

A DIPLOMATIC UNDERTAKING.

GAME PLAYED FROM DEC 1995 TO MARCH 1996, GM = EAMON ZINK. THANKS, PATCHES.

CAST: \_\_\_\_\_ SCORPION, HUMAN NAMER (ANNA) SCRIBE  
THORN, HUMAN FIGHTER (HELEN)  
THULRANDIR, ELF FIGHTER (DORSAI)  
EIDELON, HUMAN SOLAR MAGE (ANDREW)  
DIMITRI, HUMAN MIND MAGE (ANTHONY)  
SIR AGRIVANE, HUMAN FIGHTER (FRANCIS)  
ARWEN, HUMAN EARTH MAGE (SIMON)  
KISERI, HUMAN ILLUSIONIST (ROSEMARY)

SUMMARY:

MISSION OBJECTIVE: HIRED BY DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FREE CITY OF SALAMAKAR, AN OFF-PLANAR TRADING CITY WHO HAVE JUST DISCOVERED A PORTAL TO ELUSIA AND HOPE TO INCLUDE HER IN THEIR TRADE NETWORK, TO ACT AS GO-BETWEENS FOR THE ORC RULING CLASSES TO A SUBVERSANT ELEMENT OF THE HUMAN SLAVE CASTE IN THE CITY. MAIN OBJECTIVE, REVEALED LATE, IS TO TAME THE BLACK MARKET FOR NOBS, INSTEAD OF CURRENT SCHEME OF TRYING TO DESTROY IT. DO THIS BY OFFERING THE REBS A PORTAL TO UNTAMED GRASSLANDS NAMED ECHELON, WHICH WOULD TAKE ABOUT A DECADE TO CULTIVATE WITH BARE TOOLS, WITH TRADE AGREEMENTS IN PLACE FOR WHEN THEY'RE ESTABLISHED.

OUR EMPLOYERS: BACKRUN DAL'TOSH, (BACKRUN IS THE TITLE OF THE RULING CLASSES), A YOUNG ORK NOB UNDERTAKING A COMING OF AGE MISSION BY PLANNING A (BY THEIR STANDARDS) RADICAL NEW APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN UNREST, DEVICE = A FANGED EYE, POSSIBLY PACTED - EVIDENCE = CONCEALED BAT FOUND IN HIS QUARTERS ONBOARD SHIP; LORD DIPLOMAT EMMANUAL ASANTE, ELF ASSISTANT AND REPRESENTATIVE TO DAL'TOSH, IN THEIR WORDS A SACATA = AN INFORMATION COURIER AND BROKER (VERY PROBABLY A SPY, VERY ADEPT AT SURPRISE ATTACK AND SURREPTITIOUS OPERATIONS), AND A MEMBER OF THE MERCHANT/ DIPLOMAT/ POLICING CLASSES COMPRISED OF ELVES AND DWARVES IN THE CITY; JAQUILO, HUMAN SLAVE TO DAL'TOSH. ALL COULD SPEAK ELUSIAN. OFFERED TRADE GOODS (EMBARGO) WORTH 300 - 700 SP EACH, DEPENDANT ON MARKET, AND ANY TREASURE WE FIND IN THE UNDERGROUND OF THE CITY, LEFT THERE BY THE PROGENITORS OF THE ORGINAL CITY. ALL MEN PROVED TO BE FAIR, CONCERNED AND HELPFUL (WHATEVER THEIR MOTIVES), AND I'D WORK FOR THEM AGAIN, THOUGH BE CAREFUL OF HIDDEN COMPLICATIONS SUCH AS THE FACT THAT OUR MISSION WAS DAL'TOSH'S IDEA, AS HIS TEST OF MANHOOD, AND NOT NECESSARILY WHAT ANYONE ELSE IN THE COURT WOULD SUPPORT OR EVEN APPROVE OF. POLITICS CAN BE A BASTARD.

GEOGRAPHY: THE CITY IS APPROACHED THROUGH A CROSS-PLANAR TUNNEL RUNNING FROM THE SEAS OF ELUSIA TO A SPHERICAL INLAND SEA. DO NOT CAST ANYTHING AROUND THE VORTEX, AND WATCH THAT FIRST STEP. CLIMATE IS HOT. MANA DIMINISHED ZONE. IT'S BEEN CARVED LAYER BY LAYER ON

TOP OF ITSELF OUT OF ROCK, WITH ROADS ON ROOFS AND PASSAGEWAYS WINDING DEEP BELOW THE UPPERMOST LEVEL. IN SHORT, ITS A FUCKING RABBIT WARREN. NOBS ARE QUARTERED AT THE TOP OF THE HEAP, WITH THE IMPERIAL PALACE AT THE HIGHEST, MOST CENTRAL POINT, OBVIOUS IN APPROACH BY ITS METAL DOMES AND UNUSUAL ARCHITECTURE. APPROACH TO THE PALACE GROUNDS IS BY A WIDE ROAD WHICH RUNS THROUGH THE CITY FROM THE DOCKS, BUT THE PALACE PROPER IS PROTECTED BY WALLS CARVED OUT OF THE ROCK AND PASSABLE ONLY THROUGH A LONG TUNNEL WITH LOTS OF NASTY MURDER HOLES ALONG ITS LENGTH (OR FLIGHT, MORE OF THAT LATER). THE THRONE ROOM IS A MAGICAL NULL ZONE, BUT THE MAGICAL DEFENSES ON THE THRONE DIAS SEEM TO WORK JUST FINE. DUNGEONS ARE DEEP, DARK AND DAMP, WELL BELOW THE PALACE. IS AT LEAST ONE SECRET TRAPDOOR ENTRANCE FROM THE SEWERS AT SEA LEVEL. NOT RECOMMENDED AS A HOLIDAY SPOT. MIDDLE LEVELS ARE MERCHANTS QUARTERS, LOTS OF SHOPS DECORATED BY BRIGHTLY COLOURED AWNINGS, AND LOTS OF STREET STALLS RUN BY HUMANS. AT NIGHT STREETS LIT BY SOME MAGIC, ALSO SOME OF THE STONWORKS GLOW. LOTS OF ACTIVITY AFTER DARK. DOCK LEVEL AND UNDERCITY POPULATED MOSTLY BY HUMANS.

THE PEOPLE: THE EMPEROR AND RULING CLASS ARE TALL, WELL PROPORTIONED ORCS WITH A GREENISH COLOURATION, EMPEROR HIMSELF IS BLACK, DWARVES AND ELVES COMPRISE THE MERCHANT AND DIPLOMATIC CASTE, AND ALSO THE POLICE CORPS, AND HUMANS ARE BONDSMEN AND SLAVES (WITH SOME REBELS). LIFE EXPECTANCY ABOUT TWENTY WORKING YEARS, DIE OF "FEEBLENESS" AND "INABILITY TO CONTINUE WORKING". HUMANS SOMETIMES IMPORTED TO KEEP UP NUMBERS. THERE ARE SOME EXCEPTIONS: WE SAW SOME ELVES AND DWARVES IN THE SAME RANKS AS HUMANS, SOME HUMANS APPARENTLY EMPLOYING THEMSELVES ETC, JUST NOT MUCH. MAGIC RESTRICTED TO CRAFTSMEN, ADVENTURING MAGIC ONLY AVAILABLE TO THE IMPERIAL GUARD (POLICE) AND THE NOBS. NOBS ALSO HAVE IMPERIAL NAMERS. REBELS SUPPOSEDLY HAVE VERY FEW MAGIC USERS.  
THE POLICE: ELVES WEAR LIGHT BLUE WITH BLACK HARNESS, ALL BUT ONE IN EACH SQUAD ARMED WITH A LONG BOW AND WHIP, BOTH OF WHICH BEING MADE OF SOME KIND OF SEGMENTED METAL OF IRON ALLOY. LAST MAN CARRIES NO IRON. GUESS. DWARVES WEAR BLOOD RED WITH BLACK HARNESS, ARMoured WITH BLACK ARMOUR, HELMETS AND SPIKED GAUNTLETS, AND CARRY SPEARS MADE COMPLETELY OF IRON ALLOY THAT REACH THREE TIMES THE HEIGHT OF A STUNTY. OBSERVED TECHNIQUE: DWARVES LOWER SPEARS AND RUN AT ENEMY IN RANKS FIVE MEN DEEP, AND ANYTHING LIVING THAT COMES OUT THE OTHER END IS ASSAULTED BY THE ELVES WITH THOSE FUCKING WHIPS. PRISONERS ARE CHAINED TO POSTS, THEN COLLECTED UP AND CHAINED TO EACH OTHER, FROGMARCHED TO HOLDING BARRACKS/ PRISON (BAD TIME TO TRY TO TALK TO EACH OTHER), AND SLOWLY PROCESSED. COULD BE FASTER IF THERE ARE LESS THEN A THOUSAND REBELS TO DEAL WITH.

#### CUSTOM:

IN COURT: DRESS FOR FEMALES TENDS TO SKIMPY PIECES OF CLOTH CAREFULLY POSITIONED TO SHOW ALMOST EVERYTHING A MAN COULD HOPE FOR. DIDN'T NOTICE WHAT THE MEN WERE WEARING. COURT ATTIRE WAS EXPECTED. MOST PRESENT CARRIED WEAPONSMITHED WEAPONS OPENLY, AND

KNEW HOW TO USE THEM, MISSILE WEAPONS WERE FROWNED UPON. UNDERSTAND DUELING IS ACCEPTED WAY OF DEALING WITH INSULT, (UNAUTHORISED DRAWING OF WEAPONS DIRECT TICKET TO DUNGEON) ALSO APPEARED TO BE SOME KIND OF RITUALISTIC HAND WRESTLING DUEL DONE BY MALE ORCS TO ESTABLISH PECKING ORDER. OTHERWISE PEACE KEPT BY PALACE GUARD (DWARVES AND ELVES). THERE IS NO CASTING OF ANY KIND IN THE VICINITY OF THE EMPEROR ON PAIN OF DEATH. IF ADDRESSED BY THE EMPEROR, BOW FROM WAIST TO ALMOST 2 O'CLOCK AND ADDRESS HIM AS EMPEROR. OTHERWISE WAS PRETTY MUCH AS I IMAGINED COURT TO BE WITH LOTS OF POLITICKING, VERBAL BACKSTABBING, OBVIOUS ALLIANCES AND LONG WAITS FOR HIS IMPERIAL GREENSKINNED MAJESTY TO GET AROUND TO HEARING WHAT YOU'RE THERE FOR. HUMAN PRESENCE VERY UNUSUAL; BE PREPARED FOR SNIDE COMMENTS YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO ANSWER BACK TO.

HUMANS: MALE SLAVES TEND TO WEAR THE UNIFORMS OF THEIR JOBS, FEMALES TEND NOT TO BE WORKERS BUT HOMEKEEPERS AND WEAR BRIGHTLY COLOURED LOW QUALITY CLOTH, VEILS AND OBVIOUS JEWELRY, WHICH DENOTES MARRIAGE. SMALL HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS, A WOMAN AND HIS CHILDREN ARE A MAN'S ONLY POSSESSIONS, OWNERSHIP OF WHICH PASSES ON TO THE MAN'S SLAYER. A WOMAN WHO CANNOT GIVE A MAN CHILDREN IS WORTHLESS. KEEPING FAITH APPEARS TO HAVE SOME WORTH. SAW INSIDE OF ONE HUMAN HABITATION: SINGLE ROOM, PARTITIONED WITH SCREENS. ONLY FURNITURE = CHEST OF HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS AND A BRAZIER (BELONGING TO HOUSE). WALLS ALL PAINTED WITH MURALS, SLEEPING MATS ON FLOOR, AS CLEAN AS POSSIBLE. COULD BE TYPICAL OR COULD BE RESULT OF COMPLETELY UNREASONABLE BITCH WHO LIVED THERE.

GENERAL: IF YOU ARE CONSIDERED A GUEST, IN ANY SENSE OF THE WORD, THEN YOU ARE SACROSANCT, AND HARM TO YOU IS CONSIDERED HARM TO THE HOST. A HUMAN WAS KILLED FOR FIGHTING WITH ME WHEN I WENT OUT LOOKING FOR IT.

#### ENEMIES:

THE JABAKU: PIRATES WHO SAIL AROUND IN ENORMOUS BLACK FRIGATES ACCOMPANIED BY NASTY STORMS ATTACKING DEFENSELESS ADVENTURERS WITH CATAPULTS. ARE GUIDED TO THEIR TARGETS BY AN "EYE" INVESTED WITH TOTEM MAGIC PLANTED BY JABAKU SPIES (OUR EYE WAS THE DEVICE OF DAL'TOSH ON THE FRONT OF THE SHIP WHICH HAD BEEN DOCTORED.) CAN ALSO CAST OR CALL SNOWSTORMS AND SOME KIND OF FREEZING TORPEDO. ALL JABAKU MINIONS, INCLUDING ZOMBIE-LIKE MONSTERS, CONTROLLED BY THE MAGIC OF THE CAPTAIN. SO ALSO IS THE REALITY OF THE SHIP, WE DISCOVERED WHEN I KILLED HIM AND IT DISAPPEARED WITH CREW. THE CAPTAIN WAS A GAUNT, DISEASED-LOOKING BASTARD WITH WHITE EYES SURROUNDED BY FOUR CHANTING LACKEYS. APPARENTLY IMMUNE TO PARALYSATION POISON. HE HAD A BLACK BALL IN EACH HAND AND HIS FINGERS HAD EXTENDED AND FUSED OVER THEM TO FORM A LIVING CAGE. THESE BALLS ARE MAGICAL, D.A.= SUMMONS SOMETHING, ONE MAKES YOU POWERCHUCK POISON, THE OTHER MAKES YOU BLIND, BUT IT HAS SOME ADVANTAGES. WOUNDS DONE BY JABAKU NASTIES VERY LIKELY TO BE INFECTED.

THE ASHATELL: ELVEN NASTIES (PIRATES) WHO ROWBOAT AROUND ATTACKING DEFENSELESS ADVENTURERS WITH PLANT MAGIC. FOUND A GLASS

BALL WITH AN EYE FLOATING IN IT, WHEN BROKEN GREW A GREAT BIG OFFENSIVE ASPARAGUS. SUSCEPTABLE TO COOKING.

THE CHALDAK: DWARVEN NASTIES (PIRATES) WHO WOULD HAVE RAMMED THE DEFENSELESS ADVENTURERS GIVEN HALF A CHANCE.

DESTINY: GUTLESS PIRATES WHO TOOK ONE LOOK AT THE OTHERS AND RAN OFF. FUCKWITS GOT US ON THE RETURN JOURNEY.

THE REBELS: MOST ARE EASILY STIRRED UP RABBLE NOT WORTH A FART IN A FIGHT. HAVE BEEN GIVEN RELIGION, "THE UNIFIER", SYMBOL AN "X" ON A STICK, TO GET THEM GOING EASILY. THE UNIFIER, THE ONE TRUE, SPEAKS THROUGH THE PROPHETS OF THE THREE: LORDS OF CHANGE, DESTRUCTION AND CREATION. HAVE PROMISED THE RABBLE THEY WILL GET BACK THEIR WILL, BECOME FREE MEN AGAIN ETC. USUAL CRAP TO STIR UP THE DOWNTRODDEN. RECKON GET THE PROPHETS AND IT'LL STOP. DAL'TOSH RECKONS THE INSTIGATORS MAY BE OFF-PLANE IMPORTS. HOLY MEN UNFORTUNATELY SAW NEED TO HIRE LESS DEVOUT BUT LESS FICKLE HELPERS IN THE SHAPE OF OFF-PLANAR MERCS. ORLIX'S LOT, MUCH RESPECTED BY THE REBELS. AT ATTACK ON THE THRONEROOM WE SAW APPROX. 25, MOSTLY OLDER HUMAN, ONE GIANT. ALL DRESSED IN WORN, HEAVILY GREASED HEAVY LEATHER ARMOUR, GOTHIC APPEARANCE, WITH RAGGED CHAIN. LOTS OF BIG WEAPONS, SPECIALISED MELEEISTS, SUICIDE TROOPERS, SEEMED CONTENT JUST TO CAUSE FLESHWOUNDS ON MOST. NO RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS, JUST LOTS OF ACCESSORIES, E.G. GRENADOES OF STICKY FIRE. USED MAGICAL "PORTAL" FOR ENTRANCE, ALSO ENTRANCE APPARENTLY FROM SHADOWS AND MORE MUNDANELY THROUGH THE SKYLIGHTS. WHEN KILLED, OR WHEN UNABLE TO ESCAPE BACK THROUGH THE PORTAL AT THE SIGNALLED END OF THE ATTACK THE BODIES TURNED TO PILES OF DUST WITH A BLUE FLASH. ANYONE CAUGHT IN THIS GOES TOO. SUSPECT LIMITED LIFETIME. SUPPOSEDLY NO SUPPORT FOR REBS FROM HIGHER NOBS BUT WAS A RUMOUR THAT SOME OF DAL'TOSH'S ENEMIES MAY BE CONNECTED WITH THE RELIGION. REBELS DO HAVE SOME ACCESS TO PORTALS SO ARE CONSIDERED RICH. MAIN PROBLEM ORCS HAVE WITH REBELS IS THEY GET 20% OF ALL PROFITS COMING TO SALAMAKAR BY TRADING ON THE BLACK MARKET.

OTHERS: MOST OBVIOUS ENEMY OF DAL'TOSH IS ORK NOB WITH THE DEVICE OF A FLAMING BALL. THOUGHT HE COULD BE A MAGIC USER, BUT TAKING HIM OUT (TEMPORARILY) DIDN'T SEEM TO CHANGE ANYTHING. ALSO WAS SOME FRICTION WITH AN ORC HONEY, BUT DAL'TOSH SEEMED QUITE PUT OUT BY HER DEATH SO GUESS IT MUST HAVE BEEN SOME KIND OF ROMANTIC SHIT.

ALLIES: TWO OTHER ORC BACKRUNS, DEVICES = DAGGER GUARD AND TALONED HAND.

#### MAGIC ITEMS:

CRAFTED TORCS INVESTED WITH RITUAL OF INTRUSIVE TRANSLATION; THINK OF WHAT TO SAY AND TRANLATION COMES TO YOU SO CAN SPEAK (AND MAKE OFFENSIVE GESTURES) LIKE A CULTURED NATIVE.

TRUTHFINDING RING

MURTLES MAGICAL SHARPENING STONE; WEAPON SHARPENED WITH THIS DOES MORE DAMAGE.

PINK HEART MEDALLION OF PROTECTION; GIVES SINGLE SHOT

PROTECTION FROM AORTA SHOTS.

MR HUMPHRIES FACE; MAGICAL MASK.

FLICK-GAUCHE: MAINGAUCHE THAT APPEARS FROM A WOODEN HANDLE.

LADY SYNTHIA'S EVER FASHIONABLE BALLGOWN: MAGICALLY CHANGING GOWN, JUST THINK OF THE STYLE.

GIRDLE OF MIGHTY EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION; GROW OR SHRINK AT WHIM.

BALL AND CHAIN OF PAIN: DOES NASTY THINGS TO BOTH WEILDER AND TARGET.

UNDERGARMENTS OF BOUYANCY: LINGERIE DESIGNED TO HELP YOU SWIM BY GIVING YOU A WEDGY YOU LEVITATE AWAY FROM.

BLACK SPHERE OF THE JABAKU #1: POISON VOMIT RANGE EFFECT.

BLACK SPHERE OF THE JABAKU #2: VISIONISE SKILL ABILITY.

MISC: EIDELON IS A COMPLETE NUTTER. DO NOT LET HIM BE PARTY LEADER, AND KEEP HIM RESTRAINED WHEN NOT IN USE. THE MILKY WHITE STUFF THEY DRINK IS CALLED KASTELL AND IS RECOMMENDED.

31 MARCH: GUILD MEETING. GO TO ROOM WITH ORC, ELF AND HUMAN, INTRODUCTIONS AS ABOVE, OFFERED REFRESHMENTS. HAVE SOME MILKY STUFF; WEE! I COULD LIKE THIS JOB. TOLD OBJECTIVE, THEN LEFT TO SQUABBLE ABOUT IT. PARTY = ME, THULRANDIR, THORN, EIDELON, KISERI, SIR AGRIVANE AND DIMITRI. LAST THREE ARE BUNNIES. EIDELON GETS PARTY LEADER, IMMEDIATELY INSISTS ALL PARTY MEMBERS CARRY 2 WEEKS FOOD, 1 DAYS WATER AND 2 HEALING POTIONS AT ALL TIMES. FUCKWIT. I GET SCRIBE, THULRANDIR GETS MILITARY SCIENTIST. EMPLOYERS RETURN, TELL US WE WILL BE INTRODUCED AT COURT SO NOT MISTAKEN FOR HUMAN SCUM BY OTHER NOBS. ASANTE SAYS TO HAVE A NIGHT ON HIM. ALL RIGHT! EIDELON DRAGS ME BACK INTO ROOM. FINALLY GET AWAY AND CORNER ELF TO ESTABLISH MEANS OF PAYMENT FOR THIS PARTY. TALKS OF REASONABLE EXPENSES. FUCK. SO COLLAR JAQUILO AND SHOW HIM THE SIGHTS. SEEMS REASONABLE EXPENSES OPEN TO INTERPRETATION. ARRANGE COURTLY ATTIRE. BIG JOKE.

1 & 2 APRIL: SPENT WHORING AND DRINKING. GET RECEIPTS. OTHERS ARRANGE COURTLY ATTIRE AND SET UP AGRIVANE INTO FOPS CLOTHES. QUOTE DIMITRI: "IT WOULD BE TERRIBLE TO GET A FAUX PAS IN A COURT FULL OF ORKS. I DON'T THINK I COULD LIVE IT DOWN." ARWEN JOINS PARTY. SHOULD BE GOOD SPORT.

3 APRIL: BOAT LEAVES ON EVENING TIDE, DIMITRI CARRIES ME ON UNCO. COME TO FOR DINNER. NICE FOOD, TALK BUSINESS, MORE MILKY STUFF. WILL BE LENT AMULETS AS PART OF DIPLOMATIC STATUS SO CAN UNDERSTAND LOCAL LINGO.

6 APRIL: KISERI RECOVERS FROM SEASICKNESS. YAY.

7 APRIL: ALLOWED TO CAST ON SHIP TO PRACTICE. SOME STUPID BASTARD GIVES TASTE OF THINGS TO COME BY BLOWING UP SOME WATER WITH A BOLT OF SUNLIGHT AND UPSETTING THE CREW.

8 APRIL: STORM CLOUDS. SHIT. GET GEAR TOGETHER AND PUT IN FLOAT, OTHERS TIE THINGS AND SELVES DOWN APPROPRIATELY. FUCKWITS. SPELL OF LIGHT ON SHIP SO EVERYONE CAN SEE HOW MUCH SHIT WE'RE

IN. BAD STORM. LIGHTS GO OUT HALFWAY, SO RENEWED. EIDELON FALLS IN LOVE WITH A SAILOR. NOT SURPRISED.

9 APRIL: 18 HOURS AFTER STORM HIT, SAILORS ALL BUGGERED, EIDELON DENIES RESPONSIBILITY. THORN SAYS WIND IS WRONG, CROWSNEST REPORTS ENORMOUS BLACK SAILED FRIGATE COMING TOWARDS US WITH STORM ACCOMPANIMENT. NO FLAGS. OTHERS START PREPARING FOR MELEE SO I SUGGEST WE ASK OUR EMPLOYERS WHAT IT'S WORTH TO THEM TO HAVE OUR PROTECTION. NOT A FUCKING CHARITY, AFTER ALL. ASANTE IDENTIFIES JABAKU, SAYS TO LOOK FOR EYE. THULRANDIR FINDS GLASS BALL WITH EYE FLOATING IN IT IN BILGES, EIDELON GENTLY BATTLEAXES IT FREE. FUCKWIT. D.A.= ICE HARMS IT. AGRIVANE THOUGHTFULLY DEALS WITH PROBLEM AND TROMPS ON IT. FUCKWIT. ENORMOUS AGGRESSIVE ASPARAGUS SPRINGS UP AND ATTACKS HIM. QUOTE THORN: "OOO... MAGIC." THE ORIGINAL DUMB WOMAN. MISS D.A. FUCK. SOME STUPID BASTARD CASTS SOLAR FLARE. I GRAB BUCKET OF WATER. THREE PULSES LATER SHIP IS SET ON FIRE. THROW BUCKET OF WATER AND JUMP OVERBOARD TO RESCUE FRIED SAILOR, FOLLOWED BY KISERI. EVENTUALLY GET HIM BACK. FUCKING NEAR DROWNED MYSELF. ASANTE SAYS PLANT MAGIC = ASHATELL, WHO ARE THEN NOTICED BEHIND US AS WELL. FUCKING MARVELLOUS. HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER EYE. ASANTE SUSPECTS A TRAITOR, STARTS TESTING CREW WITH TRUTHFINDING RING. OTHERS FIND EYE, AGRIVANE USES TRIED AND TRUE DESTRUCTIVE METHOD TO DEAL WITH IT AND GETS BLASTED. HA. WHILE DISRACTED, COOK "FALLS" OVERBOARD. EVERYONE IGNORES HIM. CHALDAK SHIP APPEARS ON FORWARD HORIZON. SHIT FUCK. JABAKU SHOOT AT ASHATELL. AGRIVANE'S IDEA: SURRENDER AND LET THEM FIGHT IT OUT AMONGST THEMSELVES, THEN TAKE ON SURVIVORS. DULY IGNORED WHEN THE JABAKU FIRE AT US. ANOTHER SHIP APPEARS BEHIND OUT OF STORM IN SORRY STATE. DESTINY: CONSIDERED POTENTIAL ALLIES BY EIDELON. THEY TAKE ONE LOOK AT ALL THE OTHERS AND HEAD BACK INTO THE STORM. SOME DEFENSIVE SPELLS CAST, THEN SERIES OF SOLAR FLARES SET UP TO CATCH JABAKU SHIP WHO ARE STEADILY GAINING. THORN FIRES OFF SOME GOOD SHOTS INTO THE ENEMY, THEN SOLAR FLARES GO OFF AND CATCH THEM. SNOW STORM ON SELVES TO PUT IT OUT. DECIDE TO TURN TOWARD CHALDAK: BEST CHANCE OF SURRENDER/ SURVIVAL. BOULDER CATCHES RIGGING. JABAKU AND ASHATELL ENGAGE, JABAKU THROWS GRAPPLES. SLOWS PURSUIT. ASHATELL BREAKS FREE, JABAKU CONTINUE CHASE. ANTI-RIGGING SHOT FROM JABAKU, THEN THEY CATCH US, GRAPPLES WITH CHAINS, AND GO TO BOARD. SMALL FIGHT, THEN CHALDAK RAM JABAKU AMIDSHIPS, BREAKING CONTACT. FINISH OFF BOARDERS AS DIMITRI FALLS OVERBOARD. FUCKWIT. AGRIVANE EVENTUALLY DEIGNS TO RESCUE HIM. SOME STUPID FUCKWIT CASTS STAR WINGS AND FLIES OFF TO TAKE ON THE JABAKU SHIP HIMSELF AS I THROTTLE LAST BOARDER. LOSE A BET TO DIMITRI. FUCK. FLIGHTY BUGGER RETURNS AND OFFERS LIFT TO ASANTE OVER TO CHALDAK. ASANTE SAYS ATTACKS "SOMETHING POLITICAL". NO KIDDING: I THOUGHT THREE DIFFERENT RACES WERE AFTER MY AUTOGRAPH. NO DETAILS/ GUESSES FORTHCOMING. DECIDES TO GO TO CHALDAK WHO OFFERS US 25 000 SP TO SINK JABAKU SHIP. MEANWHILE KISERI

THINKS DAL'TOSH IS PACTED: FOUND A HIDDEN BAT WHILE LOOKING FOR EYES. FAIL D.A. OF COURSE. FUCK. ASANTE AND BIRD BOY RETURN. EIDELON HAS THIS GREAT PLAN: WE ATTACK THE JABAKU FRIGATE AND BOARD HER, BIRD BOY FLIES IN AS I TAKE OUT AIR MAGES, THEN WE KILL EVERYONE HELPED BY 20 CHALDAK. EMPLOYERS, UNDER THE MISTAKEN IMPRESSION HE'S OFFERING A PLAN WE CAN ACCOMPLISH, AGREE. FUCK. EIDELON IS MAD. DIMITRI GIVES HIM ARSEHOLES. SOMEONES SPELL BACKFIRES SO I DON'T GET INVISIBILITY BUT THULRANDIR DOES. AS WE CHARGE JABAKU THE CHALDAK ARE HIT BY SOME KIND OF TORPEDO, FREEZE UP AND STOP. I RECOMMEND LEAVING. MORE SUNBEAMS HIT THE JABAKU, ONCE MORE FROZEN. GET INTO RANGE, I THROW GRAPPLE AND MAKE MYSELF SCARCE, THEN BOARD HER. ABOUT 26 ON DECK. OTHERS TEAR UP (AGRIVANE LATE CAUSE HE HAS TO FINISH A CRAP) AND ATTACK. CAN'T SEE ANY AIR MAGES, OR ANY MAGES FOR THAT MATTER, BUT DO SEE HAGGARD LACKEY RUNNING TOWARD THE TOWER, SO FOLLOW. OTHERS HAVING PROBLEMS OF FOOTING ON SLIPPERY DECK. PLAGUERIDDEN ZOMBIE THINGS APPEAR AND MOVE SLOWLY TOWARD FRAY. I GO DOWN TOWER, NASTY PLACE, WALLS COVERED IN DISEASE SHIT, INTO ROOM WITH 4 JABAKU SITTING AROUND THE CAPTAIN, CHANTING. HIT CAPTAIN WITH PARALYSATION POISON, DIDN'T WORK. FUCK. SO STICK HIM WITH DOCTORED MAINGAUCHE, THEN SLIP A GARROTTE AROUND HIS NECK. LACKEYS GO NUTS AND SCRATCH AT ME LIKE BITCHES, THEN THE CAPTAIN BUYS IT AND THEY ALL DROP. I GRAB THE BALLS OUT OF HIS HANDS. MEANWHILE, ZOMBIE THINGS MOW THROUGH THEIR OWN SIDE TO GET TO THE OTHERS. ARWEN AND AGRIVANE GO DOWN. THEN ALL THE ZOMBIE THINGS DROPPED AND THE CREW WENT NUTS AND THE SHIP STARTED TO DISAPPEAR/ DISSOLVE. I NOTICE THIS, TOO. OTHERS ABANDON SHIP, I FALL INTO WATER AND LOSE MAINGAUCHE, WHICH IS STILL STICKING IN CAPTAIN. FUCK. OTHERS PULL ME OUT. DAL'TOSH'S CAPTAIN PLEASED, PARTY PLANNED. DEBRIEF, HEAL UP, MENTION POSSIBILITY OF DISEASES. ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR ME RESCUING PARTY. FUCKWITS. GET SCRATCH INFECTIONS SEEN TO. GO TO PARTY. DAL'TOSH PLEASED, ASANTE WORDY: OFFERS US "ITEMS OF POTENCY" EACH FOR SAVING SHIP. LOTS OF MILKY STUFF. COME ON TO KISERI AND EIDELON PROPOSITIONS ME. NOT INTERESTED. MENS MEET ON BOARD. EIDELON CALLS BATTLE "PRETTY CLOSE CALL" AND WARNS ME OFF THE WOMEN. BASTARD. AGRIVANE GETS RELIGIOUS MORAL AS WELL. GO BACK TO PARTY, GET PISSED, TRY TO PICK FIGHT WITH AGRIVANE, FAIL. SHIT.

10 - 14 APRIL: WEATHER FINE, RECOVER FROM PARTY. DAL'TOSH AND ARWEN GET COSY, SPEND HOURS IN HIS ROOM. SHE SAYS HE'S TEACHING HER DANCES. I BET. MENTION POSSIBILITY THAT WOMAN OF SLAVE RACE MIGHT FIND THINGS INCONVENIENT IF MAN OF MASTER RACE TAKES TOO MUCH OF A FANCY FOR HER, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THEIR PENCHANT FOR RESTOCKING SLAVE RACES OFF-PLANE BUT SHE SCOFFS. BITCH. HOPE SHE GETS TROUBLE.

15 APRIL: GOING REALLY STIR-CRAZY SO GO AND PICK A FIGHT WITH A SAILOR. CREAMS ME, BASTARD, BUT I FEEL BETTER. THEN NOTICE WHIP IS MISSING. SHIT. AGRIVANE GOES TO CONGRATULATE THE

ANTAGONIST AND WINDS UP TERRORISING HIM. PARTY UNSYMPATHETIC ABOUT STUNNED SCRIBE. GOOD. EIDELON TALKS A BUNNY INTO HEALING ME. BACKFIRES AND STARTS TWITCHING. THREATENS EIDELON, SO EIDELON HITS HIM, SO AGRIVANE HITS EIDELON. QUOTE THORN: "TRUST SCORPION: HE'S THE ONLY ONE I KNOW WHO CAN START A FIGHT IN THE PARTY WHILE UNCONCIOUS." ALL THROW WATER ON ME 'TIL I WAKE UP. FUCKWITS. ASANTE COMES ON BOARD TOWING ANTAGONIST, TAKES HIM TO RAIL AND DRAWS A KNIFE. I CLICK BEFORE PARTY AND YELL NO BUT ASANTE CUTS HIS THROAT AND SHOVES THE BODY OVERBOARD. PARTY GETS VERY UNHAPPY, BLAMES ME. DIMITRI GETS RIGHTEOUS AND EIDELON SAYS I'M NOT TO CAUSE ANY MORE DEATHS. COMPLETE FUCKWIT. AS THOUGH I DO IT FOR THE FUN OF IT. RECKON BEING ON BAD SIDE OF SAILORS COULD CAUSE TROUBLE FOR MISSION, SO WHILE PARTY GIVING ME THE COLD SHOULDER GO AND ASK JAQUILO HOW I COULD MAKE AMENDS. TELLS ME I HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF ASSAILANTS' (BRAKENS') WIFE AND SPROG. FUCK.

16 APRIL: CAPTAIN SETS UP TOOLS FOR PLANE SHIFT. ALL PURIFY. NIGHT FALLS, GET TO HIGH MANA ZONE. SOME FUCKWIT TOLD NOT TO CAST (BELATEDLY) AS IT DISTURBS THE VORTEX. SHIT. BLACK HOLE APPEARS. DAL'TOSH GRABS ARWEN, EVERYONE ELSE GRABS SHIP. GO IN, VERY DARK. EIDELON CATATONIC, SCARED OF THE DARK. DIMITRI GETS WASHED LOOSE AS SHIP ROLLS IN TUNNEL, GRABBED BY AGRIVANE AND THULRANDIR. BIT HAIRY FOR A BIT: DIMITRI GETS WASHED LOOSE AGAIN, GRABBED BY AGRIVANE AGAIN, ARWEN GETS WASHED LOOSE, GRABBED BY HER GREENSKINNED BOYFRIEND. WON'T BE THE FIRST TIME, I BET. OUT OF HOLE INTO LIGHT.

DAY 1: HOT. FLYING. FUCK. LOOSE KISERI OVER WHEN WE HIT WATER. SHE GOES UNDER, EIDELON JUMPS IN TO RESCUE HER. WAIT. THEN ME. THEN ARWEN. THEN EIDELON AGAIN, AFTER SURFACING FOR A BREATHER. THEN DIMITRI. WATER IMPOSSIBLE TO SEE THROUGH. SHE EVENTUALLY SURFACES, SO WE ALL GET DRAGGED BACK ON BOARD. FIRST IMPRESSIONS: HOT. CLIFFS ON BOTH SIDES, CARVED WITH HEIROGLYPHICS AND RIDDLED WITH CAVES, SLAVES CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT. BEHIND, THE HOLE WE CAME OUT, 10' UP, GUSHING WATER, WITH LOTS OF VINES HANGING FROM IT. IN FRONT, MORE HOLES, MORE SHIPS AND THE CITY. FORMS A STEAMING SPHERICAL INLAND SEA. MILITARY STYLE BOAT APPROACHES, SAIL HAS A DEVICE OF A BIG BIRD COMING OUT OF THE SUN. COMMUNICATES WITH OURS USING MIRRORS. FUCKING HOT. CLEAN WEAPONS ETC. FIND OUT THE MILKY STUFF IS CALLED KASTELL. IMPORTANT, THAT. APPROACH CITY, SEE DESCRIPTION ABOVE. DAL'TOSH COMES OUT IN ALL HIS FINERY, IS GIVEN A CHEST BY A WELCOMING COMMITTEE AT THE DOCKS. GIVES US EACH A TRANSLATION TORC FROM THE CHEST, ALL HAVE HIS DEVICE, ARWENS IS PARTICULARLY IMPRESSIVE. INTRODUCED TO SOME OF DAL'TOSH'S ALLIES IN TRADE: DWARVEN COURTIER, ELF ASSASSIN AND SOME ORC NOBS. HEAD INTO CITY, TAKE NOTES (AS ABOVE). SEE NO VERMIN, VERY LITTLE POOR TRASH, NO LOITERERS. DISREPUTABLE TYPES MOVE QUICKLY. LOTS OF TENSION AND COPS. SEE WATER AND ICE FOR SALE, AND SALTY STUFF ON A STICK. FUCKING HOT. GET TO STREET LEADING DIRECTLY TO PALACE WITH NO PEOPLE ON IT.



INSTANT SUSPICION IN PARTY, NERVOUS BASTARDS. SOME COMPLETE NUTTER SETS A WHOLE LOT OF SOLAR FLARES DOWN THE STREET WHERE WE HAVE YET TO WALK. DAL'TOSH GETS NERVOUS OF QUIET AND STARTS US DOWN STREET. START HEARING A NOISE LIKE SURF, I GUESS SERF (RIOT, FOR ALL YOU SLOW FUCKWITS). SOLAR FLARE #1 GOES OFF AND I START RUNNING. MORE SCARED OF ADVENTURERS THAN REVOLTING SLAVES. #2 GOES OFF, MISSED ME. NOISE BECOMES DEFINITE RIOT. I DUCK INTO COVER. EVERYONE SCATTERS. CROWD COMES OVER. SCUNGY DRESSED HUMANS, OCCASIONAL SCUNGY DRESSED ELF. WILD. I'M FINE. DAL'TOSH, ASANTE, JAQUILO, EIDELON, THORN AND THULRANDIR (ALL IN A GROUP) START GETTING BUFFETTED SO DAL'TOSH STARTS PULLING THE OTHERS ONTO A ROOF. I GET WINKLED OUT, SO DECIDE TO FIND SOMETHING OUT IN RIOT. KISERI AND ARWEN GET CAUGHT UP AS WELL, ALREADY LOST DIMITRI AND AGRIVANE. I FIND A RANTER, TALKS OF A PROPHET, THE HEAVENS, THE TIME IS NOW, TO THE PALACE BULLSHIT. NOT MUCH SENSE, SEE SYMBOL. TRY TO GET OUT AGAIN. ARWEN GETS OUT TO BE SURROUNDED BY DWARVES WITH SPEARS, THEN ARRESTED BY ELVES. SPEARWALL CONTINUES DOWN STREET AND RUNS OVER KISERI. NASTY. I GRAB ROOFTOP AND AM JUST MISSED BY THE DWARVES, BUT ARE PICKED OFF BY THE ELVES FOLLOWING. VERY NASTY. FIVE OF THE BASTARDS TIE ME TO A POLE AND BUGGER OFF, IGNORING MY CLAIMS OF ASSOCIATION TO DAL'TOSH. STILL HAVE MAINGAUCHES AND BLOWPIPE, BUT ALL OTHER GEAR TAKEN. RIOT GETS SANDWICHED BETWEEN SPEAR WALLS AND STARTS GETTING VERY UGLY. DAL'TOSH, ASANTE AND THULRANDIR REALLY COP IT. EVENTUALLY BREAK INTO HOUSE AND BARRICADE SELVES 'TIL CONSTABULARY ARRIVES. GROUND COVERED IN BLOOD. DAL'TOSH GOES OUT AND STARTS BITCHING ABOUT HOW THE SITUATION HAS "PROGRESSED TO RELIGIOUSLY INSPIRED RIOT" THEN STARTS BITCHING ABOUT STUPIDITY OF CONSTABULARY AND PUTS OUT A CALL FOR US WHO ARE MISSING. I GET MANACLED TO A LONG LINE OF HUMANS AND LED OFF. PROMISE DEMISE OF GUARD, REMEMBER HIS FACE. ARWEN GETS LOCKED ON DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF ME SO I BREATHE DOWN HER NECK. SHE KICKS ME IN KNEECAP. FUCK. PROMISE HER DEMISE. WHIPPED FOR TALKING. GET TO PALACE, PUT IN BARRACKS WITH MANY OTHERS - STANDING ROOM ONLY, AND VERY HOT. WAIT TO BE PROCESSED AND GET INFO ON THE PROPHETS AND ORLIX'S MERCS (THEY ASSUME I'M ONE). TALKING ABOUT RELIGION STARTS ANOTHER RIOT. MEANWHILE, KISERI WAKES IN "HOSPITAL" BANDAGED HEAD TO FOOT, AND THE MAIN PARTY GETS SHOWN TO NICE COOL QUARTERS IN THE PALACE GROUNDS AND ARE GIVEN FOOD, DRINK AND HEALING. BASTARDS. AGRIVANE AND DIMITRI STILL MISSING. TWO HOURS LATER, THINGS CALMED, DOORS OPEN. GUARDED ELF COMES IN AND ASKS FOR SERVANTS OF BACKRUN DAL'TOSH. DON'T WANT TO LOSE COVER, SO KEEP QUIET. ARWEN GOES OUT AND LEAVES ME TO IT. BITCH. EVENTUALLY FIND SOME OF THE LEADERS, MEMORISE A FACE. MAKE WAY TO DOOR FOR WHEN IT'S OPENED AGAIN AND PASS OUT IN HEAT. MEANWHILE, KISERI GETS FOUND AND HEALED UP A BIT AND THE OTHERS GET OUR GEAR BACK. TWO HOURS LATER DAL'TOSH VISITS THEM. SAYS SITUATION IS OVER, BUT STILL LARGE NUMBERS OF POLICE AROUND, SO GIVES THEM ROBES

WITH HIS DEVICE EMBLAZONED ACROSS AND SOME MONEY AND SAYS TO HAVE A NIGHT ON THE TOWN IN THE TOP THREE LEVELS. SAYS HE'S STILL LOOKING FOR MISSING MEMBERS, INCLUDING ME: ARWEN SAYS NOTHING. THULRANDIR SAYS SOMETHING ABOUT ME BEING THE "#1 MOST WANTED IN THE COUNTRY IN FIVE HOURS". ALL GET NICE REFRESHING RESTORATIVE DRINKS. FUCK 'EM ALL. CAN'T HELP ARWENS LEG THOUGH. HA. AT THIS POINT AGRIVANE AND DIMITRI SHOW UP. SAYS THEY WENT UNCO IN THE RIOT AND WOKE UP IN A COOL PLACE WITHOUT CLOTHES OR ARMOUR AND COVERED WITH OINTMENT. SOUNDS GOOD. THEN SOME BIG GUYS CAME IN AND GAVE THEM WHITE ROBES AND VEILS, THEN LED THEM UP THROUGH THE WARRENS TO EVENTUALLY TURF THEM GENTLY IN THE STREET. THEY NOTED THAT HUMANS REACTED IN A SEMI-RELIGIOUS WAY TO THE ROBES AS THEY TRIED TO FIND THEIR WAY BACK. EVENTUALLY ASKED AN ELF THE WAY TO BACKRUN DAL'TOSH, WAS SHOWN TO A COP-SHOP AND FROM THERE TO THE QUARTERS. MEANWHILE, I COME TO AS DOOR BESIDE ME OPENS, PROJECT AND SLIP OUT PAST SPEARS AS SIMULACRUM GIVES THE GUARDS THE FINGER. MUST HAVE LOOKED GOOD TO THE REBELS. FIND JAQUILO, GET HEALED UP A BIT, DECIDE I DON'T WANT TO TALK TO THE OTHERS SO GET HIM TO SHOW ME THE WAY TO THE SAILORS' PUB. GET THEM TO SHOW ME THE WAY TO BRACKEN'S WOMAN. GO THROUGH RABBIT WARREN BIG TIME, GET SHOWN DOWN SOME STEPS TO A CURTAIN. SAY THEY'LL HANG AROUND. GET IMPRESSION IT'S NOT FOR MY BENEFIT. CLAP AND ENTER. NICE ROOM. WOMAN AND CHILDREN (TWO. FUCK) IN SHADOWS. SHE COMES FORWARD. FUCKING AMAZING! SHE, AL-AHLINA, AND THE KIDS, AGALO (9) AND MIRIDI (3) GIVE ME INSTANT ANTI-PATHY. SUITS ME. TALK A BIT, GIVE HER TWO CHOICES: GIVE HER A LUMP SUM AND LEAVE HER, OR SHE PACKS UP AND COMES TO SEAGATE. INHERIT A WIFE. LEND HER A RING TO SEAL STATUS IN EYES OF EMPLOYERS THEN SHE PACKS EFFECTS INTO CHEST. ROPE IN LOITERING SAILORS TO HELP CARRY THE FUCKING THING TO DAL'TOSH'S QUARTERS. GIVE THAT FUCKING NASTY WEASEL TO AGALO TO LOOK AFTER. BIG JOKE. GET JAQUILO'S HELP MOVING AL IN AND HE SAYS THE SAILORS ALL GOT THE SACK DUE TO SOME MONEY THAT WENT MISSING FROM DAL'TOSH'S SAFE DURING THE VOYAGE. TELL HIM I'M NOT A FUCKING SOCIAL WORKER BUT I'D MENTION IT. THINGS I DO TO KEEP A MISSION SAFE. FEEDING MY FACE WHEN OTHERS RETURN. FIND OUT THAT THULRANDIR EVENTUALLY WENT LOOKING FOR ME IN THE BARRACKS, FOUND DOOR DWARVES UNCO-OPERATIVE SO GO GETS WRITTEN ORDERS FROM SOME BUREAUCRATIC ELF IN A RED BUILDING, THEN GOES BACK, GETS IN, CAN'T FIND ME, SURROUNDED BY PROBABLE ENEMIES WANTS TO HAVE THE WHOLE LOT D.A.ED TO SEE IF I'M HIDING. HA! ARWEN CHECKS OUT WITH RECORD KEEPER, NO SIGN OF ME BEING PROCESSED. EIDELON WORRIED SO SHE CHECKS AGAIN USING MY COBRA ALIAS. NO LUCK. HA. DECIDE TO GO SHOPPING WHILE DIMITRI SUGGESTS THEY CHECK OUT THE WHOREHOUSES FOR ME. I WISH. AGRIVANE GETS SOME OFF-THE-RACK ARMOUR, ARWEN GETS HER ARMOUR REPAIRED AND BUYS A BATTLEAXE. ALL GO TO LARGE, NOISY, OPEN PLANNED HUMAN TAVERN. GET DRINKS, AGRIVANE AGRIVATES THULRANDIR, GENERALLY SOCIAL TIME. MEET A HUMAN ACCEPTED DWARF

CALLED MACREL. JAQUILO EVENTUALLY LEADS THEM HOME, TELLS THEM I'M BACK. TELL THEM WOMAN IS MY PRIZE, KILLED HUSBAND. FILL THEM IN ON STUFF I'VE FOUND OUT ABOUT CITY AND PEOPLE, AND MENTION SAILORS. KISERI OWNS UP TO THE THEFT, SAYS IT WAS TO COVER HER TRAIL WHEN SHE FOUND THE BAT. MY IDEA: DOCTOR COINS TO LOOK LIKE BAD MAGIC HIT THEM, THEN RETURN WITH STORY OF ACCIDENTALLY TELEPORTING THEM WITH A BACKFIRE. KISERI GETS TO WORK. THULRANDIR STARTS GETTING SENTIMENTAL TO ME ABOUT MY ABSENCE SO I RETIRE WITH AL. SHE STARTS SERIOUSLY GETTING ON MY WICK SO I GET PLASTERED AND PASS OUT.

DAY 2: "ITEMS OF POTENCY" DELIVERED IN EARLY MORNING. PARTY FALL OVER THEMSELVES IN ENTHUSIASM TO GET ME UP TO D.A. THEM AND EXPERIENCE MY HANGOVER. AL RESCUES ME. EVENTUALLY COME OUT AND CHECK WHETSTONE: NOT TRAPPED, WARDED OR CURSED, IS MAGICAL, THEN JAQUILO TURNS UP AND TELLS US TO DRESS FOR IMPERIAL AUDIENCE, LEAVE IN TWO HOURS. FEEL FUCKED, AND AL GETS IN MY FACE WHILE I'M DRESSING SO I ADVISE SHE TAKES A WALK AND GOES BUY THOSE THINGS SHE NEEDS FOR A HANGOVER CURE. NASTY MOOD. SHE LEAVES. GET OUT AND GRAB SOME MELON. ALL FANCIED UP EXCEPT AGRIVANE WHO DIDN'T PUT ON THE FOPS CLOTHES (DAMN) BUT INSTEAD'S WEARING HIS SKULL AND DEATH ARMOUR AND CAPE. RECKON HE'LL IMPRESS THE LOCALS. GIRLS LOOK GOOD. SOME WEAPONS BETWEEN US, DON'T TELL THE OTHERS WHAT I'M CONCEALING. LEAVE FOR PALACE FOLLOWING JAQUILO. NICE DECOR. SEE ORCS, ELVES AND THE OCCASIONAL DWARF, WOMENFOLK UNBELIEVABLE SO TELL KISERI TO REMEMBER ONE SO I CAN SHOW BALODE WHEN WE GET BACK. JAQUILO DECIDES ON DISCRETION, TAKES US BY A LESS TRAVELLED PATH. GET TO LONG TUNNEL / KILL ZONE, GO THROUGH TO GET TO PALACE. GET TO DAL'TOSH'S ROOM, HE'S THERE WITH ASANTE. TELLS US TO STICK WITH HIM, WILL BE ABOUT 2 - 3 HOURS BEFORE PRESENTATION, SO FRESHEN UP AND EAT A BIT. KISERI RETURNS THE MONEY, DITHERS OVER EXPLANATION. NEXT TIME GIVE HER A SCRIPT. DAL'TOSH TELLS OF NULL ZONE AROUND EMPEROR AND RULES ABOUT NOT CASTING. PLAN OF ATTACK: FOLLOW DAL'TOSH IN, STAY DEFERENTIAL AND BEHIND HIM. CAREFUL OF WHATEVER YOU SAY IN COURT, INSULT LEADS TO DUEL. MISSILE WEAPONS FROWNED UPON, DRAWING WEAPONS IN EMPERORS PRESENCE LEADS TO THE DUNGEON AND NO CASTING. ALL PRESENT WILL BE SOCIAL SUPERIORS, SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW. WILL STAY AT BACK OF AUDIENCE CHAMBER UNTIL PRESENTATION, WHEN WILL BE INTRODUCED AND THE MISSION PUBLICALLY ANNOUNCED. THEN RETIRE AND DISPERSE. EMPERORS TITLE = EMPEROR. BOW FROM WAIST TO ALMOST 2 O'CLOCK. DAL'TOSH AMUSED BY CURTSY, CALLED IT A SQUAT. PUT ARWENS NOSE OUT OF JOINT. GOT ALL OUR NAMES AND TITLES FOR PROPER INTRODUCTION. EIDELON PRACTISES HIS SPEECH AND KISERI PRACTISES CURTSYING. TWO OTHER BACKRUNS JOIN US, DEVICES DAGGER GUARD AND TALONED HAND = ALLIES. SUGGEST DAL'TOSH'S ENEMIES MIGHT BE TIED IN WITH THE RELIGION, AND THAT SOMEONE PRESENT MAY CAUSE TROUBLE FOR HIM. YAY. ALL FILE OUT TOWARD THRONE ROOM, ENTER NULL ZONE. THRONE ROOM BIG, WELL GUARDED, FULL OF TALKING. EMPEROR = BLACK ORC DRESSED IN GOLD

SITTING ON A BLACK THRONE EXTRUDED FROM A MASS MURDERER. MOST COURTIERS ARE ORCS. WE'RE NOTICED, IMMEDIATE PHYSICAL ALIGNMENT OBVIOUS, LOTS OF NEGATIVE COMMENT. STAND BEHIND DAL'TOSH BITING TONGUE AND OGGLING THE LADIES. DAL'TOSH WINS MOST RITUALISTIC HAND WRESTLING EXCEPT VERSUS ORC WITH DEVICE OF STYLISED HERON. SOME HOT ORC HONEY COMES ON TO HIM. EMPEROR MAKES ECONOMIC ANNOUNCEMENT: LESS INPORT TAX ON SLAVES WITH TWO YEARS TRAINING, SLAVES WHO HAVE BEEN SLAVES SINCE ADOLESCENCE, AND SLAVES NOT FROM A WAR ZONE. NICE WAY TO KEEP THEM UNDER CONTROL. EMPEROR ANNOYED AT BACKRUN WHO BROUGHT IN TROUBLEMAKERS. WE MOVE UP, LOTS OF INTEREST AND COMMENT. SOME POORER ORC GRANTED 33 SHARES IN A GATE FOR HIS SERVICE. HUMAN PRISONER BROUGHT FORTH, SOMEHOW CONNECTED TO MARTYRS. SAYS HE IS NOT REPENTANT, AND WILL NOT BE FOREVER. EMPEROR CONSIDERS DEATH OR WORSE, BUT DECIDES TO MAKE THE HUMAN A BODY SERVANT TO ACT AS AN EXAMPLE. ROYAL BEASTMASTER = FALAL. FROGMARCHES HUMAN OUT. OUR TURN. DAL'TOSH REVEALS PLAN AS HIS COMING OF AGE RITE, GIVES DETAILS AND BACKGROUND. RECKON ECHELON PLAN GOOD WAY OF TAMING DISSIDENTS AS WELL AS OTHERWISE USELESS PORTAL, THOUGH A LITTLE PEEVED THIS WASN'T MENTIONED EARLIER. ORC WITH DEVICE OF FLAMING BALL STEPS FORWARD, NOT HAPPY. SHADOWED BY HOT ORC WOMAN WHO MAKES EYE CONTACT TO DAL'TOSH AND GETS HIM ALL AGGRAVATED. FLAMING BALL STARTS MOUTHING OFF AT DAL'TOSH AND US, SURPRISED DAL'TOSH DIDN'T CHALLENGE THEN AND THERE - I WOULD HAVE, CAME FUCKING CLOSE. SEEMS FLAMING BALL HAS A PROBLEM WITH OUR LACK OF REFERENCES AND RADICAL AS OPPOSED TO TRADITIONAL WAYS OF DEALING WITH PROBLEMS. COULD HAVE BEEN PLAYING THE EMPEROR / COURT WITH THAT LAST COMMENT. THEN A LOUD BANG AND ALL THE SKYLIGHTS SHATTER. DIMITRI GETS DANGERSENSE. NO KIDDING. WE MOVE TO PROTECT DAL'TOSH, I PROJECT AS THE ENTIRE COURT EXCEPT MY FELLOW ADVENTURERS DRAWS WEAPONS. EMPEROR HITS THRONE DEFENSES, THREE OUT OF FOUR STEPS TO HIS DIAS SHOW OBVIOUS SHEILDING MAGICS. AVOID THE FOURTH WHILE DODGING FALLING GLASS. ORLIX'S MERCS POUR IN THROUGH SKYLIGHTS, APPARENTLY OUT OF SHADOWS IN THE THRONE ROOM, AND THROUGH A PORTAL THAT OPENED WITH A BANG VERY CLOSE TO THE THRONE. FALLING BASTARDS FLARE OUT INTO THE COURT, APPARENTLY ON SET FLIGHT PATHS, ATTACK THE ORCS WITH LOTS OF MOMENTUM. THOSE ON WALLS THROW GRENADOES. DAL'TOSH ORDERS US TO FALL BACK TO THE WALL. SEE HIS HOT NEMESIS ATTACKED. THULRANDIR HIT SLIGHTLY BY A STICKY FIRE GRENADO. I SEE FLAMING BALL SNEAK BEHIND THE PORTAL ENTRANCE. DAL'TOSH ROARS IN PAIN (? - DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING GET HIM) AND CHARGES INTO THE FIRE AROUND THE PORTAL. GET EYEFUL OF ARWEN WHIPPING HER SKIRTS OFF AS I GO AFTER DAL'TOSH. WEE. THEN MY SIMULACRUM BURSTS INTO FLAME. FUCK! I GET SEEN, AND THERE'S A HOSTILE MAGIC USER OUT THERE SOMEWHERE. RECKON DAL'TOSH UPSET AT THAT WOMAN BEING ATTACKED. COURT DOORS BURST OPEN AND A WHOLE LOT OF DWARVES COME IN WITH PIKES. FUCK. DAL'TOSH PLOWS THROUGH THE PORTAL GUARDIANS, GENERALLY APPEARS BATTLE TURNING TO ORCS. AGRIVANE FOLLOWS

HIM, I AVOID COMBAT, DIMITRI RESISTS HOSTILE MANA, THULRANDIR GIVES SOMEONE ANOTHER ORIFICE. NASTY. SOME STUPID BASTARD CASTS SOLAR FLARE. OH NO. THRONE AND EMPEROR AND ALL DISAPPEAR DOWN A HOLE I SWEAR WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE THERE. DAL'TOSH GETS THROUGH THE MERCS, HAS GONE BERSERK BY THE LOOK OF IT, THEN GETS TO WOMAN AND STARTS CRYING. DOESN'T SEEM TO NOTICE MERCS STILL ON HIM. SOLAR FLARE DUE TO GO OFF AND AGRIVANE, THULRANDIR, EIDELON AND ME ARE STILL IN THE AREA WITH DAL'TOSH. SMART. SEE FLAMING BALL BEHIND PORTAL, RECKON HE'S GOT SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE MAGIC SO BLOWDART HIM. AMAZING SHOT! HE WON'T BE GETTING UP FOR A WHILE. PROBABLY GET TOASTED BY THE SOLAR FLARE. A GONG SOUNDS AND THE MERCS RUN FOR THEIR PORTALS, THOSE THAT DON'T MAKE IT DISINTEGRATE AS THE PORTALS CLOSE. FUCKING DWARF GUARDS TURN THEIR ATTENTIONS TO US. WE PUSH DAL'TOSH OUT TO DEAL WITH THEM, EIDELON CHECKS THE WOMAN'S BODY: PRONOUNCED DEAD. THEN HE GETS ZAPPED WITH AN AGONY SPELL, RESISTS BUT SPENDS SOME TIME WRITHING NEXT TO THE BODY. SUSPECT. KISERI AND THORN HIDE BEHIND ASANTE AS DWARVES ADVANCE. SOLAR FLARE GOES OFF BUT FAILS TO GET THROUGH SKYLIGHTS EXCEPT TO LIGHT THE WALLS. DWARVES CHARGE, ALL BUT THULRANDIR AND DAL'TOSH SCARPER, AGRIVANE TRIES TO PULL THE LATTER AND TRIGGERS HIM TO GRABBING ARWEN AND RUNNING WITH US. THULRANDIR GETS HIT WITH HANDS OF EARTH, SAYS "ARE THEY TRYING TO RESTRAIN ME, OR IS THAT A HELPING HAND?". RECKON THEY SHOULD SLAP ONE OVER HIS MOUTH. ME AND DIMITRI DODGE DWARVES AS THEY HERD THE OTHERS INTO THE WALLS. DAL'TOSH COVERS ARWEN, AGRIVANE COVERS DAL'TOSH. DIMITRI: "JUST GOES TO SHOW - YOU TEAR YOUR SKIRT OFF AND GUYS JUMP ALL OVER YOU." I GET HIT BY AGONY, CAN STILL RUN THOUGH OFFERED LITTLE SYMPATHY. DIMITRI MOUTHS OFF AT ME SO I TRY TO HIT HIM, MISS. FUCK. WE GIVE UP AND GET PUMMELED FOR IT. ALL GET MANACLED TOGETHER EXCEPT DAL'TOSH (AND CO.) AND ARWEN, THEN GET HERDED OUT WITH LOTS OF CEREMONY. TAKEN TO DUNGEONS, VERY DEEP UNDER PALACE, STUCK IN A CELL ALL TOGETHER. TELL THULRANDIR TO PICK MY LOCKS, DISCOVER WHOLE PARTY BUNCH OF OLD WOMEN, AFRAID TO MOVE EVEN THOUGH THE NEXT TIME OUR DOOR OPENS IT COULD EASILY BE THE ENEMY. STILL HAVE BLOWPIPE, OTHERS UNARMED. ASANTE TURNS UP, SAYS HE'LL GET US RELEASED AND OFF PLANE WITHIN THE DAY. PLEASED WITH OUR JOB, WILL EMPLOY AGAIN (PROBABLY 6 - 12 MONTHS TIME, WHEN THINGS HAVE SETTLED DOWN). SAYS THE EMPEROR IS STILL MISSING. LEAVES. DIMITRI AGREES WITH ME TO MOVE, GIVEN BAD SITUATION REPORT - ANARCHY AFTER EMPERORS DISAPPEARANCE NOT GOOD FOR HOPES OF DIPLOMATIC TREATMENT. OTHERS VOTE TO LEAVE ME MANACLED. FUCKWITS. SAY WE WILL MOVE IF WE'RE STILL HERE IN 24 HOURS. MAKE DART FOR BLOWPIPE FROM BONES OF PREVIOUS TENANTS. COUNT GUARDS AS THE HOURS PASS, THEN AGRIVANE STARTS PRAYING. FUCKWIT. HEAR LOUD MARCHING, STOPS OUTSIDE DOOR, THEN IT OPENS. SEE ARROWS SILHOUETTED BY LIGHT, THEN ELVES WEARING DARK GREEN AND FLAMING BALL DEVICE. FUCK. CONCEAL WEAPON WHILE TELLING OTHERS THEY'RE ALL

FUCKWITS. LOTS OF GUILTY LOOKS. DWARF ENTERS, CARRYING CESTUS AND WARHAMMER, SAYS HE INTENDS TO MOVE US. GETS SHEILD BARGED FROM BEHIND BY DIFFERENT ELVES DRESSED IN BLACK AND COVERED IN SOOT. NINJA ELVES. EIDELON SUGGESTS CONGA-CHAINING THE ENEMY, SINCE IT'D TAKE TOO LONG NOW TO GET LOOSE. FUCKING MAD. WE RETREAT, TAKING HIM WITH US, I HIDE BEHIND DIMITRI. LEAD ELF IN BLACK IDENTIFIED AS ASANTE. DEAL WITH OTHERS, THEN LET US GO. I GET A METAL WHIP OFF A BODY. YES! MAKES MY DAY. OTHERS ARM UP. I PROJECT, GO FORWARD TO CHECK, THEN FOLLOW ASANTE TO GUARDROOM WHERE THE OTHERS GET THEIR WEAPONS BACK. ALL VERY SECRETIVE AND SNEAKY. SAYS GEAR AND AL ALREADY AT DOCKS, JUST WAITING FOR US. SHOWS WAY TO SECRET TUNNEL, 25' DROP INTO WATER = SEALEVEL, ALL JUMP, AGRIVANE SINKS, EIDELON FINDS HIM. FOLLOWED BY NINJA ELVES, ASANTE LAST AFTER CLOSING TRAPDOOR. FOLLOW CURRENT FOR 10 MINUTES, COME OUT AT DOCKS. NIGHTTIME. FIND BOAT FROM VOYAGE IN, FIXED, CLIMB ABOARD. GEAR AND AL PRESENT. SAME SAILORS, EVERYTHING CLEARED UP. DAL'TOSH THERE WITH ARWEN AND GUARDS. GIVES PRAISE: "PERFORMANCE OUTSTANDING", MAY (HOPES?) TO HAVE US BACK, DEPENDS ON SITUATION, WANTS COPY OF SCRIBE NOTES. EIDELON RESERVEDLY AGREES. DAL'TOSH AND ARWEN NOT RETURNING THIS TRIP. SHE STAYING TO "LEARN MORE OF CULTURE AND STUFF" BUT WILL BE BACK IN TIME FOR THE NEXT GUILD MEETING - TRUSTS DAL'TOSH TO GET HER BACK. SURE. INFORMED OF TRADE GOODS STOWED FOR US, THEN DAL'TOSH AND ARWEN LEAVE AND WE SET SAIL. ASANTE SHOWS US HOW TO REMOVE COLLARS, IF WE WANT TO. RECKON TO LEAVE MINE ON FOR VOYAGE - EASIER TO TEACH COMMON TO AL AND KIDS. SHE BEDS DOWN IN THE MENS CABIN WITH ME. IGNORES THE OTHERS. GET TO PORTAL, SHIP PASSES WRIT TO GUARD AND GETS PASSAGE THROUGH. I GET PISSED ON KASTELL AND PASS OUT.

DAY 3: OUT OF PORTAL INTO SUNSHINE. HUNGOVER. TRY AL'S SPECIAL REMEDY, THROW UP.

SPEND DAYS TEACHING AL AND KIDS COMMON, NIGHTS GETTING PISSED AND MORNINGS THROWING UP AFTER SHE GIVES ME HER SPECIAL REMEDY. WORKS, THOUGH.

DAY 8: SEE DESTINY MERCHANTMAN ON HORIZON: TRADE BLOCKADE. FUCK. KISERI GOES TO DISGUISE TRADE GOODS, FAILS. I GET BLACK BALLS AND CONCENTRATE ON TURNING US INTO A BIG BLACK JABAKU SHIP. FAILS, BUT LOSE MANA. FUCK. DESTINY BRIBED TO LET US PASS. NO PROBLEMS.

DAY 10 = APRIL 26: REACH SEAGATE AT EVENING, ARWEN WAITING AT THE DOCKS AS THOUGH IT WAS NATURAL TO HER. ASANTE TAKES COLLARS AND GIVES A GIFT TO THE GUILD TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION TO SALAMAKAR. GIVE AL MY COAT SO NOT TO START RUMOURS OF MY INTEREST IN BLUE BIRDS. ALL DECIDE TO MEET AT THE PUB AT NOON TOMORROW TO SORT OUT THE STUFF. EIDELON MAKES AN INFORMAL COMPLAINT ABOUT ME TO THE GUILD, ON PRINCIPLE. FUCKWIT.