

Kedri, Sushi and Calimari Surprise

Cover Sheet

Adventure by William Dymock

01/04/95 - 26/05/95

Player Characters

Starflower	Mind	Elf	Female	Military Scientist
Glass	Illusionist	Human	Male	Party Leader
Gretchen	Illusionist	Giant	Female	
Tussock	Air	Hobbit	Female	Scribe
Darksinger	Necromancer	Human	Male	
Daroin	Necromancer	Dwarf	Male	
Aqualina	Water	Human	Female	

Plane

Alusia

Places Visited

Jermarc - village of merpeople

Shamalk's cave

A nearby island

The Great Bowls - fresh water areas at the bottom of the sea

A sunken Calimari voidcruiser

Sunken Calimari site

Aquatic elf village

Merfolk town of Balmain

Employer

Alex Dennethbure - brewer

Major NPCs encountered

Shamalk - mermaid priestess of Itimanuka

Shamalk's nautilus familiar

Calaine - islander that spoke Common

Cardrey - island warrior

Madari - island shaman

Lady Athena - elven Seeker, interested in Calimar

Caliphele - Lady Athena's assistant

Queen Corrinthana - elven queen in village

Tenal - Alex's mermaid wife

Tekae - shaman on another nearby island

Maria - ex Calimar slave

Edmund - mayor of Balmain

Mission

Find the inhabitants of the village of Jermarc

Kedri, Sushi, and Calimari Surprise

Adventure Summary

31/03/95

We met our employer, Alex Dennethbure, who wanted a party to find the inhabitants of his village of Jermarc. This village is underwater, two weeks away by boat to the west. Most of the inhabitants are merfolk with a few humans.

01/04/95

Got through the Destinian blockade and headed out to sea.

09/04/95

Reached the island near where Jermarc is located

11/04/95

Finally found Jermarc. It's coral dome had holes in it. Inside were lots of wreckage, scattered weapons, piles of dust, more holes but no bodies. Discovered the attackers were elves and had come from up-current. Used a Waters of Vision to check out the nearby town. That looked ok.

Used an air bubble at the top of the brewery to summon a spirit. Told that the attack was 'to aid cause of the Elder Lords' and the bodies were taken away 'to serve the Elder Lords'. A group of goblins attacked. Three escaped, one was captured. They were scouting and scavenging. Captive released with instructions to tell the tribe not to return.

Headed off toward's Shamalk's cave. She's an middle-aged mermaid and priestess of Itimanuka.

14/04/95

Found the cave, guarded by Shamalk's giant nautilus familiar. Shamalk told us that the villagers had chosen not to heed their warnings and had been taken by the 'ones with the chariot'. She also mentioned dark forces in the sea. The slaves had been taken to the Great Bowls, five days upcurrent.

15/04/95

Continued up-current. Felt an earthquake midday and discovered a plume of smoke and a red glow to the south west. Attacked by sharks that evening. Gretchen and Tussock were killed and Darksinger had vanished. Started to take the bodies back to Shamalk for resurrection.

18/04/95

Tussock and Gretchen resurrected. Spent time recovering.

22/04/95

Waters of Vision showed Darksinger paddling a canoe between islands. Went to check out the nearby islands. Reached the island. No sign of Darksinger but, when we showed an image of him, the natives referred to him as Remari. Remari is a legendary giant who dresses in black with no hair. During dinner, Darksinger arrived, followed by a group of warriors.

After dinner, saw the shaman, Madari, who told us there was evil below the ocean. 'Back in the time when gods walked the earth, there came a some strange people who built an alien structure

on the surface of the water then declared war. What they did so angered the gods that they caused the island, with the structure on it, to sink. But it is said that when flame appears in the south that they will rise again'. It was generally agreed that the volcano to the south was the sign.

25/04/95

Left on our raft and reached the area where the shaman had indicated where the structure was. This was also the approximate location of the Great Bowls. Descended to the bottom and found the wreck of a Calimari Voidcruiser in one of the bowls. Took treasure, including the ship's helm and what appeared to be a female 'zombie' under some sort of hibernation spell. Contact was made with the spirit of the Calimari skeleton who told us that the helm was working but he didn't know what had caused it to momentarily fail and cause the crash.

26/04/95

Found a sunken galley and attacked by undead. After defeating them some elves turned up. Starflower introduced herself and us as her retinue. They wanted us to go with them to their settlement further down the basin and meet the Lady Seeker, the daughter of their Queen, who was searching for something in the basin. It was her whim that the elves had settled here. Starflower declined.

27/04/95

Reached the bottom of the basin and found a stone building. There we found a couple of elves, one being the Lady Seeker, Lady Athena, who was seeking knowledge, especially of the Calimar. We gave her the Calimari skulls and as much information as we had. In exchange she told us that the missing villagers are at the Place at the Edge of Fear where the elven queen is.

28/04/95

Reached the elven village. Saw the merfolk working in the fields with elven overseers. Starflower spoke to Queen Corranthana. They had taken the merfolk from Jermarc as they hadn't brought their previous set of slaves with them. The Queen would release the villagers if we could find alternative slaves. Starflower managed to arrange for a mermaid, Alex's wife - named Tenal, to be 'loaned' to her. All the villagers were accounted for except for the headman.

Later a Speak with Dead ritual was conducted. Discovered there was another Calimar site and that there was a portal under the building the Seeker was investigating that the Calimar had originally come through. It could still be active.

02/04/95

Decided to investigate the center of this basin. Discovered the water was hotter at the center and a sleeping big red scaly dragon - 25ft long with a 60ft wingspan.

05/05/95

Made our way back to the island group with Tenal. Managed to get the 'zombie' revived. She was named Maria and was the head servant on the ship.

06/05/95

Reached the area where Jermarc was and arrived at the town of Balmain where Alex was waiting. Reunited him and his wife.

07/05/95

Saw the mayor and tried to warn him of the coming apocalypse, believed to be connected to the Calimar and their portal. Headed back to the islands. The shaman there had also done divinations and concluded a battle was imminent.

08/05/95 (White Lotus Day - a High Holiday of Darkness)

Visions showed the islands scythed off all life. Preparations were made for a mass evacuation. Headed for the Calimari site where the Seeker had been. Discovered that the golems were all in bits - torn apart. There was also the body of a male elf. Scrying the area where the elven village was showed that they had left in an orderly fashion. The interior of the building was in a shambles.

When I tried to swim in I heard the message "This is a warning you fools for those who meddle in the affairs of the Calimar".

In a nearby hole we discovered more dead elves and something that looked like a brain on legs in the centre of the room between two pillars. As we came in the pillars glowed and the brain-thing vanished.

As we tried to knock the pillars over some pikemen materialised between them and attacked. After a battle, those that were left surrendered and the pillars were knocked over. As they went over there was an explosion. The pikemen told us they served the Calimar and were there to guard the portal.

We wanted to find out where the elves went but, as we reached the surface, we were greeted with a light show and four Voidcruisers appeared. The pikemen took off for parts unknown as we abandoned the raft and swam away towards Shamalk's cave. Maria was still with us.

On the way we were intercepted by a group of Calimar and held captive in one of the voidcruisers. The Calimar wanted to know why we had opened the portal. We told them the elves had done it. After a while we were released after handing over the helm as ransom. We were told never to return to this area again. Maria was to stay with us and live out her life in Carzala.

Once released we headed straight for the Guild arriving back there after 18 days.

Kedri, Sushi, and Calimari Surprise

31/03/95

Our party employer, one Alex Dennethbure, wanted a party to find the inhabitants of his village of Jermarc. The really interesting thing about this was that all the villages were underwater. Alex had been here before, but I hadn't been able to go on that adventure which was a pity as a completely underwater adventure would be really exciting - and different. There aren't many of those on offer.

Alex introduced himself as the brewer of his village. He also admitted he was a Water Mage himself but claimed to be relatively inexperienced. He said that Nendil had been better at casting the Water Breathings than he was.

My fellow adventurers were:

Starflower - a female elf neuromancer.

Glass - male human illusionist

Gretchen (BFG) - female frost giant illusionist

Tussock - female hobbit aeromancer

Thoron Darksinger - male human necromancer

Daroin - male dwarf necromancer

and me, Aqualina, human female aquamancer.

Alex told us that Jermarc is two weeks away to the west by boat. Sounds like it's halfway to Pasifika. However, I don't think it's in King Kierl's domain. Most of the inhabitants are merfolk with Alex being one of the few humans.

After some discussion, Glass became the party leader (Gretchen also nominated herself) and Tussock volunteered to be scribe. Starflower offered her services as Military Scientist.

On Glass's suggestion, I forked out 5,000 for a 15pt Greater from an enchanter called Phillip, deposited 600sp with the Curse Removal department (just in case) then went up to the Water College and spent the rest of the day making Waters of Strength and Waters of Healing potions as well as Waterproofings for Gretchen. At the end of the day I had three WoH and 1 WoS for us.

.2.

01/04/95

I headed up to the Water College where I did a WaterBreathing and Resist Cold on myself, collected my gear, then went to join the others in the Guild Courtyard. I was about five minutes late but Tussock was still missing. Glass went looking for an enchanter to put a Locate on her. He finally tracked her down, sleeping in a coil of rope on the wharf.

Alex had brought a pile of wood with him and tossed it into the harbour. Then he cast a Ship Strength and created a long boat. To the further consternation of the sailors on the dockside Alex then incanted again and soon a large wave was propelling us along at speed away from Seagate, and straight towards the line of Destiny ships blockading the harbour. I ensured (with Glass's help) that my chocolate was well hidden.

As we approached we were hailed and asked to heave to. So we hove to next to one of the ships and this sergeant type wanted to know whether we had anything to declare. No chocolate - just adventurers. He then wanted to know why we hadn't declared that dwarf and insisted that we were to be searched. So he started coming down a ladder. He started to inspect our packs. He looked into Daroin's pack and then rushed at Daroin in a berserk rage. Gretchen stood up to intervene and rocked the boat. Gretchen, Daroin, Darksinger and Starflower ended up in the water. The sergeant dived in after Daroin. I dived in after the others as some of them couldn't swim very well. Gretchen was closest but it looked like she was in no danger. However Daroin and the sergeant were sinking and fighting so I headed for them next. As I got close the sergeant suddenly fell unconscious (I later found out that an invisible Starflower had sapped him). As quickly as I could I put a Water Breathing on both of them then helped them to the surface.

Once we returned the waterlogged sergeant to his ship we were on our way again. As a parting shot, Glass sent back an illusionary albatross which was programmed to die on their boat.

That evening I summoned some tuna for dinner and Glass used illusions to make it appear as cooked food. There wasn't enough room on the boat for us all to sleep so I changed to merform and slept in the water.

02/04/95

After gathering some kelp for Glass (he's a vegetarian) and squid for the others I returned to the boat and we continued on our way.

09/04/95

It was eight days later when we reached the island that Alex had been aiming for. Jermarc was somewhere nearby. It was a very well stocked island, in fact surprisingly so. I gathered up some coconuts for provisions - and to take some back. Alex had three caps that bestowed waterbreathing. Gretchen, Glass, and Tussock got them. I cast Waterbreathings on the others and we waded into the water. I spent most of the trip in merform.

11/04/95

Finally found Jermarc. There was a coral dome over it. Nendil had reported it as being intact but now there were holes in it. Inside there were lots of wreckage, scattered weapons, piles of dust, more holes but no bodies. Darksinger managed to question some spirits and discovered that the attackers were elves and that the bodies had been taken away up current (they referred it to up river). There had been some strange happenings in the village before hand and some elves had visited, but had left before the attack came. Scouts?

Darksinger then tried to find out more about the strange happenings. Magic had been involved and the changes had affected the villagers and had been welcomed but had surprised them. We then discovered that it was a religious matter and that the Goddess Itimanuka was involved. I had already found out that Alex and many of his people worshipped her. I resolved to find out more.

Apparently Itimanuka appeared in a vision to her local priestess, Shamalk who lived as a hermit upstream. We decided to go and find her. In the meantime I was wondering if the other villages were ok. Alex only knew the location of the town so I used a Waters of Vision to view it. It looked intact with merfolk swimming around. Alex said that was normal.

There was an air bubble in the top of Alex's brewery so Darksinger decided to talk to some sort of spirit in order to determine what had happened. So he carefully drew a pentagram and started his ritual. He was told that the attack was 'to aid the cause of the Elder Lords' and that the bodies were taken to 'serve the Elder Lords'. When he asked where they went, the spirit said 'I'll take you' and reached out of the pentagram to grab him. Gretchen also reached out and grabbed Darksinger resulting in a tug of war. Gretchen won and pulled Darksinger out of the way. Meanwhile Glass and Starflower went into combat with it and it soon expired. Its last comment was 'Beware the abomination'.

As we sorted each other out there was a sound from the roof. Glass and Gretchen immediately went through the entrance pool to investigate. I wasn't too far behind and decided to change into merform for the greater speed. Meanwhile Starflower searched the area with ESP and detected four goblin minds.

When the goblins saw the giant Gretchen coming at them they decided to make a speedy withdrawal. Gretchen was able to grab one and bring it back. The other three got away. Glass tried questioning the goblin but didn't learn much. They were basically scouting and scavenging. So Glass let it go with instructions to tell the rest of the tribe not to come back.

12/04/95

It was going to take a few days to reach Shamalk's cave so it was suggested that I ask some dolphins if they would assist us. However this proved to be more difficult than I thought. Some of the deep water species aren't as bright as their coastal cousins I usually deal with. However I soon got the message across and we were on our way. This pod was more concerned about hunting in the Cold Seas. Maybe I will take up their invitation to join them there but not yet. After a while we had to stop and rest.

14/04/95

I finally managed to distract the dolphins from disturbing the others, while they were purifying, by joining them in a hunt. Three more had turned up. After breakfast we continued on. After a while as the dolphins came up to breath, we could see an island ahead. Alex said that Shamalk lived at the base. So we dived down to the seafloor.

Soon Alex pointed out the cave. Just then we noticed something in it - something with a large eye. A minute or so later a giant nautilus came out and rumbled at us. Glass told us to keep our distance and not to attack. Gretchen's reply was 'If it picks me up and moves me towards its mouth, is that an attack or a discussion'. Glass categorised that as an attack. Meanwhile I quickly cast another Speak with Aquatics keyed to Nautilus. The dolphins had already left.

It wanted to know who we are and what we wanted. I acted as translator as Glass replied. It also wanted to know who had cast the spell that had hurt it. Uh oh! Darksinger admitted he had done it and Counterspelled it. Meanwhile Starflower detected another mind coming towards us.

It turned out to be Shamalk, a middleaged mermaid. The nautilus was her familiar. Shamalk told us that the villagers had chosen not to heed her warnings and that they had been taken by the 'ones with the chariot'. She also reckoned that there were dark forces within the sea. When pressed she went into a trance. Starflower was still mindsnoping at the time so she picked up the priestess's vision. It showed a humanoid creature with the face of a squid sacrificing a human by an edifice.

The edifice was growing. Starflower then passed the vision on to us - and I wish she hadn't, or had asked first as I recognised the creature from Flamis's stories. It was a Calimar. I began to feel very distressed. Darksinger reckoned we weren't being paid enough to go up against those guys. They're nasty with a capital N.

Shamalk then told us that the slaves had been taken to the Great Bowls located five days upcurrent. She reckoned the edifice was the cause of the troubles. Glass then extracted a quaking Alex from behind the boulder he was hiding behind and instructed him to tell the town what had happened and get them to warn the other villages. Alex took off at speed.

While the others swam up to the island, I expressed a desire to pray to Itimanuka in order to gain guidance and hopefully a blessing in our quest to rescue the villages. Tussock decided to do the same. As I did so I felt a current swirl around me which resolved itself into her presence. She reminded me of the endless cycle of life and death and what has happened is just part of the natural order. However I did gain her blessing for me and my party to rescue the villagers. She also told me not to worry about the Calimar as her brother had taken care of them. That had to be Maui. That made me feel a lot better.

It was near to midnight as Tussock and I swam up to the island shore and reached the camp the others had set up.

4.

15/04/95

I was on the last watch so I didn't bother purifying this morning. After a breakfast of coconuts and anything else we could find I renewed all the waterbreathings - or tried to. When I cast on Daroin he started coughing and spluttering. That led Starflower to the conclusion that I had backfired the spell in such a way that Daroin couldn't breath air anymore. So Glass tossed him in the shallows. Didn't seem to help though, in fact it made it worse. Eventually Starflower doublechecked and concluded that Daroin had water in the lungs. Once it was pumped out and healing potions administered (including a freshly created Waters of Healing) Daroin was rather recovered.

Soon we continued on our way upcurrent, swimming this time. Starflower's suggestion that I summon some more dolphins to assist was firmly vetoed by Glass. So we slowly made our way across the ocean floor.

About lunchtime those still walking on the floor felt the earth move. Glass ascended to the surface to have a look and spotted a plume of smoke and a red glow to the south east. I wasn't sure exactly which part of the ocean we were in so I didn't know which volcano that was. I just hoped it wasn't fire cultists at work again and that Pele was just having a little fun. The resulting shockwave buffeted us about a bit but did no damage.

That evening, (it was difficult to tell as it was rather dark at this depth), we settled down to start making camp. As Darksinger and I were discussing various dolphins we had met, Starflower suddenly felt wary. Within seconds we were beset upon by the largest pack of sharks I had ever encountered.

I tried casting a Control Aquatics in order to cause some confusion but a rather close pass put me off. Gretchen was surrounded by quite a few of them. Glass and Tussock were also soon under attack as they were the closest. It was soon difficult to see the others in the mass of sharks.

Since the spell was ineffective I moved into attack to help, after a quick prayer to Itimanuka, but quickly discovered that even though they had difficulty hitting me, that my dagger was having difficulty penetrating their tough hide. Unfortunately they weren't having so much difficulty with the rest of the party. Glass and Tussock were soon down and Gretchen was getting into trouble.

Daroin was trying to get a spell off. Finally he succeeded. Several of the sharks decided this wasn't a good place to be and swam off. One stopped swimming and sank (well that one won't last long) and one went berserk and savagely attacked Gretchen. She was looking really worse for the wear now. Suddenly she collapsed. Starflower was, at this time, attempting to stabilise Glass and Tussock. But she was just a tad too late for Tussock.

I wasn't sure what to do to stop the sharks from ravishing Gretchen's motionless form until a voice in my mind said 'Control Aquatics' - and I don't think it was Starflower. So I tried it and managed to control half of them. So I got them to attack the ones around Gretchen. That left one that Starflower was finishing off and another was having a good go at Daroin. Darksinger was nowhere in sight. My original idea was to try to distract the shark away from Daroin by grabbing it by the dorsal but managed to get tangled up with it and brutally attacked. Fortunately Starflower and Daroin managed to finish it off.

When I regained consciousness, Starflower was tending to my wounds. I was then soundly berated for doing something she considered stupid. Glass cut in reckoning if I hadn't taken a risk than Daroin probably would have died. As it was I had to create several Waters of Healing to fix him.

We had already lost Gretchen and Tussock and there was still no sign of Darksinger. Glass asked me to go into merform then swim off in the direction he had been last seen going. He had probably been affected by Daroin's Mass Fear. So I did so, but couldn't find him. When I got back I discovered he was out of Starflower's Telepathy range as well - which was most odd. Glass then asked me to summon a dolphin and get it to look for Darksinger which I did before going to sleep.

16/04/95

I was woken up at dawn the next morning with the news the dolphin had returned. So I spoke with it but it hadn't found Darksinger. This was getting really worrying. If we didn't find him in the next 5 hours his Waterbreathing was going to run out and he'll drown.

.5.

Glass and Starflower decided to have another look for Darksinger. Meanwhile Daroin and I gathered up as many shark's teeth as we could get. I wanted enough to make a necklace. Just then we saw an octopus scuttle across the ground and disappear under Gretchen's armpit. Evidently it was intending to make itself at home. I managed to coax it out with some shark meat then played with it for a while.

Once the others returned, with no luck, Daroin tried a Speak with Dead ritual while sitting on Gretchen's body. I prepared my weapons, just in case. I also thought he had a good chance of summoning Gretchen's spirit but what he got was the spirit of a sky blue humanoid creature that had a squid-like face. I later found out that was a Calimar. When asked whether Darksinger was alive it replied "The slayer is alive". Daroin's next question was "What's the easiest way to find

the body" which yielded the answer "When that which sunk rises again in flame and fear and fire". Sounds to me like a sunken volcano erupting and rising from the depths. Daroin's last question was "Is he in the clutches of a malevolent entity". The reply was "He is in the death like grip of destiny". When Daroin thanked it it replied "Anything to help the enemy of my enemy" before disappearing.

We had no clues to Darksinger's location so it was decided to make our way back to Shamalk's cave to see if she could help. Also there was the matter of Tussock and Gretchen. Shamalk had managed to resurrect members of the previous party so hopefully she'd be able to help us as well. Tussock was easy to carry but Gretchen was another matter. She was just too large and heavy for us to lift even with the help of some Waters of Strength. Finally Daroin and Starflower managed to make a primitive travois out of rope and dead coral.

However it was still hard going. Finally Glass suggested that I take Tussock's body and swim ahead as I was still in merform. So Tussock was strapped to my back and I swam off as fast as I could.

Three hours later I stopped to rest. I should have been in the vicinity by now, according to my estimates but there was no sign of Shamalk's island. Maybe I should have listened to Flamis and learned a bit of 'wrangewing'. So I swam up to the surface for a look around. I could see the plume of smoke from the volcano and it looked roughly in the right direction. There were also three islands ahead in the distance. One of them could be where the cave was. So I headed off to the middle island.

By the time I got close I was totally exhausted. So I found a small coral cave, stuffed Tussock's body at the back then curled up for a nap.

I'm not sure how long I slept for but when I awoke it was getting close to sunset. Also I realised I had no idea where I was. So I summoned a dolphin to act as a guide. While I waited I nibbled on some hobbit chocolate in the hope it would give me some extra energy.

Soon the dolphin arrived and it turned out to be one of the pod I had called earlier. When I asked it told me it knew the way to Shamalk's cave. Naturally it wanted to be fed but I told it I was on an urgent mission. After convincing it Tussock wasn't a food item we set off. I was determined to get there no matter what but I must have passed out from sheer exhaustion.

17/04/95

When I finally came around I found myself on a bed in a cave. The dolphin had brought me the rest of the way. The others had also arrived. Apparently they had managed to put wheels on the travois. Shamalk needed some shells gathered in order to perform the resurrection ritual (lots in Gretchen's case) so Glass and I went out to get them. I think I'm going to start my own collection after this. While we were doing that Shamalk mentioned that the sharks that had attacked us were Blue Hunters.

Starflower was so zonked out from the trip that she fell asleep while healing the gash in Daroin's leg. Daroin was a bit miffed but there wasn't a heck of a lot he could do about it until she woke up later that afternoon.

That night I attempted the change back from merform. Uh oh! It didn't work. So I went to tell

Glass that I was now stuck in it until someone did a curse removal.

By now Gretchen was recovering and feeling rather unhappy about having all these shells stuck on her. Shamalk started working on Tussock.

18/04/95

Next morning Tussock was alive again. Both of them were covered in shells that were stuck all over it with instructions not to remove them. They were intended to drop off normally. It was decided to hang around the rest of the day while they healed up. Tussock reckoned she could do astrology readings but we didn't believe her. Meanwhile Starflower and I spent much of the day learning about underwater plants.

22/04/95

After a few days we were all set to look for Darksinger. So Shamalk did an astrology reading. What she got was:

In the world as time goes by
The slayers mask will come to light
They who seek the dark return
Shall in the light find and learn.

I then did a precognitive Waters of Vision. What I got was a picture of Darksinger paddling a canoe presumably going between islands. So it was decided to check out the nearby islands.

We went up to the surface. While I waited in the shallows Gretchen gathered some dead wood and I used a Ship Strength to make a raft. Meanwhile Glass used his boots to rise into the air in order to make a map of the local islands. Tussock insisted on scrounging a lift. They then floated down taking a while to do so.

Finally we were underway. I conjured a Mage Current then swam alongside the raft. Gretchen, when she found out I was stuck in merform, started making seal jokes like 'Can you balance a ball on your nose' and 'if you clap your hands I'll throw you a fish'.

Two hours later we drew close to the next island, dodging canoes. None of them had Darksinger in them.

.6.

As the raft reached shore a local native rushed down the beach waving a spear. We could see some others just beyond the tree line. Fortunately he was speaking in a language close to my native Pasifikan so it didn't take long to determine that he wanted to challenge Glass to single combat. Glass accepted and a fifteen foot diameter circle was drawn in the sand. The fight didn't last long as Glass quickly made first blood. I presume the fight was to show our bravery.

Gretchen plucked me out of the water and carried me up the beach. The others had already met the natives and were attempting to communicate - with little success. So I introduced my companions.

Soon we had an audience with the chief and I explained we were looking for a missing companion. When Glass used an illusion to show an image of Darksinger everyone exclaimed 'Remari'. We were then told that he had been here a day or so ago but had gone off to fight a

rising evil. The chief then asked us to stay for dinner. I was fairly sure he meant as a guest not as the main course.

So that meant we had a bit of time to spend. Glass managed to find an islander, named Calaine, that spoke a bit of Common. He had been adventuring on Alusia. He also told Glass that Remari is a legendary giant who dresses in black with no hair. Sounds like Darksinger. Meanwhile many of the village men were fascinated with Starflower and soon she was getting the attention of several potential suitors. Gretchen had parked me in a convenient rockpool and shortly I had a collection of curious children gathering around wanting to know why I had a tail. So I entertained them by telling the story of the merprincess that was captured by the Followers of Pele and how we rescued her.

As the sun started going down the umus were being prepared for dinner. For some reason the villagers reckoned Tussock and Daroin needed feeding up (probably because of their size) so they kept receiving samples. This was annoying Gretchen who was feeling rather hungry so I sent some of the kids to forage something for her.

I also took the opportunity to cast a Waters of Vision on the bowl of water that the children had provided to be tipped over me from time to time. What I saw was Darksinger clad in mithral plate mail, riding a white warhorse, leading a crusade of similarly clad knights. Glass had no idea what the heraldic device was when I told him about it.

Another amusing thing was one of Starflower's prospective suitors, a rather large muscular guy called Cardrey. He was rather persistent. Even when I told him that she was already married to Brightflare he wanted to challenge Brightflare to single combat with Starflower as the prize. We tried telling him that Brightflare was likely to toast him but he was adamant. Finally we gave up. Instead Tussock started making plans to sell tickets to the fight.

Dinner finally arrived. As we ate there was the sound of drumming. It sounded like wardrums but it didn't sound like an actual declaration of war - more of the intent. The drums got louder and louder then stopped. Just then a rather familiar figure came through the door, followed by a bunch of warriors. Everyone started chanting 'Remari. Remari'.

Starflower called out 'Darksinger!' He looked around then saw us. He looked as happy as we were to find him again. He told us he had managed to backfire and lose his memory. Somehow he had found his way to another island and was washed onshore. The natives there had taken him in and looked after him, all the time reckoning he was the incarnation of the hero Remari. It wasn't until two and a half days later that his memory came back and had spent the rest of the time looking for us.

After dinner, we went to see the shaman, Madari, who told us there was evil below the ocean. 'Back in the time when gods walked the earth, there came a some strange people who built an alien structure on the surface of the water then declared war. What they did so angered the gods that they caused the island, with the structure on it, to sink. But it is said that when flame appears in the south that they will rise again'. It was generally agreed that the volcano to the south was the sign.

The shaman then checked us all for curses and reckoned we were all Doomed. He also reckoned Glass's aura was slowly dropping off which led us to the conclusion that Glass was suffering from

Creeping Senility. It was decided that the shaman would remove that at midnight that night. He also agreed that he would try removing the lycanthrope curse I got from staying too long in merform so I would have the option of changing form again.

23/04/95

By the next morning Glass had his curse removed. We spent the rest of the day resting. I was helping the pearl divers as well as going fishing and exploring the reef.

24/04/95

I had spent the entire night and most of the morning in a curse removal. Part of it involved being covered in some sticky substance but it worked. At the end of it my tail dissolved and reformed into legs. When I finally staggered out, rather exhausted, I went for a quick swim to wash off the substance then curled up in an empty hut to sleep most of the day away.

25/04/95

We finally left on the raft. Cardrey insisted on coming with us. I rigged up a mast and sail then Tussock cast a Mage Wind as I cast a Mage Current. Soon we were zipping across the water.

A few hours later we reached the area where the shaman had indicated that the alien structure had been. We also realised it was at the approximate location of the bowls of fresh water - the Great Bowls that Shamalk had mentioned. Tussock attempted to counterspell the wind but something went wrong. Instead the wind doubled in strength becoming a roaring gale. Darksinger was immediately tossed off. I started frantically casting Waterbreathings on everyone while hanging on to the mast. Finally, after a couple of misfires, they were all done and we slipped into the safety of the sea. Darksinger was quickly located. He had already drunk a potion of WaterBreathing but I put the spell on him just in case. It was then we realised that Tussock was not with us. Apparently she had a featherfall spell on her and the wind had picked her up and blown her away. We had no idea where she had gone and how far she went. At least she had a Waterbreathing cap with her.

We descended into the depths. As we did, it got colder so I put a Resist Cold on myself (I'll have to find something warmer to wear for the deeps). Soon we neared the bottom and we could see we were in what looked like a shallow bowl so I tasted the water. It was fresh. I could also feel a current coming from the centre of the bowl - presumably where the spring is located.

Glass told us to be alert as we headed for the centre. Two hours later we reached another depression so we carried on down for another half hour. What we found was a large shape which turned out to be a spire lying on the ground. As we got closer it looked more like a quadruple helix. It looked like it had been snapped off the base. Two hundred feet away was another large shape.

.7.

Darksinger announced he could detect the presence of lesser undead from the large shape. As we got closer to it we could see it looked like a large nautilus lying on it's side. Upright it would be 100ft high, 180ft long and 60ft wide. At one end, where the mouth of the shell would be, was where the spire had broken off. A balcony jutted out above the broken end so this was where we made our entrance.

As we traversed the insides of the nautiloid we could see some skeletons lying around. They had been warped and twisted. Daroin reckoned that they had been infected by Primal Chaos like the Servants of the Calimar he had encountered before.

We continued to the 'top' of the spiral. Here we encountered a different type of skeleton, this time of creatures with oval heads. We suspected they were Calimar. Lying near one of them was a black metal short sword. It looked ok through the ocular so Glass stowed it away. He reckoned it was heavier than normal. There wasn't anything unusual about a jewelled necklace and a signet ring either so those went in Glass's pouch as well.

The 'top' part of the nautiloid turned out to be a large open area. Halfway 'up' was a platform jutting from the stern. On the end of the platform was a large ornate chair. Darksinger reckoned it was similar to the one that makes the Novadom ship 'Eagle' fly. He had been on it once and described how it worked. Also in this chamber was another of these ovoid headed skeletons that looked like it had been tossed off the throne (Darksinger called it a helm). There were three rings on it. All of them appeared safe so Darksinger took them.

We searched most of the entire ship save for one room which Darksinger stated had an undead creature in it. Finally we opened the door. Inside was what appeared to be a female zombie spreadeagled and chained to the wall. It didn't move, not even when Daroin prodded it. So we left it there and continued 'downwards'. Finally, at the bottom of the ship, we reached a platform that overlooked a basin. It registered as 'magically trapped, warded, or cursed' so we decided not to go in. Instead Darksinger tried speaking to the dead. He discovered that the spirit had been killed in an accident that caused the ship to crash. This area was a powersource which involved killing slaves. Also they had been leaving Alusia when they had been hit by an external force which was an Alusian entity or power, however it wasn't Remari. From what the spirit was saying, what they were up to matched with the legend we were told.

We headed back to the zombie. Glass determined it wasn't under an illusion. Starflower tried Healing it but nothing happened. I put a WaterBreathing on it, just in case it 'came back to life'. Glass then tried to pick the manacle locks but failed. So I had a go and soon had them off. Starflower then suggested that I feed the 'zombie' a Waters of Healing in case she was poisoned. So I made one in a leather waterskin and squirted it into the gills. Still no reaction. I was then attempting to remove the manacles and chains from the wall (not sure why but I figured that they might come in useful). I wasn't having much luck until Daroin used Warping to get them off. Meanwhile Starflower tried to Preserve Dead on the 'zombie' but she was still alive. The only other conclusion we came to was that she was under the effects of some sort of hibernation or feign death spell. We decided to take her with us.

It was decided to swim back to the 'top' so Darksinger could have a 'chat' with the skeleton there. It did turn out to be a Calimari and was the owner of this vessel and the helmsman. He didn't know what had caused the crash but the accident had included loss of power to the helm and he had died from it. The helm could still work and any adept can use it. Later Darksinger told us he had personal experience using the one on the Eagle.

The Calimar knew of Remari and also knew that Remari is human. The period that they were in was between the Elven/Drow War and Penjarre. The alternate power source involves the pit at the bottom of the ship.

Given the power and abilities of this helm it was a unanimous decision to take it with us. The value of such an object would be even more money than I could imagine. So Daroin managed to get the helm off the platform and Gretchen picked it up. Even with her giant strength it was rather heavy.

Upon leaving the nautiloid we continued down into the bowl. After a short while we camped and I renewed the Waterbreathings (a triple on Darksinger and a double on Starflower). I then settled down to sleep.

26/04/95

The next morning I was starting to really feel the cold so I decided to wear the kraken skin armour over the two-piece swimsuit and sash. I then purified for three hours before doing the morning Waterbreathings.

That helm was getting rather awkward for Gretchen to carry so we travelled perpendicular to the slope for a short while before hiding the helm under a pile of rocks and an illusionary terrain. Once done we continued down.

Two hours later another shape loomed out of the gloom. It was sixty foot long by 20 wide and looked like a standard sunken galley. Starflower probed the area with ESP and detected rage, despair, and anger. "They're not happy" she told us. She then put Mind Special Counters on us all. Darksinger then reported that the minds consisted of about 20 lesser undead - ghouls - and one greater undead - a nightgaunt. Just then a black bolt of energy leapt from the galley and splattered against Darksinger. Fortunately for him it had no effect. I triggered a Spectral Weapon on my dagger just as a Web of Darkness appeared around us which I was able to avoid. Gretchen picked up Daroin and strode towards the ship. I followed behind. Partway there Gretchen slowed down as if she was wading through treacle and was forced to drop Daroin. Meanwhile I circled around to be in line with the ship's centre line and prepared my spell.

.8.

I cast it and all the water in the area was caught in the grip of a Mage Current. The ship's timbers began to creak. As I kept up the pressure, a Wall of Darkness appeared between us and the rest of the party. At the same time a mass of undead poured out of the ship and overwhelmed the area where Gretchen, Daroin and I were. I was jumped on before I had a chance to get my dagger into play.

As I tried to fight my opponent off I noticed something odd. Some of the ghouls began fighting other ghouls. Turned out Darksinger was controlling them. When the one attacking me turned on it's neighbour I took the opportunity to back off and drink one of my premade Waters of Healing. Trouble was, it was a bit late for Gretchen by now as she had collapsed. I started preparing a second one but was attacked by another ghoul so I grabbed my dagger and hit it back. I was sure I nearly had it but it scored a lucky strike and I lost consciousness.

The next thing I remembered was Starflower bending over me, muttering something about people who don't listen to their Military Scientist. It was all over by now. Daroin had slain the nightgaunt rather heroically so he was now to be known as Daroin Undead Slayer. Glass reckoned his actions were worthy of a nomination of Bravest Adventurer. Gretchen and I were nearly casualties but Starflower had been able to get to us in time.

A quick search for treasure revealed a broadsword, scale armour (that Glass reckoned that he could cast in), and some copper ingots.

As we rested and tended our wounds we heard what sounded like a hunting horn. Elvish according to Starflower. Then we heard it again, much louder. At the same time Starflower detected two minds. I started wondering if these were the elves that had attacked Alex's village.

.9.

A few minutes later six swimming shapes were spotted. Darksinger, Starflower and Glass went up on top while the rest of us huddled below. I cast a quick Resist Cold on myself, removed my armour and shifted to merform in case we needed speed. While I did that I felt Starflower's presence in my mind as she cast a Mind Speech.

Starflower introduced herself as an elven wanderer and the rest of us as her retinue of slaves. One of the other elves wanted to buy Glass but Starflower refused saying that he was too valuable to her. Just in case one of the elves tried prying in my mind I started imagining a brick wall. A few minutes later a couple of elves swam into the area where we were. For some reason they grabbed me and one of them slapped me. I wanted to hit them back but Gretchen restrained me. Starflower later commented it was because I had muttered something in orcish at the time. Whatever, I'm going to remember that elf who struck me just in case I see him again. These elves are so egotistical - even more than the average elf.

Up top, Starflower had found out there was an elven settlement further down the basin. They had wanted to take us to meet the Lady Seeker, the daughter of the Queen, who was searching for something in the basin. It was because of her whim that the elves settled here. Starflower declined to go with them.

After the elves left (and good riddance), we decided to rest here for the night. So I shifted out of merform then tried a Waters of Vision to see what was going on in the depths of the basin but I couldn't find anything.

The night passed without incident.

27/04/95

In the morning we purified and I cast Resist Colds and Waterbreathings on those that needed them. Darksinger also cast Dark Visions on us before we continued into the basin.

Finally we reached the bottom of the crater and caught a glimpse of something moving. At first glance it looked like some sort of giant starfish but it had four huge legs and the other two were upraised with eyes on them. It seemed to be building a tower out of the neighbouring rocks. As we watched a 'sea slug' slithered into the pile of rocks. Starflower said that it was looking for something. Shortly it crawled out again. Darksinger reported he could detect undead. It turned out that all these creatures were sentient flesh golems, programmed for specific tasks. A floating eye swam up to have a look at us. Glass shot it before it could swim off and report then hid the remains under an illusionary rock.

The next creature we saw was a 'crab' carrying a clay pot so we decided to follow it. Shortly we reached a stone building built into the wall. The front was dominated by a row of caryatid

columns. Starflower detected two elven minds and some more flesh golems. One of the elves was cooking and the other was wondering when the creeper would return. Then something like a manta ray swam out of the structure. Starflower reported the two minds were now on alert.

A couple of elves swam out of the structure, one male one woman. The man introduced himself as Caliphele and was there to aid the Lady Seeker. She sought knowledge especially of the Calimar. Starflower told him that we had quite a bit of information that she would be interested in. We were then instructed to follow them inside.

Once inside we met the Lady Athena. We had collected the Calimari skulls from the downed nautiloid ship so Gretchen offered her one. Glass then created an illusion of one to show the Lady what they looked like. I was studying the drawings on the wall and discovered it was hard to look away. Starflower saw that they were hypnotic, and used a hypnosis spell to overcome their hold on me. In exchange for the information we had given she told us that the missing villagers are at the Palace at the Edge of Fear, where the elven Queen is.

After a brief discussion we left. As we did so, we noticed that some of the rocks being gathered up looked more like bricks. I picked up some pebbles. So we carried on in the direction of the elven village. Finally evening came around and we camped.

28/04/96

More Resists Colds and Waterbreathings around then I did a Mage Current to help propel us along. After an hour or so we spotted shapes approaching. Glass put an illusion on himself to look more like an elf. The shapes turned out to be elves mounted on sharks. Starflower put herself to the front of the party and told us to behave as subservient slaves. Meanwhile Glass was explaining that he was looking for some missing slaves that he was responsible for and belonged to his liege lord. His excuse was that he had been away patrolling the borders and the village was on the outskirts of his area.

We followed the elven patrol back to their village. As we approached we noticed merfolk working in the fields with elven overseers. Occasionally one of the merfolk would be beaten. Those elves are going to be the first against the wall when the revolution comes.

Shortly we reached a large marquee tent, that was surrounded by seven smaller tents, and were conducted inside. Ten elves were inside waiting for us (including the one that hit me). One of them was seated on a throne and she introduced herself as Queen Corrinthana. Glass (who introduced himself as Silverglass) explained the problem. The queen said that they had moved into this area, because of a whim of the Seeker, and had discovered Jermarc nearby. Since they hadn't brought their previous set of slaves they decided to take the villagers. (Definitely a set of egotistical, arrogant, elves.) Glass and I then went outside to speak with the merfolk and soon discovered all of them were from Jermarc - and they definitely wanted to go back. Many of them were in a distressed state so I tried to reassure them (and to tell them that we were here to rescue them). I just hoped the elves didn't understand merfolk too much.

The Queen finally decided that they would release the villagers if we could find them some alternate slaves. In the meantime they prepared a tent for us. They also lent us one of the villagers. From her we discovered Alex was married to a mermaid called Tenal so Glass arranged for her to be brought to us. After reassuring her that her husband was okay we told her that he had hired us to rescue them. She told us that everyone was accounted for except the village headman.

Apparently the elves were keeping him somewhere else. If we removed the women and children there would only be twenty men left.

Darksinger did a Speak with Dead ritual. To our surprise (and his too I bet) he got a dragon spirit. It was aware that the Calimar existed but it wasn't killed by them nor did it have a hand in their destruction. It is aware of another Calimar site and also of the portal below the site that the Seeker was investigating, which was where the Calimar came through. The portal could still be active. The dragon died in a natural cataclysmic event, probably a tidal wave. It also would be grateful if we honoured it in some way.

So Darksinger tried summoning another spirit. The one he got was a jovial one who started offering everyone a beer. Darksinger identified him as Garioth, an ex-Guild adventurer who was now on the Roll of Honour. Garioth told us that the other Calimar site is somewhere near here in a desert area, probably a place called The Great Desert. He then gave us some advice i.e. 'Don't move all the rocks and charge through like a bunch of loose adventurers'. In answer to Darksinger's question about honouring the dragon Garioth replied that we should destroy something appropriate for the dragon type'.

After Garioth was dismissed we decided to sleep on it.

.10.

29/04/95

Next morning Starflower requested that one of the slaves be brought to her. A merman by the name of Sayal was brought in. He told us (with Starflower's help) that Shamalk had said "Listen to my words people of Jermarc. There will come the lords of the sea. And you will not run from them or else the lords of dark will rise." This implied that if the elves hadn't taken the villagers as slaves then the Calimar would have showed up. Sayal also mentioned that a few elves had visited before the attack. The first they realised that something was going on when one of those flesh golem 'starfish' tore holes in the coral dome and the elves poured in on sharkback. The village consisted of twelve families, total population approximately fifty. When asked whether if he knew if the elves used magic, Sayal replied that one of the males had thrown black bolts (celestial darkfire) and the female beastmaster (read slaver) had blue bolts (E&E energy bolts).

After Sayal was dismissed Gretchen reckoned that we were part of the prophecy. She's probably right. We then decided that it was time to find Alex and tell him what was going on and somehow we had to take Alex's wife with us at least.

However that idea was soon impractical as we had no one spare. Instead Glass and Starflower went to see the Queen (while the rest of us waited outside). Basically Starflower requested a new personal maid because she only had one and needed another. The Queen acceded to that request so Starflower picked one, which 'happened' to be Tenal. After collecting her we were on our way. Once out of sight I shifted into merform to keep Tenal company.

Before going to find Alex, we decided to investigate the centre of this basin. After all we had come this far...

02/05/95

It took us a while but we finally neared the centre of the crater (of what we had deduced was a rather large volcano and it was very likely that whatever the Seeker was doing in the ancient

Calimar site would set it off). As we got closer the water was getting warmer. For a while it was comfortable but then it felt like we were getting cooked.

What we discovered at the centre was a big red scaly lizard - a dragon. Fortunately it was asleep, and we wanted to keep it that way. It was about 25ft long with an estimated 60ft wingspan. what appeared to be large bubbles were rising to the surface. We swum away - as quietly as possible.

04/05/95

We found our way back to the shipwreck. Darksinger checked for undead and detected another nightgaunt. Fortunately it turned out to be an effect of the armour Glass was wearing. To speed things up we used some of the wood from the ship to make a small boat. I then put a ship strength on it and once we climbed aboard, used a mage current to push us along. A short while later we found the buried Calimar helm and loaded that onboard.

05/05/95

With the mage current pushing us along, we made it to the island group later that afternoon. Since Tenal couldn't leave the water I stayed to keep her company and to reassure her we were on our way to find Alex. However we had a couple of matters to deal with first.

While I was showing Tenal the wonders of the coral reef, the others went to find Calaine to enlist his services as a translator as they spoke to Madari to find out whether it was possible to revive the woman we had found in the nautiloid. He couldn't do it but it was possible that the shaman on the next island could.

So we, with Calaine, took the boat to the neighbouring island after burying the helm in the reef. Upon arrival the others went to see Tekae, the female shaman of this village. Yes she knew the Namer Ritual of Dissipation so she was able to wake her up.

Upon awakening she screamed and had to be held down until she calmed down. She said her name was Maria and the last thing she remembered was having a Calimar cast a spell on her. She was born in a place called the Swordlands and was on the 'Retaliator' (the name on the side of the nautiloid). She was the head servant and is fluent and literate in the Calimar language. She refers to the elves as the Eldar. Tekae DAed Maria for Plane of Origin and got 'Land of the Sword'. The nautiloid's last landing had been 'The City in the Warm Sea'. Gretchen had thought she meant Pasifika but Maria pointed out that the city had been founded by the Calimar. She also gave the name of the nautiloid's owner as Janus Hadlue. Darksinger was able to identify one of the remaining two Calimar skeletons as his.

06/05/95

We went back to Calaine's island and dropped him off. Starflower was able to get rid of Caldrey by hypnotising him to stay. After retrieving the helm we sailed off along the surface.

That afternoon we reached the area of ocean over Alex's village so I cancelled the Mage Current and Darksinger warped the raft to make it sink. Gretchen decided to go down with it.

The ship landed in a field of cultivated seaweed. Soon we found the town of Balmain. I questioned the guards and discovered that Alex had arrived there a few days ago and that he was still there. Once I had directions I led the others in.

We found Alex in an inn and he and his wife soon had a joyful reunion. We were even plied with drinks. Glass then arranged to have the items we found divinated. What we had turned out to be:

An amulet with 6*r14 enchanted armour

A ring with 4*r10 sleep gas.

A ring with 5*r10 healing (mind)

A ring with 3*r16 hellfire (fire)

A ring with 4*r10 necro special counterspell

A short sword with 5*r9 spectral weapon.

The armour Glass was wearing was cursed in such a way that anyone wearing it is treated as a nightgaunt. The helm proved to be a bit of a disappointment. Basically it allowed a Calimar to see through the ship that the helm is mounted on and move it. It works for a non-Calimar as well but several nasty things can happen to the user as well.

Glass wanted to wait out the rest of the day so I decided to have a look around the town (in merform), do a bit of shopping and sample the local entertainment including the dancing. None of the others wanted to come.

.11.

07/05/95

The next day, we went to see the local Mayor - Edmund - to attempt to warn him of the apocalypse that we believed was going to happen the next day (a High Holiday of Darkness). He listened politely but I had the distinct feeling he didn't believe us, especially when we weren't even sure what was going to happen ourselves. But we were firmly convinced something was and it was linked to the Calimar and their portal in the volcano.

So we left the city, retrieved the helm, and refloated the ship. Once on the surface I conjured up a Mage Current to get us back to the islands. Once there, I tried a precognitive Waters of Vision in an attempt to gain further information. The spell worked but the mana I was using felt like it was crackling - as if it was highly charged. What I saw were four bright points of light arranged in a kite formation, against a night sky background. The formation looked unnatural and even the background stars weren't familiar.

Daroin summoned a spirit which turned out to be an old guy who was hard of hearing. When asked 'what is the most momentous event to happen within 50kms tomorrow' he replied 'It's very very very bad'. The next question was 'Does it involve the Calimar coming through the portal'. The spirit replied 'In a manner of speaking'. Daroin's last question was 'How do we stop them' and the answer was 'They're all dead'. Starflower concluded that the Seeker was going to raise some Calimar as undead.

Madari had also done some divinations and had concluded that a battle was imminent. Already the villagers were preparing.

That night I borrowed a canoe and paddled to the outskirts of the reef in order to better see the stars. I wanted to keep an eye on the sky and see if that odd formation appeared - especially at midnight.

08/05/95 (White Lotus Day)

At midnight Madari did an augury. Suddenly he started exclaiming 'Flee. Flee'. When Glass asked him what he saw, Madari replied that he had seen the islands scythed off all life, both plant and animal. He then started preparations for a mass evacuation.

Darksinger managed to blind himself while giving himself a Dark Vision but since the ocular didn't detect a curse we concluded it was a reverse spell effect and would wear off in a few hours. So we decided to wait. After renewing the Waterbreathings and the Ship Strength I took a nap.

At three am we left with the help of a Wave Riding. The helm was left buried in the sand. It was hoped that Darksinger's blindness would abate at the same time that we arrived over the archaeological site which is what happened.

Once we swam down to the site we discovered that there was a big hole in the ground and that the 'starfish' creature was lying around it in pieces. Darksinger couldn't detect any undead (except for Glass) and Starflower couldn't detect any life (apart from us). We headed for the Calimar building. Halfway there we spotted the body of an elf with a hole in his back. At the building the manta golem was also in bits. Again there was no undead in the building nor any life signs. From what we could see from the entrance the place was in a shambles. No bodies and no recent deaths here either.

Since I was in merform, I volunteered to swim in and have a very fast look around for clues. Glass agreed so I headed for the door. But when I got to the entrance I was stopped by an unknown force and a voice said 'This is a warning you fools for those who meddle in the affairs of the Calimar'.

I then decided to check on the elven village using a Waters of Vision and discovered that they were no longer there. The signs were that they had left in an orderly fashion. While I was doing that, Glass had conjured up an illusionary shark and got it to swim into the temple. Nothing happened. I ran my ocular around the doorway but didn't pick up a thing.

So we headed back to the hole (which was located in the side of this subcrater) and checked it out. It was quickly discovered that there was something in there. Something waiting.

So Glass sent the shark in while Darksinger animated the dead elf and sent that in. What we discovered was the other two elves, dead, and something that looked like a brain on legs in the centre of a large room 150' by 150' by 150' in dimensions. Also in the centre between the two elves were a couple of large pillars. So we prepared to go in ourselves. Before we did Daroin cast Spectral Weapons on our weapons.

As we came in we saw the two pillars glow and the brain-thing disappear. Starflower put a Counter Mind Special on the area around the portal while Daroin and Darksinger tried casting Spectral Hands in an attempt to knock the pillars over. Gretchen strode forward in order to lend a hand while I followed behind to cover her.

Just then the pillars glowed again and ten pikemen (humanoids with pike heads) armed with pikes appeared and immediately attacked. I had to do some fancy swimming to prevent myself from being skewered. Gretchen tried pushing the pillar over but soon had to contend with a mass attack. I tried a Control Aquatics on them in the hope that it might have an effect but it didn't work. So I went on the attack.

At this point Gretchen was swinging with her glaive and knocking them over so I went to deal with one attacking the others. I got a good strike but managed to get stunned by the retaliation.

By the time I recovered from that the pikemen (those that were left) decided to surrender. I did a Waters of Strength and between Starflower, Gretchen, Glass and a couple of animates one of the pillars were knocked over. As it went over there was an explosion which Glass bore the brunt off. So I did a Waters of Healing for him and another for me.

A check on the place where the dragon had been (with a Waters of Vision) revealed that the dragon had left. So much for Glass's idea of help from that quarter. So I shifted out of merform while the others questioned the pikemen. They told us that they were stationed in a place called Altrassa and their masters were the Calimar. Their instructions were to guard the entrance to the portal.

They were willing to come with us and we figured we'd better get out of here and try to figure out where the elves went. So we headed for the surface. Once we got there we noticed that the sun was beginning to come up and that the surface of the water was sparkling with what I first thought was St Elmo's Fire but looked more like electrical discharges arcing and crackling all around us. As the sun rose above the horizon the discharges intensified. Glass recommended that we get out of this area with all possible speed so I summoned another wave.

Suddenly four pillars of energy leapt out of the water and headed up to four points in the sky. A bright flash of light appeared in the middle of those four points. and the points coalesced into four nautiloid void-cruisers (as Maria had already called them), one of which was larger than the others. We hastily submerged before they tried doing anything nasty to us.

.12.

Basically we abandoned ship and headed for the bottom. I summoned up a Mage Current to assist before changing to merform in order to make a speedy getaway. The Mage Current worked but a flash of light surrounded me as the spell engaged. Also the pikemen took off for parts unknown.

Maria stayed with us as we headed off in the direction of Shamalk's cave. Fifteen minutes or so later a surge of water hit us. I just hoped that it wasn't the volcano going up.

Starflower was probing with ESP and after an hour or so picked up two entities, one sentient, the other non-sentient. They were heading our way. I concentrated on seeing them and soon saw that Starflower had grossly understated the size of the opposition. There were two Calimar with 5 human troops riding sealions. I started preparing a Control Aquatics but something hit my mind and I lost consciousness.

As a result I was unaware of what happened in the ensuing melee. The troops charged in with their lances while the Calimar threw spells at us (one was a Solar Mage and the other was a Necro). Darksinger and Gretchen got themselves killed and Daroin ended up with a crippled arm and decided to surrender. Glass was knocked unconscious while Starflower refused to accept the offers of surrender and ended up losing consciousness as well. Maria had fled at the sight of the Calimar.

By the time I regain consciousness, we had been tied up and were being escorted to one of the voidcruisers. I was tempted to try and escape but reckoned that feigning unconsciousness might be better for me and the rest of the party.

When we reached the voidcruiser we were taken to the cells and shackled to the walls. It looked like an easy escape, but a warning glance from Glass stopped me. Besides a Calimar was with us.

He wanted to know why we had opened the portal. Glass explained we hadn't done it but the elves had. He told them that Maria could confirm our story. The Calimar replied that Maria had been caught and he would check. He left, but a guard was posted.

A little while later the Calimar returned. Yes, our story checked out so we would be returned. However he wanted to know how much would be paid for our ransom. After a bit of negotiation Glass offered the helm we had found. Yes that would be acceptable. We were also allowed to keep Maria. Her fate was to live out the rest of her life in Carzala. Also we were told not to investigate the ruins (the portal was confirmed as being inactive) or to even return this area except to retrieve Starflower's Bound Air tulwar which had been lost in the battle.

The Calimar healed us up and resurrected our dead party members before dropping us off on the island where the helm was. All that was left for us to do was to create a boat and head back to the Guild. I made a careful note of the position of this island so I'd know where not to go on any trips to Pasifika.

It took us 18 days to get back to the Guild. Nothing unusual happened on the way. When we got back we discovered that Tussock had made her way back ahead of us.

As far as the treasure was concerned I decided not to take any items but retain my share of the cash instead. After all there was all those building renovations to pay for, as well as my pond and jetty. Plus Kishwa had informed me that my new horse was ready.