't see. She explained later that she had noted that the tiger tracks were all around the village, but not in it. Given that the

Seelie Daoine Sidhe were blocked from entering the village, that they were able to shape-change, and that the tiger was a long-lived sentient, she had concluded that the tiger was also a Seelie Daoine Sidhe. From her end of the conversation that followed, (apparently it was mind-speaking her - why am I not surprised at this?) I gathered that the tiger was a Daoine Sidhe, that he was following us, but he was not there to help us. He has his own agenda it seems.

.4.

We then investigated the village, starting with the inn's cellar. After all, if the drinks had been aged 100 years, some of them could be rather valuable. Some like the peach brandy and the apple cider turned out to be very nice so some of the bottles ended up in our packs. The labels were thin bronze plaques and magical. None of their auras were very revealing though.

Dinner was roast boar. Unfortunately we didn't have any camembert sauce to go with it but it was delicious none the less.

15/01/96

The night passed without incident. Glod managed to get slightly soused on the wines. Meanwhile Anatheia decided to try some divinations. The first was "Where are the slavers?"

"On an island near a line
The slavers wait, manipulating time."

That matched with the map that we had found on the slavers ship showing their island base near the equator. I suspected it was halfway to Pasifika from Carzala. That put it uncomfortably close to Calamari territory. I explained that to the others.

The next question was: "Where is the next village to be attacked?"

"North and East, up and up
The next village is higher than thou..."

According to the map there was a village of sorts northeast of our present location higher in the mountains. Starflower decided to improvise a divination using a strand of her hair, her powerstone ring, the map and her sense danger talent. Using the hair and the ring as a pendulum she let it swing over the map while going into a trance. Soon the ring settled into a pattern which had it swinging between the village Anatheia had picked out and a peak which was the highest in the range. Meanwhile I was amusing myself by drawing a pentagram around Starflower and surrounding it with Pasifikan symbols.

Just then Starflower jerked out of her trance with the news that some magic had hit her. Glod checked her aura for 'last magic to impact' and got the answer 'Seeker finder'. We also noticed that Hargan had been hypnotised by the swinging crystal on the ring. Starflower snapped him out of it. Hargan reported he had seen a swirling, glowing, globe that shifted through all the colours except brass and bronze. So, just in case, we started collecting bronze and brass implements, such as pokers, in case they would be useful against whatever power was behind all this.

We slogged off through the snow and headed up the mountain range. By lunch time we were above the tree line. Mid afternoon and the cold was starting to get to me. I just had to risk a

Resist Cold spell even though there was all this snow around that was making it harder to cast. So I cast the spell and felt something go wrong. I didn't want to try again but Hargan wanted one as well so I did. This time it worked.

By now the clouds were rolling in and we hurried to find shelter before the storm hit. As it got darker I noticed that the others were giving me odd looks. A short while later I saw that my hand was surrounded by a faint glow of rapidly changing scintillating colours just like the globe that Hargan reported seeing. I also started to feel rather hot. Soon we found a snow cave and settled in, just before the storm hit. I was getting so hot that I had to remove all my outer clothing. As I did the glow got brighter as it seemed to be emanating from my bare skin. Anatheia divinated me and came to the conclusion that the Resist Cold was working, but there was an Alter Temperature component that was making my body react as if I was in a hot day on Pasifika. The glow was the mana reacting with the cold. She had no idea how long this was going to last. Hargan touched me and concluded I was slightly warmer than usual.

16/01/96

I was still glowing when we woke up. The storm had been raging all night, but morning dawned as a brilliant fine day. Starflower insisted I should cover up in an attempt to hide the glow but it was just too uncomfortable. All I could bear to wear was my two piece swimsuit. So I tossed the Sash of Defense on as well. I did clip a cloak on, just in case I got caught out in the open when whatever it was wore off.

Just then Glod noticed that a symbol had been 'burnt' into the snow. It was a skull over a snake symbol surrounded by eight arrows radiating out at all compass points. Another of those Chaos Stars. Looks like the opposition knows we're coming. Hargan threw some snow at the symbol which melted. We then tried covering it with lots of snow. That hid it for a while but it melted through after a few minutes.

Hargan checked its aura to determine how far away the person who created it was at the time of casting. The answer was 100 miles. According to the map, the distance to the highest peak was somewhere between 80-120 miles.

Starflower had insisted that we ditch the snake and spider medallions back at the village (I had tossed one in the well). However we discovered Glod had one in his pocket. Hargan had hidden it in there. Starflower was not amused. So we hid it under a large rock nearby.

We rode off. We must have looked a very odd sight. There was the rest of the party wrapped up warmly against the cold, then there was me, faintly glowing and dressed as if I was on a beach on Pasifika during summer. Starflower was very jumpy and paranoid but started to settle down around lunch time.

During the morning I felt a voice in my mind. It was a female voice, but unlike Starflower's, it had with a very distinct purr - just like Sh'rel at her most sultry. She commented on my glow saying it was interesting and wanted to know if I could teach it to her. I had to apologise and admit it was an accident. Her reply was "We'll have to look into that" before communication was cut. It had to be the 'snow tiger'.

Once we stopped for lunch I was amusing myself by covering my bare skin with snow and watching it melt off. When Glod and Hargan saw what I was doing they decided to bury me in

snow. Fairly soon I was covered in it with only my head showing. It just felt like I was immersed in cool water and was rather pleasant.

I was expecting the glow to wear off that afternoon, assuming I had tripled the spell, but it was still going by the time we reached a cave that evening. Since I had the light, Glod and I went in to check it out. The floor was covered with white fur and it was obvious this was where the 'snow tiger' had waited out the previous night's storm.

Night passed with no visitors and no more Chaos Stars.

17/01/96

Hargan wanted his Waters of Strength. Five attempts later I managed to create one. By now we're all starting to come to the conclusion that Hargan is getting addicted to Waters of Strength.

Nothing unusual happened all day. That evening Starflower suggested I try my Counterspells in order to get rid of my glow. When I finally got the General Counter going it didn't shift it. So I tried the Special Counter but something went horribly wrong. Anatheia did another divination and discovered that the 'curse' was now a major one with an MA rating of 25 and would last at least a month. Starflower gave up in disgust. No way could her curse removal move that. During all of this we discovered that we were in a high mana zone.

18/01/96

Again I backfired making Hargan's Waters of Strength draining quite a bit of my fatigue. By the time I got one done I needed to take one of Anatheia's restoratives then get healed by Starflower in order to travel. I also gave Hargan the permanent one, just in case he needed one and I couldn't make it.

Late that afternoon we topped a rise and could see the monastery/village below us. Even with my enhanced perception I could only see the buildings within the surrounding wall. The only signs of life was rising smoke from fires.

We continued on down the path which led through the bottom of a crevasse. The impression was that even an old lady with a broom could defend this path from attack. Finally we rounded a corner and could see the village again. The gate was open and we could see figures on the wall. As we approached we were hailed by a gentleman wearing a light grey tunic and sporting a symbol of two crossed pitchforks.

Starflower told him that we were on a mission from the Queen and that we had news. We had to see the person in charge as soon as possible. The person informed us that the village was ruled by a committee which led Hargan to make the muttered comment "At last. Civilisation".

As we passed under the gate we all felt a tingling. We noticed it was rather warmer in the village than outside. There were quite a few villagers in here and several of them were giving us curious glances. I also noticed that I was getting some rather surprised double-takes and stares.

We were shown to a bath house where we could freshen up while the committee were made aware of our arrival. I changed into my pearl white two piece, jumped into the bath and cast a Water Breathing on myself before throwing a short white cotton dress over the swimsuit and the sash. I also hid a dagger under the dress - just in case the attack arrived. All of the rest of our

gear, including armour and weapons were transported to sleeping quarters, much to Starflower's annoyance.

Shortly we were conveyed to the presence of the ruling committee. Starflower explained our mission and warned them that, according to our divinations, that they were under threat by the slavers. She managed to pick up one member, using telepathy, and got the distinct impression that they knew who we were talking about, and that he had been defeated before.

Just then there was a loud GOONNNNGGGGG! sound and the sky was lit by flashes of light. All the committee had gone into a trance. When I rushed to the nearest window we could see flashes of light bouncing off an invisible, hemispherical, shell that surrounded the entire village. Glod was able to determine that the flashes were spells impacting against a defensive screen, spells such as Hellfire and others that we weren't familiar with but appeared quite lethal. The attack had begun.

.5.

I was watching out a window and could see the inhabitants clustered in groups. They all looked like they were in a trance. Using my Clear sight, I could just see strands of energy emanating from each group reinforcing the shield. The only ones not taking part were the guards. They seemed unconcerned but I prepared for combat, just in case. Somehow I got the feeling that the guards were more interested in watching me than planning for a fight. Starflower cast a Limited Precognition spell and discovered that two hours later we would be in conference with the Council. When we asked we found that it had happened several times before and that the shield always held. It only has to fail once. Glod and Hargan were able to determine that all the spells being hurled against the shield were being focused through the same thing - probably the warpstone.

The attack stopped after an hour but I was still wary in case there was a resumption. Anatheia and I fed the council restoratives and Waters of Healing. I also supplied Hargan with a Waters of Strength.

The council still had to rest from the attack so we were shown back to guest quarters by the two guards. A short time later, it was time for dinner, even though the sun was higher in the sky than it should have been. We were really surprised when Glod read the food's aura and discovered it came from Avalon. The only Avalon I had heard of was a faerie plane. I just hoped that eating food from there wasn't going to do strange things like we had been warned could have happened with Tir-Na-Nog food.

After dinner we were conducted, by two different guards, to another section of the council chambers. This room was lined with books. I noticed that some of them were written in the same language that was on the sunken city of Pasifika.

The council told us that this place was on all planes. The attack came from Alushia, from a being that had been imprisoned there. Just then, the Siberian Snow Tiger walked right out of the wall. Some of the council started wearing an 'Oh no not her again' look. As she walked over she smoothly shape changed into human form. In that form, she had long black hair with a white streak, cat shaped emerald eyes, and a body hugging white suit that looked like tiger skin. She moved just like a cat and her body oozed sensuality. Her voice also had a sensual purr to it.

She introduced herself as Lady Rh'khay-el, a guardian inhabitant of Avalon and also a member of the royal family. The Royal family were partially to blame for the present situation. Long before Penjarre one of them had been consorting with powers from the lower planes and an offspring was produced. They believed in giving him the benefit of the doubt for a while but his actions (destroying a village to summon a demon) got him banished to Alushia with bonds that shouldn't have come free. And this was the second time. The first one was during Penjarre and it had taken quite a bit of power to put him back. They weren't sure what had caused it this time but it had something to do with the snake cult. That led us to suggest that their warpstone was responsible. She agreed saying that it focuses, channels and changes mana. There were no warpstones on any of the faerie planes, and for good reason. Such stones could warp the faerie folk themselves, being mana creatures as they are.

Our mission was to help restrain the Dark One. To do this we had to travel to Alushia's shadow planes and retrieve certain items secreted there. She explained that each shadow plane only represented one aspect of the total plane of Alushia. We had to retrieve one item each. Hargan - the Gloves of Laran, Anatheia - the Talisman of Obsidian, Me - The Feathered Cloak of the Ocean, Glod - the Hammer of Beltor, Starflower - The Circlet of Tiranth.

We would be plane-hopping from this village, returning here from each shadow plane. We were also warned to be careful what we picked up. The items together would strengthen the bonds and maybe even slow down the slavers. Resealing the bonds will strip the items of most of their powers. It may be possible to keep them afterwards. Also some on the shadow planes may be able to help us, others could be agents of the Dark One.

After the meeting, Lady Rh'khay-el took each of us aside and conducted a ritual that would enable us to find our item. When it was my turn I asked her if it would be a good idea to remove my glowing Resist Cold. She agreed and did a very fast Remove Curse ritual. I then succeeded in doing another Resist Cold. The spell was behaving a bit differently from normal so she then divinated me to see what it was doing. Apparently it was creating a narrow zone of warm air around me. My immediate thought was that cats were going to love me - and I'd have to ensure I didn't get too crowded with cold adventurers, especially their feet.

19/01/96

The next morning we prepared to enter the first shadow plane - the Shadow Plane of Darkness. Somewhere there was Anatheia's amulet.

.6.

I spent a lot of time in the pool. As well as the usual Waters of Strength for Hargan, Anatheia wanted a Waters of Healing in exchange for a Restorative so I used the pool to put a Waterbreathing on myself before creating the permanent potion. Then I did Hargan's potion. I was considering another Resist Cold but decided to use the kraken skin armour instead.

When we finally assembled, we were handed, on loan, Amulets of Luck made of some curiously shaped spiral teeth (+4 DEF, +5 MR). Glod said they were the teeth of mana-drakes, from the Plane of Kal-cien. Their inherent magic was that they were easy to enchant.

We were shown to the portal and stepped through. After a few moments of disorientation we found ourselves in a very dark place. Fortunately I had an Invested Firelight in one hand so I

triggered it. The resulting glow was rather muted than normal but at least we could now see. What we were in was a rather rough cut tunnel and it smelt like a sewer. We soon discovered it was a sewer. There were some doors in the wall and Anathea indicated one of them, the same door that Starflower believed to be the most dangerous.

The door in question was given a good going over before we even thought of opening it. For some strange reason, it glowed black through the ocular. Glod and Hargan quickly determined that the spell effect was Darkfire and it wasn't dangerous. So Starflower opened it. I had my dagger at the ready but nothing leapt out to attack us.

Anathea's directions led us through a maze of tunnels and doors. I managed to get a large splinter in my finger from one door so I pulled it out. It hurt really bad, and Starflower thought it might be infected so she put some sort of herbal solution on the wound. That stung!. It also didn't taste good when I resumed sucking at it.

After a while we reached a door that glowed purple. The nature of the magic in the ward was entrapment. College: Spider. That suggested a web so I began preparing myself to be wrapped up, just as the Bards had taught me. It would be triggered by the door being opened. Fortunately another door, leading in about the same direction, wasn't warded so we went through that instead.

The next door we encountered was also warded, and this time there was no alternative route. Hargan tried knocking a hole in the wall but that had no effect. The bricks refused to budge. So Anathea tried to burn the door down with Ignite Flammables. Her first attempt set the tinder in her tinderbox on fire. Fortunately we were able to get it out of her pack before the rest of it was set alight. Her next attempt on the door caused a small flame to appear on the door but the flame didn't catch.

Starflower then tried using telekinesis to open the door. It worked but Anathea, Hargan, and myself were enveloped in a sticky web which was covered with a poisonous, black, substance. Thanks to my training, I was able to wriggle free while Hargan broke his way out. We then helped Anathea out.

After healing the damage and poison we continued on. A few more doors (nonwarded) and I nearly stepped into a hidden cesspool. That was one patch of water I definitely didn't want to swim in.

The next door, Hargan decided to kick in and we passed through without incident. When I scanned the next door with the ocular there was a loud explosion and we were enveloped in a ball of fire. Again we had to stop to heal people up. Glod checked the aura of the floor, door, and walls and couldn't detect any more wards so we continued on. By now we were all expecting trouble so I partly shoved the firelight rod down the front of my armour and had both the dagger and maingauche out.

More doors later and we reached a deadend and started backtracking. But all the other doors we explored also ended up in dead end rooms. I managed to find a poison needle in a door by the simple method of being stuck with it. While Starflower started a Neutralise Poison I created a Waters of Healing to get rid of it.

Glod leaned against the wall. As he did, we heard a grinding sound deeper in the maze. We

investigated and discovered that a secret door had opened. We proceeded into a room with another wooden door at the end. Hargan enthusiastically kicked it in and splinters flew everywhere. This was the first door that wasn't made of ironwood. Pine according to Glod.

The opposite wall of the revealed room had a black glowing disk set in it. There was a ward in the floor and another in the air above. DAs soon determined the floor ward was Malignant Flames but it took Starflower's Limited Precog to reveal that the ward in the air was Telekinetic Rage.

Since the place was crawling with rats we started catching them and throwing them into the room. They didn't seem to be affected by the Telekinetic rage but as a rat landed on the floor a glowing red ball would briefly appear and the rat was literally fried. As the next rat was thrown in, Hargan shot at the globe with a silver tipped crossbow bolt and managed to hit it before it disappeared. It didn't reappear when another rat was thrown in.

Starflower started crawling into the room. The Telekinetic rage ward didn't activate but it was still there. She then laid down a series of Mind Counterspells. Anathea was quite certain the right direction was towards the disk so she walked across the room and touched it. She disappeared, but thanks to the Mind Speech that Starflower had previously set up, we knew that she was safe somewhere else in a volcanic cavern. Starflower then stepped towards the disk but was hurled out of the room. Fortunately she was caught in the net that Hargan and I had stretched out between us.

Glod was the next one to wander in. Nothing happened to him so he touched the disk and was transported to where Anathea was. I was next. Soon the rest of the party joined us. Since Starflower was the only one affected by the ward we concluded it was a ward designed to only activate when stepped on by faerie or faerie-kin.

We were near the entrance to a tunnel that led into the depths of an obsidian block. Anathea reported that her target was straight up. Then we noticed that light was pouring in through the entrance. So I went to have a look. The sun was rising, in what was later determined to be the west, and was moving at such a speed that it traversed the sky in an hour. Also the landscape had no colour. The mountain was a smooth obsidian block, impossible to climb. So we proceeded deeper into the block.

.7.

Finally we reached a chamber. The walls were black marble interlaced with silver threads. It was lit from an indeterminate source. On the opposite wall was the word TOUCH running from top to bottom. Engraved around it were eight triangles, pointing to each compass position. Glod reported it was magical with it's nature being teleportation. Anathea was definitely getting the feeling of 'up' and was itching to press the topmost triangle so Starflower did a limited precognition. All she got was black mist so Anathea decided to press it anyway. As soon as she did, all of us, except Starflower, was hurled to the side wall and slammed against it.

While Anathea did a divination with her tarot deck, I tried enhancing my vision and stared at the panel looking for a clue. All I got was a bad headache so Hargan massaged my temples. After a short while the headache went away. Meanwhile Starflower and Glod searched the chamber for secret entrances and didn't find any. They did find an invisible wall across the entrance.

The results of the divination told Anathea that pressing the right symbol would transport us to where the amulet was. However it couldn't tell us which one. It was also protected against any sort of precognitive visions. So Anathea played a hunch and pressed the down button. Nothing seemed to happen although Starflower detected mana impact. Last magical effect - transportation.

Then we realised we were not alone. The chamber looked the same but, along the walls were spaced thirteen humans wearing leather armour and carrying broadswords/shields as well as six seven foot tall creatures in plate mail and helms that looked like dragon wings. Then there was the large throne on the far wall, on which was seated a spider centaur wearing a black outfit. Four severed heads were dangling from a waist band. The odds were definitely not in our favour but we had to somehow win as the amulet was dangling from the creature's neck.

We were all bunched in the centre of the room. While I put a Spectral Weapon on my dagger, Glod, at Starflower's command, put a line of Hands behind us. Starflower and Anathea tossed spells at the spider-guy but they both rebounded on them. Then he disappeared. Meanwhile the rest of the opposition advanced on us. I was attacked by one of the big guys and all that I could do was evade as it was painfully obvious that my little dagger had hardly any chance of getting through the plate armour.

It was soon apparent that we were up against some sort of golems. The little ones were easy to dispatch, as Glod and Starflower showed, but the big ones were a different story. Some of those near misses were carving chunks out of my hair. Quite a bit of it ended up on the floor. I was getting very annoyed as well as getting very damaged. Hargan was trying to help me out but was getting into serious trouble himself. Plus it took me three goes before my Trollskin ring would work. I was about to use the last charge on Hargan, who had a serious chest wound, but was knocked unconscious before I could do so.

When I came around we were in a luxurious room with the guy in black, no longer a spider centaur. Turned out he was some sort of faerie, like a Daoine-Sidhe but of the UnSeelie kind. All our armour, weapons, and investments had been removed and an iron band had been locked around one wrist. Those of us who were down to our underwear (I was one) had a robe on. Also any running spells had been removed. Our wounds had been healed, my hair had grown back and was now down to my hips, and anything else wrong had been fixed. Hargan even had his other eye back.

He introduced himself as Shi'Kain of the Royal House of Durban and offered us refreshments. We were rather wary at first, but they proved to be very wholesome and delicious. Starflower explained the situation and requested the amulet in order to rebind the Dark One. Shi'Kain agreed that having the plane destroyed would be a tad inconvenient so he agreed to hand over the amulet on the condition that each of us would accept a geas to do something for him in the future. He assured us that whatever it was would not compromise any allegiances, beliefs, ethics, or our personal honour. Hargan took quite a bit of convincing (he didn't like this guy) but eventually we all agreed. So he laid the geas on us to help him when called and transferred the amulet to Anathea.

He then told us he would open a portal for us to get back to the village and that he was coming back with us. So that's what happened. Rh'khay-el was also in the room and it soon became apparent that these two went back a while. She looked daggers at him but he pointed out it had taken both the forces of Light and Dark to reseal the bonds the first time.

We asked which bit we had to get next and were told it was Starflower's circlet - on the Shadow Plane of Life.

.8.

Anathea's amulet proved to be almost completely resistant to divination, but they were able to determine that it was a combination of all the known amulets plus a few we hadn't heard of. They had also determined that we were to visit the Demiplanes of Death, Chaos, and Time. Unfortunately they couldn't give us any information on Life.

Starflower wanted to ensure that we all had Waters of Strength before we entered the next plane so I went on the scrounge for ingredients. What I found were four sets for Waters of Strength and five for Waters of Healing. So I made them up. Once I had done that Anathea arrived with three restoratives she wanted to swap for three Waters of Healing. So I was surrounded by bottles of liquid putting my marks on them. But somehow there was an extra Restorative. I was rather confused for a while until I discovered that a pixie had removed it from my pack.

20/01/96

The next morning I purified then prepared myself with a Water Breathing and Resist Cold. I had a hunch that the DemiPlane of Life wasn't going to be immediately hostile so it was the white skirt over the sash and pearl two-piece again. Just before we entered the portal we all drank a Waters of Strength each, except for Glod. For some reason he wasn't coming. I hadn't felt so strong since I was an orc.

Once through the portal we found ourselves in a rather large marketplace. Lots of stalls containing all sorts of goods. Starflower was looking rather on edge and wanted to get on with the job but the rest of us were more easily distracted. I headed for a clothing stall. Many of the styles were very similar to what I had seen in Britannia so I asked about swimwear. The shopkeeper didn't have any saying that there was no demand. Noone here wore anything when swimming. I didn't really have any answer to that. Then I spotted a red, longsleeved miniskirt with a black neckband, and matching panties. When I tried it on I found it fit very snugly at the waist and chest and came down to just below my hips. So I bought it, and a matching gold one. I also picked out several samples of fabric for Sh'rel. During all of this, Starflower and Hargan were at the weaponshops, and came back with finely crafted bows and crossbows.

We continued wandering through the market in the general direction that Starflower was indicating, stopping from time to time to look at shops. Even Starflower was relaxing. Shopping has a tendency to do that for us females, even female elves it seems. My next stop was a instrument maker where I allowed myself to be tempted by a harp which could be played both on land and underwater without much adjustment.

We then found a shop that sold minor magical items. The everfilling waterskin was very tempting, but very expensive. However Starflower and Anathea both went for combs that magically untangled hair. Anathea stated that no mermaid should be without a brush and mirror so I found a brush/comb/mirror set for 100sp. Only the brush was magical and was made from turtleshell. The mirror was set into a scallop shell. Starflower's prize was a teapot which was unbreakable and magically heated the contents. It and the matching teaset fitted into a remarkably small box. Honest Abdul said that it had once belonged to one M. Hatter. Anathea asked for a pouch that kept herbs fresh for longer, and she and Starflower both bought one.

Finally we found one shop that had me in instant raptures. It sold chocolate. Lots of it. Then I got this mental image of me consuming vast quantities of chocolate and rolling in fat. I went as bright red as the skirt I was wearing and chose a smaller assortment box to take away which I then gave to Anatheia to look after. A short while later I realised that it wasn't my thought but had been projected via Starflower's mindlink.

Finally we got out of the market place and went through a gate in the surrounding wall. Instantly we were in countryside with grass and gently rolling hills. A short while later we encountered a bush which spoke to us. It was soon apparent that this wasn't dense undergrowth but a Sentient Nightbush. It told us that other travellers had been this way but none had returned. Anatheia wanted to know if this was the way to the Source of Life. The plant replied that it was. Now I wonder what Anatheia is up to?

That evening we reached a river. Most of us wanted to stop and camp but Starflower insisted we carry on. She wanted out of this place as quickly as possible. It looked kneedeep but Hargan insisted it would be over our heads. So I offered to prove it but just in case, I'd use a safety rope and Hargan would hold the other end. Once prepared, I stepped into the river. Sure enough, it was knee deep. Just then Hargan pulled sharply on the rope and I lost my balance and fell into the water. As soon as I had pulled myself out I loudly demanded just why he had done it. He reckoned I had sank, like a stone, right out of sight.

While I dried myself and changed to the matching gold minidress, Anatheia tried to do an Install Flight on a tarpaulin. It went wrong and everything contacting Anatheia started trying to fly - including her clothes. While she desperately tried to salvage her dignity, I held up the tarpaulin as a screen until she managed to Counterspell the effect. The next attempt worked and Hargan was invited to sit on it. While the rest of us waded over Anatheia pushed the tarp. But once we reached the other side we discovered that everything from the neck down was wet.

Night fell. Couldn't see any stars but since there were six moons in the sky I wasn't really surprised. Finally we stopped for camp - and tea from Starflower's new magical teapot which heated the water by itself. We then slept in the open as the night was warm.

21/01/96

When we woke up, we discovered a few little furry animals had also curled up on us. As soon as we stirred they fled. After breakfast we tidied up and left the campsite in the same condition as we had found it, at least as much as we could.

By midday we had reached what appeared to be a very large walled city. A gate was ahead of us. Sitting in the gate was an extremely large tiger, even larger than the snow tiger. It wanted to know why it should let us pass. Starflower explained our mission and, finally, the tiger relented. It also told us that we would not be able to come back this way.

The path through the gate led us into a garden so Starflower continued leading us down the garden path until we discovered we were literally going in circles. Soon all of us were feeling dizzy and passed out.

When we recovered, we found ourselves in a bare room apart from a dais. On the dais was a figure who identified himself as Pan. His question was 'What is the one thing that the metaverse cannot do without'. After conferring and two wrong answers, Hargan and Starflower decided on the answer of 'Balance' which proved to be correct. Pan indicated the door behind him and we

went through to a glade. In its centre was a fountain, thirty odd feet wide and very deep. Resting on the dais in the centre was the circlet that Starflower had to get. However there was a further problem. The water was extremely magical and Anathea identified it as the Source of Life. Contact with it would change a person's aspect to Life, unless they were Death Aspected in which case it was pure poison.

While Starflower pondered what to do both Anathea and Hargan filled a waterskin with fountain water and drank it. Meanwhile I prepared myself for a swim even though I didn't want to lose my Water Aspect.

Starflower decided to try using telekinesis to get the circle. I was hoping she wouldn't drop it. As it drifted over the water I could see that it was exhausting Starflower. She collapsed just as it reached her.

We laid her out on a grassy knoll and waited - for some time.

22/01/96

It was nearly 22 hours later when she came around. Someone had managed to place the circlet nearby. Her first action was to put it on. Hargan read its aura and said that to remove the circlet now would result in mind-death for the wearer.

Anathea then used her tarot deck to figure out how to get back. The tower card came out so we looked around for someplace high. But there was nowhere obvious to go so we started trudging towards the forest. After climbing a rise Starflower was able to make out a spire sticking up from the trees. By evening we figured we were about halfway there.

23/01/96

This time when we woke up we found that a pride of sentient lions had joined us. I was woken up by a lion licking my face. They hunted breakfast for us while I supplied Hargan with his regular Waters of Strength. After breakfast I decided to join in the cubs rough and tumble play. I came out with a few bruises, scratches, and a very broad grin.

After the pride left us, we continued on our way. That afternoon we entered the forest and quickly found the tower. The interesting thing was, it looked exactly like the one on Anathea's tarot card. All that was inside was a set of rickety looking wooden spiral steps leading up. I put my foot on the first one and it creaked rather alarmingly. We decided to take a chance and kept close to the walls.

Halfway up, with the stairs creaking and groaning at every step, Starflower came to the conclusion that the stairs were more solid than they appeared. So she projected a thought at them. It turned out that they were sentient. So we were all treated to a series of ribald comments, especially me when they discovered the view up my skirt.

Finally we reached the top and discovered a shimmering white disk in the air above. I was sure it was the way home but Starflower insisted Anathea divinate it before we went through. Since there wasn't much room on the platform I decided to sit on the stairs. Maybe that would also give them a thrill. Besides, if they got too obnoxious, I could always threaten to carve runes in them with my dagger.

Finally Anathea had determined that this was indeed the way back. Starflower didn't hesitate for a moment and went through it. I wasn't too far behind and ended up in a pond in the town garden. Starflower had come out alongside it. We waited for a while for the other two but nothing happened for a while. We were starting to worry that they had decided to stay when they popped through. Both of them missed the pool.

We were conducted to the Council chamber and informed that our next target was Glod's Hammer on the DemiPlane of Death. They had also determined that after that was my Cloak on the Chaos Demiplane and finally the Gloves on the Time Demiplane. Starflower wanted to know what the circlet did, but they couldn't tell her, and neither could it be divinated, so she threatened to experiment until she found it out.

.9.

24/01/96

That morning I did a triple Waterbreathing and a Resist Cold on myself then did Waters of Strength all round. I then discovered that there was a representative from the Demiplane of Death in the village. So I went to see him to find out what the conditions were like even though I wasn't quite sure what to expect. After noticing that everything around his house was dead I went in with trepidation . However I soon discovered that he was a rather nice chap. So was the drink he offered. All he could tell me was that it appeared different everytime so I could find anything. Also not just the dead were there but the undead and the damned. So I promised to return to tell him what we encountered. As I thanked him and left, I noticed that his teeth gave away the fact he was a vampire.

Once through the portal we found ourselves in a battlefield. The area was ankle deep in mud and gore. Bodies lay everywhere. The smell was horrific. The uniforms and weapons were many and varied. Even the Planes of Origins of the bodies were very varied.

Glod led us towards the biggest concentration of bodies. Faintly, ahead, we could hear the sounds of gunfire. Just then we could hear a descending whistling sound. Starflower yelled 'DUCK!'. While I was looking around for the aquatic fowl there was an explosion nearby and we were hurled off our feet and into the mud.

A short while later, Glod stepped on a disk and there was a 'click'. He concluded that taking his foot off it would be a very bad thing. Finally Starflower used Telekinesis to hold the button down while Hargan pulled Glod off. When Starflower released the button the disk exploded.

Suddenly we found ourselves in a landscape created by our worst fears. In my case it was a dry, ice covered landscape. Just then a large metal bird flew up behind us and started firing stuff at us. As the projectiles impacted some strange mist floated all around us. Soon, most of us discovered we were covered in black spots - some sort of disease. Only Hargan was unaffected. Starflower's herbal remedy managed to abate it but not cure it.

I still seemed to be trudging through ice but suddenly we were surrounded by fire as well. Starflower had another go at the disease but the only one she managed to cure was me. Meanwhile Glod led us towards the hottest part of the fire. Then the scene changed again and we were all enveloped in water, although in my case it was nearly solid ice. I also started frantically throwing Waterbreathings at the others.

Just then Glod, followed by Starflower, vanished. However the rest of us soon found them as the

scene changed and we found ourselves in a food hall. And the food there was irresistible. I dived straight into the chocolate and basically made a pig of myself. Fortunately Anathea managed to resist and began hypnotisms to stop us. By then I was virtually covered in chocolate.

Once we sorted ourselves out, Glod led us down a corridor from the hall. At the other end was a large room, at least a thousand feet on each side. Floating in the middle was a crystal block with the hammer inside. When we entered, we found we were climbing up an invisible, bound air, staircase towards the cube.

When Glod reached the cube, he discovered that both it, and the hammer, were insubstantial. However his direction sense was definitely pointing towards it. He tried various suggestions to get the hammer but nothing worked. Anathea did a divination and got the result 'He who wants the Hammer must summon'.

Finally Glod used raw mana to summon it. Instantly the crystal and hammer became solid and the staircase was stone. He then managed to draw it out of the block. The haft was silver while the head was black obsidian.

Once the hammer was in Glod's possession the portal back appeared and we went through it. Upon arrival, we cleaned ourselves up and I went to relate what we had found to the undead gentleman.

The Council then told us that the Demiplane of Time was next.

25/01/96

Again I did the usual spells then we stepped through the portal. This time we appeared on a featureless plane. Also we discovered we were moving at different speeds. To slow me down I was picked up by Hargan. Just then we saw a door and went through it.

Once through the door we were all back at the same speed. We were standing on a wharf. Ahead of us was a decaying city that Nature was in the process of reclaiming. Just then we recognised it as being Seagate, at least 3000 years in the future. The harbour was very clean and I was tempted to throw off my clothes and jump in the water, just to try it out. Hargan started sketching a picture of the place with the intention of submitting it as the next Seagate Times cover labelled 'Is this our future?'. Meanwhile I spoke to some dolphins and discovered that the last signs of humans they had seen was metal ships on the water. Some sort of mass exodus they thought.

Hargan led us towards the Guild buildings. As we went through Seagate it definitely appeared to be the Seagate we knew. However four cathedrals had been added around the town square, each one to a different Power of Light and something had destroyed them but the buildings around them were untouched by whatever it was.

There was a hole in the middle of the Sweetwater bridge and we soon discovered that was caused by a statue of Raphael that was now partly buried in the river. The river itself was sweet and clean, something I had never seen before, so we quickly bottled some samples to take back.

Just as we crossed the bridge some ominous grey clouds with flashes of purple, blue, and green rapidly rolled in towards the Guild. We recognised it as a mana storm and sprinted towards the main gates, just getting through before the storm hit. The clouds boiled ominously around but a

clear spot was maintained just over the Guild itself.

Inside the place was utterly deserted. We headed for the main meeting room and the protection of its anti-magic zone. Once there, Hargan soon came to the conclusion that the gloves were in the Vaults. Meanwhile I studied the notice board and discovered that the last entry was 3567AP.

Our next stop was the Library to try to ascertain what had happened. Everything there was well preserved so we leafed through the records. Someone tried finding the scribe notes for this adventure but discovered that they were only written to the point we were up to. Other attempts soon told us that we weren't going to find anything out about our immediate future.

But what we did discover was alarming. Apparently the priests of the Powers of Light decided to build the temples then succeeded in summoning the Powers themselves. With all that elan power around, and the fact that the Powers of Light don't like magic, meant that the mana levels immediately dropped to virtually non-existence. In order to regain the Balance an attempt was made to summon the Powers of Darkness using virtually everything in the Vaults to power the ritual. Unfortunately something went wrong and most of the guild were lost while closing the gate. Those that were left fled west to found a new Guild somewhere on Terra Nova.

We found the vaults and the octarine doors were standing ajar. Obviously Guild Security forgot to lock them when they left. I was expecting something to jump out at us but the vaults were bare. All that were left were twelve swords with names like Coinspinner, Woundhealer etc mounted on the wall behind mana walls. On a pedestal in the middle of the room were a pair of gauntlets, one white, the other black.

Hargan picked them up and put them on. Once he did, the doors swung shut and the portal back appeared. When we went through we discovered that each of us had got younger, six years in my case. Hargan proclaimed that we had got time off for good behaviour.

Now we had the last item to get. My cloak, in the Demiplane of Chaos.

.10.

26/01/96

Again it was the usual morning spells: Waters of Strength all round, followed by a Waterbreathing and Resist Cold for me. Also I didn't want to take any chances that Chaos magic would cause my Belt of Merform to unexpectedly trigger so I decided to dress in case I was about to use it.

Once the portal was up, we stepped through. All around us were swirling patterns of colour. I concentrated on the direction then gingerly stepped forward. Even though it didn't look like we were standing on solid ground, it soon became apparent that there was something solid under our feet. Soon we saw something ahead, a forest of screaming trees. They were literally screaming. It was about that time I noticed that Glod's axe had turned into a mango on the end of a breadstick and Starflower had grown what appeared to be demonic wings. I just concentrated on retaining my own shape, blocking out the screams, and following the direction.

Starflower took off to have a look around. When she returned I noticed that she must have been tempting chaos. Her wings were now more draconic and other parts of her were also looking dragonish. Tiranath's influence I suspected. Then I realised I was starting to grow an extra tail, like an eel. Meanwhile Anatheia had grown extra arms.

Once out of the forest, we found ourselves on an iridescent plain. Even with the sunglasses and my Clear sight, it was still too brilliant so I blindfolded myself. By now Hargan was sprouting extra eyes, some of which were on stalks, and Starflower had turned into a dragonkin. She had to ditch her kraken skin armour before it broke.

The next feature was a river. But no ordinary river. This was a river of blood. Starflower looked at it as if she was fighting the urge to take a drink. I was not keen on swimming it, in fact I didn't even think it was breathable. Meanwhile Hargan leapt across. Anatheia climbed on Starflower's back and they flew across. Just then a bridge appeared and I followed Glod over it, and right next to where a barrel of ale was standing. Apparently that hammer has a built in ale detection sense.

We continued on and soon we could see a city ahead. Objects were flying in the sky above it. By now my tail had lengthened, and scales were sprouting all over me. The city was composed of black stone and the buildings were all sorts of shapes - except squares. As we approached, something came out to meet us, a large red devil complete with cloven hoofs and arrow tipped tail. He welcomed us to Necropolis and told us that we had to give him our souls in order to gain entry.

It didn't take me long to determine that the cloak was in the city but we didn't trust this devil enough to accept. So Starflower tried a truth telling ritual. Even under that, he assured us that our souls would be returned, unharmed, when we were ready to leave. So, as a mark of good faith, I volunteered to be first - after insisting on a receipt.

He touched us and we felt something pass from us and be stored in glass bottles around his waist. Each soul was a different colour.

We walked in and noticed that the place was full of mausoleums. Dominating the city was a large, black, pyramid which was discharging mana from the tip into the sky. It was to this pyramid that I was being led to. It was becoming increasingly apparent that I was turning into a shark-kin, despite my best efforts to resist.

The walls of the pyramid were very smooth and there were no entrances at ground level. Starflower flew up and discovered there was an opening at the tip, right where the mana was coming out. As I contemplated how I was going to get up there, I became aware of octopi suckers forming on my arms and legs. So I started crawling up while trailing a rope behind me.

Soon everyone was up. I decided to go first through the mana, as this was my object quest so I should take the risk. Nothing happened apart from a tingling. Then we discovered that all our running spells and enchantments had dropped off. I wasn't keen on casting magic on this shadowplane but Glod did an Armour of Earth, and became covered in it, while Starflower conjured up a big glowing shield in front of her. Wall of Force I soon deduced. Also she used her telepathy and picked up 4 vampires, three spectres, and a werewolf. Fortunately they were all outside.

We went down a long flight of steps and, even though we were still in the pyramid, found ourselves on the shore of a large lake. My direction sense was telling me that the cloak was in the lake so I cast Water Breathing on everyone and we went in. By now I had transformed into a marine orc which led to a revival of the 'Orcqualina' jokes.

We descended to the depths and, at the bottom, found an island encased by a bubble of air. Located in the middle of the island was a clothes rack. On the clothes rack was a feathered cloak. I reached out to touch it but found it was encased in Bound Water.

I sat and puzzled over it for a while then shifted into Waterform. That allowed me to merge with the water but then I discovered that the cloak was insubstantial. So I came out to think about it some more. Anatheia started laying out tarot cards but then I had an idea. After merging with the water, I cast Liquid Transformation on the cloak. That made it substantial enough to touch and acquire.

As I clipped it on, I became aware of a female voice in my head. She introduced herself as Collage, the entity that had become the cloak. It turned out that she was a rather high powered Water Mage herself and used to be a nixie. She wasn't sure just how powerful she'd be after the confinement ritual but, as we compared notes, it soon became apparent that the Water College had been severely weakened and there was a lot I still had to learn. Also she was rather interested in my firemage friend who liked water. Obviously she meant Jhiselle.

I had to wait for the duration of the Waterform to wear off before I could become flesh again but it was decided to get out of here before we changed for the worse. So we swam back to the surface to the lake. But when I tried to leave the water, I collapsed into a puddle and had to slip back to the water in order to retain my shape. While I was wondering how to get around this problem Collage stepped in and did a Bind Water on me. Hargan later commented that, after that, I had a very high physical beauty. I told him to memorise that so he could draw a picture of it.

When we passed through the mana flow, we found we were all back to our normal forms and shapes, except Starflower who was still a dragon-kin. That made getting us down relatively easy by Starflower ferrying us down to the bottom. The minds that Starflower detected were assembled near one corner of the pyramid, apparently having some sort of tea party. We were intending to sneak around them by heading in another direction but then we were approached by a rather tall lady with long dark hair who invited us to join their group. She was obviously a vampire.

We were very suspicious, in case they intended us ill-will, but this proved not to be the case. In fact they proved to be rather pleasant hosts. The food and drinks they provided were very delicious and I even got their recipe for marinated fish. Afterwards they escorted us to the city gate where the tall devil was waiting.

He still had our souls and handed them to us with an instruction to drink the contents. Hargan then asked for a Waters of Strength to be cast on his liquid soul. I warned him that I was completely unsure what would happen if I did that but he insisted, so I did.

After we drank our souls the devil opened a portal and, after passing through, we found ourselves in the village between planes. Because we had lost our enchantments they offered to put up Rank 19 Greater's but they would only last a short time, probably a month or so.

27/01/96

That midnight, the ritual was started in order to activate the portal to where the Dark One was. In one of the groves we all sat in a circle, holding hands. Some of the council and the two fey were also linked in. As the chanting grew we could feel the power building us and flowing

through us. All of us were enveloped in the glow of mana.

Suddenly, in front of the vampire's hut, a large gate, bound in chains, appeared. At first it shimmered and shifted but became solid. Then the chains unclasped and the pillars supporting the gates began to glow. Finally, ominously, the gates slowly swung open.

.11.

The whole process had taken quite a bit of time so it was now that we prepared ourselves with the usual spells. All we could see through the open gate was a swirling black void. This time we had company on our quest. Both Rh'kay-el and Sh'Kain were coming with us, she as a white tiger and he as a black panther. Sh'Kain was kind enough to throw Witchsights on those who needed it.

Once prepared we stepped through the gate and found ourselves falling through a dark expanse occasionally lit up by flashes of lightning. After, what seemed like an eternity, we landed on something solid. I was able to roll with the landing and ended up on my feet with my weapons drawn and crouched in a defensive position. Other members of the party weren't so lucky. When nothing had attacked us in the next few minutes I relaxed slightly while the others sorted themselves out.

Just then we could hear ominous buzzing sounds. Coming in fast were what appeared to be giant mosquitos. That was rapidly confirmed by Glod's DA talent. They dived bombed us and the one attacking me missed and impacted on the ground. Before it had time to recover I jumped on it, squishing it. The two fey cats were doing an even better job, pinning two each. Meanwhile I asked Collage to surround us with a series of Geysers. Hopefully that'll slow them down. Unfortunately, as the geyser streams went up, I was hit in the back by another.

Starflower and Anatheia had also been hit but were soon able to deal with those. Meanwhile S'Kain dealt with mine. Anatheia then started casting spells in order to blind them. To her surprise, a few more of them burst into flame. She looked aghast at her amulet for using Hellfires.

After a few more of that, and the two cats casting multiple fireballs, the remaining mossies were either dealt to or in retreat. I was about to ask Collage to shut down the geysers when they shifted, forming a corridor. I could hear her mental chuckle.

Starflower checked us all over and discovered that the people who had been hit had acquired a rather nasty disease. It proved to be no problem for Tiranth.

None of us had any definite idea which way to go except for Glod's hammer so we decided to follow it's lead. What we did find was a rather large lake of ale. The hammer nearly pulled Glod in with it's eagerness to consume the amber liquid. Once it was sated we picked a random direction. We must have got lucky because it wasn't long before we saw a cave mouth in a large rock. We knew that the Dark One had been imprisoned underground so we figured this was it.

We headed in. A short while later, Tiranth picked up several minds: one faerie, some snakes, some spiders and several lesser minions. He reported that they were two miles away. Starflower was impressed. Rh'kay-el explained that the companions would be performing the binding ritual while we would be keeping the lesser minions off their backs.

A mile and a half out, we stopped while Rh'kay-el and S'kain performed a ritual. Half an hour later we all felt a dislocation and our companions appeared. Collage turned out to be a very beautiful nixie dressed in a very brief crocheted g-string bikini. It looked really good on her but I don't think I'd ever have the nerve to wear anything like that in public. I prefer my clothing a tad more modest. Anathea's companion was a middle aged woman, Glod's was a crusty old dwarf, Hargan's was a pair of identical twins while Starflower's companion was a silvery blue mana-drake.

Finally we reached the end of the corridor which swung open as we approached. We could all sense big trouble at the other end. Inside were one large fey (the Dark One), two spider mages, two fey mages, a group of deep ones and some ratmen. As the companions took up positions to start the ritual we, and the two fey, prepared for a big fight. I triggered a Spectral Weapon on my dagger.

Hands of Earth stopped two of the deep ones while three of the ratmen got fried. The rest charged in an attacked. Meanwhile one of the mages cast a slowness, affecting Hargan and Rh'kay-el. Starflower suchied her attacker but I wasn't so lucky being immediately stunned. Starflower then minced the one that got me but was hit herself. Immediately she started to transform to dragonkin - which didn't do her chitenplate armour a lot of good.

Soon spells were flying around as well. One of the spider mages burst into flame. Meanwhile a ratman was standing away from us firing gas grenados at us. As soon as I recovered from stun I decided to try and take him out, after drinking a pre-prepared Waters of Healing. Starflower had completed her transformation by now so she flew over and used the rip,tear,rend method on one of the other mages.

Unfortunately, as I was heading off in that direction, Hargan tried firing at that ratman but the shot missed. The bolt thudded into me instead. While in a dazed state I fumbled for another Waters of Healing from my utility belt and drank it. Just to make sure I followed it up with my final one.

The companions were still conducting the ritual but, every so often, energy bolts were being fired at them. By now they were looking rather frazzled. Also Glod & Hargan were double whammied by a Ball of Cold and a Ball of Fire. To counter the spell effects, Starflower flew in on the Dark One while the two cats went for the other mages.

As I got closer to the ratman I could see that his arm was actually a tube through which the grenados were being fired. He aimed at me and I held my breath. Suddenly his arm exploded. Must have been a misfire. A spider mage had skittered up the wall and was still firing at the companions.

Just then the ritual completed and the Dark One was enveloped in chains. Deep claw marks appeared on him as well. The surviving mages disappeared. The Companions also disappeared and reappeared in the items. Collage was definitely weaker when I made a tentative enquiry. As the grenado firing ratman collapsed, something dropped off him and started beeping. I moved forward cautiously but someone else recognised what it was and called out for immediate evacuation. As I headed out the door there was a huge explosion.

Rh'kay-el transported us all back to the village, I had to spend the next six hours being decontaminated from the results of a warpstone explosion as I was caught in the blast. But after

that, and a soak in the pool, we were wined and dined. The Council covered all our expenses with 300sp left over.

They portalled us back to Widdishin and the two fey went with us. Once the queen received our report we were paid another 6000 each. They had managed to get a portal set up to Seagate but I decided to stay a while and finish my training with the Bards.