

Introduction

Mission for Styx, Rune Mage.

“There are these weird runes coming through the portal tree linked to Ildrisholm. We want you to investigate.”

The team

Nendil	Water Mage	Leader
Ms Hillborne	Namer	Military Scientist
Loxi (Me)	Earth Mage	Scribe
Aurora	Air Mage	
Sven	Water Mage	
Hammer	Rune Mage (<i>Fully – Hammer of the gods</i>)	
Bedevier	An extremely talented dog.	

The Contract (Payment)

We have each been blessed with rank 20 *Greater Enchantments*.

The guild says that we can keep any myrrh that we find after the first sixty pounds.

I am, as per usual, a little confused by this arrangement but I'm sure it is all above board – so to speak.

Information

Fossergrim

So there are these ice-blocks (2" x 2" x some) with runes on them. They have been coming through this portal at intermittent times. Five of them have been found so far. << *I wonder how many were not found ...* >>

It turns out that these ice-blocks are transformed *fossergrim* via a special ice college spell.

Ms Hillborne dissipated that spell and hey presto – we had a fossergrim to talk to. Our water mages quizzed it and found out a few things.

He (Fang the fossergrim) was mucking about in his river by his waterfall when a tasty looking ‘big’ wondered by. Then he ‘woke up’ here, in an iron cage. He described the big as tall, looking somewhat like Sven but with the colour of Ms Hillborne and my type of hair – that is to say really tall (Over 6’), fair skinned with long platinum blonde hair.

Fang can tell, by taste I think, if a body of water is close to his home. This becomes very important.

Rune Cubes

Some divination had been done by guild staff members. We now know that they were created a week apart to the minute (Tuesday 6:53). Most importantly – we know that the spell of transformation only lasts for three months.

Armed with this information – we set off to Ildrisholm via the portal, with Fang in tow.

Adventure

Through the tree and back.

Styx showed us the tree that is the rune portal to Ildrisholm. He instructed us to touch it in quick succession on the same spot – so that our travelling time will be the same(ish).

We arrived on a beautiful hill by a lovely tree in Ildrisholm. In our immediate attention were hoards of dark armies. Ogres, Goblins, walking Skeletons, Wolves carrying Skeletons, Skeletal Goats and who knows what else, surrounding our hill.

It was a very quick visit. We definitely needed to think about this some more – so we took the nearest portal back to Seagate.

Someone had the sense to ask what day it was. It turned out to be the 4th Fruit – two days since we stepped through the portal ten minutes ago.

We did some philosophising about the nature of rune portals and Ms Hillborne went back over her divine discoveries. It came to light that Fang had, in one incarnation or another, been through another portal. This raised more questions about the nature and whereabouts of rune portals. Styx was of some little assistance there.

A time to Sail.

A decision was reached that we would sail to the mouths of the various rivers within 200 miles of our hill in Ildrisholm. At each point we would let Fang taste the water and tell us if that was the way to his home.

Sven wisely alerted us to the dangers of taking a fossergrim with us – inasmuch as Fang would be tempted to charm, drown and eat us (in that order). Hammer provides us with a solution in the form of a compelling spell that he paints onto the fey in blood. Now, for a day at a time, one of the water mages can command him and he will obey to the letter.

We sailed to Dolphin Bay on the Unicorn river, Snake river, Mirimar river, into the Five Sisters, on towards the Luna Empire into the Isles of Adventure.

One night we were talking about the fact that the next rune block was about to expire when it did. Now we had two fossergrims on board. Sven got more agitated and Ms Hillborne found a friend – Cutie is her name. After some too'ing and fro'ing over the fate of Cutie we let Hammer work his magic again.

Cutie has been ordered to swim home and we are following closely behind.
And so we sail into the Isles of Adventure and the 14th of Fruit.

The Isle of Karvala

Day or night

We approached Cutie's home and watched her swim straight into a waterfall of calm water, flowing gently down a cliff face.

Later interrogations led us to the fact that fossergrims make their environment seem calm, so that the unwary will be trapped in the rapids – making them easy prey for these water folk.

There is a path running beside the Fossgrim River. Fang tells us that ‘bigs’ come and walk on it now and again and that he enjoys their flesh. I note here that the island is only a mile and a half long and a mile wide. There does not seem to be any permanent habitation of humans or people here.

Our immediate challenge was the tingle of magic that we sensed when Sven took us closer to the beach. Neither Ms Hillborne or I could discern the nature of this magic – so we barrelled through. To our surprise, we sailed into star lit darkness. Master Sven immediately took us back into the daylight, through this veil. And so we waited for Ms Hillborne to make a divination.

The curtain is a ‘temporal displacement’. It takes time back, just over twelve hours. Our water mages tell me that this is rather clever, because it fits in with tidal movements and so there will be no break in the waves. Other than that – we have no idea why somebody wants their island to be half a day behind the rest of us.

Fort.

Up on the headlands, just away from the river mouth, stands a ruin of a fort. This fort looks really ominous at night. We spent the rest of our day outside the veil and went exploring, in the displaced daylight.

When I say ruin this building is dust waiting to happen. I tried to climb the walls (as the stairs were rotted) and they crumbled under my weight.

As if that insult was not enough – the wretched occupant of this forsaken place then attacked me. He(?) is a revenant – an undead creature that we assume has a very sorry tale. Maybe we’ll find out about that later but for now we have left him in his falling down house.

The rest of the island needed our close and immediate attention.

House of Karvala

Obelisk

Our trek, through the rough – not the path for fear of fossgrim attack – took us towards the other side of this island where we came upon a towering obsidian obelisk.

Aurora said that this was a good place. As I come to think of it she said that when we crossed the veil as well. The Island does have a strange affect on our spell casting abilities.

Hammer finds casting easy.

The Water mages find it wearing.

I think Aurora finds it extremely easy.

Ms Hillborne and I don’t seem to have difficulties but nothing special is happening for us.

Back to the obelisk...

We found out that it is a link to the elemental plane of air and that while Aurora believes that she could cast lightning bolts (a spell that she has seen done at the guild) when she’s in contact with it – she can’t, but she did draw an awful lot of mana when she tried.

The Temple of the Moon

Just by the obelisk is a temple sort of a building. It is guarded, at the top of some impressive stairs, by two moon dogs. The dogs are constructs that will activate when someone walks between them. We walked around them and up to the huge oak doors.

I masterfully picked the lock mechanism by way of lifting the bar from its holding brackets.

<<*I wonder why the doors are barred from the outside*>>

We boldly walked into the temple, after Ms Hillborne assured us that there were no magical traps.

It took me a little while to realise that my magical talents are for naught in this house. This is extremely disturbing as it goes underground – in my element you might say. In here – the water mages can draw mana freely and the others are the same as when they are on top.

Our explorations took us into an ancient library where Hammer told us that the temple was indeed devoted to Karvala. Unfortunately, the scrolls will turn to dust if we touch them. Maybe there are people who can preserve and restore these texts for our library.

We found a room full of priests' robes and regalia.

<<*I wonder if it would be useful for us to have some of those robes*>>

And then we came to a summoning hall.

The reason to adventure

“Loot”: was the general cry as the skeleton guards raised their besilvered arms to silently order us out of their presence. Our noble leader informed me that we would not come back to sort this situation out later because, in her experience, there is never time ‘later’. Personally I think that all she saw was the silver trinkets walking around on easily destroyed skeletons. Oh well – a contract is a contract and I will not be the one to see my fellows be slaughtered unnecessarily.

We actually put this fight off until the next day – after sleeping off our adventures at the fort.

The day of the 16th saw us wrest the finery from seven skeletal warriors at the cost of several bumps and bruises, one grave chest wound and some consternation. Sven would not let me snap the embedded scimitar to draw it neatly out of Aurora. He bade me to heal her, then pull the blade out (causing more grievous damage) then heal her again. My apologies sky mage – the sword was worth more than your pain.

Now the skeletons are no more than dust and the illusions of snakes have dissipated leaving the wristbands non-magical. We collected the loot and had a better look around.

[[Loot: Seven times sliver Scimitars, Wristbands, Torcs.]]

The Summoning Hall – is set out with circled pentagram and a silver inlaid triangle complete with a bound entity in the middle of it. After some discussion and the gory results of Hammer's future gazing, we came to a consensus to leave well enough alone. We may find out what an extra-dimensional being is doing, bound up in an all but abandoned temple in the Isles of Adventure, but we're not going to ask it right now.

<<*I will remember to bar the doors as we leave this place.*>>

Notes from Aurora

(Thank you Aurora)

Clean up

There was something bound inside the silver triangle but, after some discussion, we decided to leave it alone. Made sense to me, especially since many deaths of adventurers are caused by poking things they shouldn't.

It didn't take long to determine that the entire first floor was devoid of anything interesting. All that we found was an old chest containing a dead snake and several mouldy clothes. As Swen put it 'What sort of rotten bugger puts a snake in their sock drawer'.

Loxi attempted to open a nearby door but that only resulted in a large rock falling from the ceiling and nearly splattering on her - just as seen in the Limited Precog. It took a while but we were able to push the boulder out of the way.

The door proved to be a false one but it's aura told Isabeth that it was formally living and a teleportation device. The destination was unknown so, again we decided to leave it alone - at least for now.

To Catch a Fossegrim

Our current concern was who had been catching fossegrim. So we started looking for some. Fang was able to point some out, just as Isabeth and I decided that going for a swim with our new friends would be a really good idea at the time. Hammer restrained Isabeth by sitting on her while when Swen started firing on the fossegrim with his crossbow I was threatening to shoot him. I came to my senses just in time. Meanwhile Hammer was using a feather to try and distract Isabeth by tickling. Must be some really strange human ritual.

Once the fossegrim died, the illusion of a peaceful stretch of river changed to a raging torrent. We managed to convince Fang to go and retrieve the other fossegrim's loot but all that was retrieved was some healing plants - heals 5 points each - enough for seven uses, some rusty stuff, a few items of jewellery and some rings. One of the rings contained invested magic, four rank 10 sleep spells.

With the local fossegrim gone, Fang was persuaded to take over that stretch of river. Basically he became the bait. So we built a hide, waited and watched. It was expected something would happen on midnight Tuesday, Guild time.

Frysdag - Hammer was spotted taking Fang for a walk into the river but Swen was able to wash them out with a Mage Current and the rest of us jumped on Hammer. While Swen was threatening the fossegrim with cold iron, Hammer was restrained until the reverse effect control wore off. Isabeth took the opportunity to take revenge with another feather. Yep. Humans are nuts. I was just hoping this wasn't some odd human mating ritual. We also noticed other fossegrim moving in to this area.

Nothing else happened. Just before midnight, Tuesday, the next cube due to melt was placed in a wooded box and buried. Meanwhile Loxi went invisible to keep a closer watch on the river bank. However, nothing was seen.

The next morning (W'ansday) both fossegrim were released to the wild and we headed back to the disguised portal. Making sure that we touched it in the same spot, we went through one by one and appeared in a large chamber.

Other options

It felt really good in here, at least that was my opinion. The room was reasonably large with windows spaced around. From the views out, we deduced that we were inside the obelisk. The centre of the room was full of toys which appeared to be representing units in armies. Occasionally a figure would move by itself. Surrounding them was a ring of chairs of which three were occupied by translucent figures that appeared to be

studying the battle. They DA'ed as short-lived sentient, human and there was some binding magic involved. An ivory figure of a knight was also DA'ed and that was formally living, mammoth, no magic.

The only wall that didn't have a window was the one behind us which had teleportation magic on it.

Mystic Wargamers

Off to one side was a very large ominous looking spirit. It was a long lived sentient, near avatar, probably a demigod, air spirit, combined FT+EN = infinity, no known counterspell to banish, major weakness = earth. When he noticed us, he wanted to know if we wanted to join the game. It was some sort of wargame and the idea was for their combined forces to defeat the air spirit's army (he introduced himself as Kaval). Games could run for months, but magics insured that no mortal distractions (such as food, sleep etc) would get in the way of play. Apparently a lot of people have come here just for the privilege of playing him and it was considered good training for military scientists, even those of master rank.

Currently playing was an ice mage, E&E and rune mage. They had already been here for a month or so. Isabeth was able to DA them and discovered all three of them had rank 20 greater and lessers on. The E&E also had four bloodcharms on. One converted fatigue to magic resistance, the second increased poison resistance, the third allowed second chances, and the fourth improved strike chances. He also had a word of summoning on.

The rune mage also had a linking lifeforce to his runestaff while the ice mage (Yalle) had a binding lifeforce and an increase strike chance with a hand and a half.

While this was going on I had drifted over to the air spring from which air was blowing direct from the Elemental Plane and was basically letting it wash all over me, all the time dreaming of flying.

An Answer for Styx

The others weren't able to speak to the mages directly but Kaval was able to tell us that, prior to them commencing the game, they had been employed by the Big Juju to send him some fossegrim as there was a shortage in the area, probably due to the actions of adventurers. They had captured some, used an ice ritual to turn them into cubes then used rune magic to send them to Ildrisholm. Unfortunately, somehow, their rune portal had intercepted with the one between the tree in Ildrisholm, and the Guild, causing the cubes to be diverted. They were popping out at random times because they were hitting different spots on the tree.

A Banishing

He wanted the fire devil in the summoning triangle banished so we decided to do so. So, while we stood in the protection pentagram, Isabeth cast the necessary counters, and rituals. After a short while, the creature vanished. We then dug up the metal in the summoning triangle, recovering 10,000sp worth.

We also discovered, from Kaval, that the ruined castle had come here with the island when it was moved here from the Western Ocean, several thousand years ago.

Before we left, Nendel constructed a map so we could find our way back.

Some of us might be playing that game in the future.

Back to the guild and a new mission

It took us thirteen days to sail back to the Guild, finally arriving back on the 6th of Harvest. After I had my chest wound repaired we went to find Styx. He told us that the Big Juju had attempted to hire adventurers for the last few years as he was interested in recovering the Book of Ildris, who was the founder of the Pasifistic Air Mages. Seems like an interesting group of people. I'd like to meet them.

Sticks also told us that the Big Juju was a freshwater kraken that had come from the Islands of Adventure and had a controlled troll that lurked under a bridge. He also mentioned the witch, the Ildrisholm Revolutionary Army (currently composed of one leprechaun), the demoncats which are black and curse people and the sabretooth tiger. The harpies and gargoyles had been killed but the orangutans had not. There was also the owl and the message tree. Several hills had special properties such as the four season hills (one each), the graveyard hill (things buried there return as undead especially necromancers which return as greater undead), and the invisible hill. There was even the castle rock hill with ogres and giant sheep on it.

However we decided not to take up the Big Juju's offer. Instead we accepted a job offer from Riptide, another water mage, to go back to the Islands of Adventure, specifically Snake Island, as he believed that was where the Big Juju came from.

Adventure Part 2

Mission

Escort Riptide (A guild water mage) to The Isles of Adventure, Snake Island specifically. Riptide wants to find out about the Big Juju and its involvement with The book of Ildris.

Prep.

It took us a week to prepare and or train before we set sail again. As it happens we neatly avoided being out in the field during the equinox.

The water mage equipped us with each with ...

A water of healing,
A water of strength and
Two vials of antidote.

Travel

It took Riptide only seven days to get us down to the locale of Snake Island. During the day of the 22nd – We sailed into a null mana zone. This caused a small amount of concern and evidenced Riptide's lack of oars (He had plenty of poles). We managed to ride the natural tide onto the nearest beach. The complete lack of mana prevailed on this Island.

A Land of Logic.

A fellow, most probably not called Zork, came down to the beach to meet us. He told us that we were on Snake Island amongst a few other lies. We don't hold this against him, as he is in fact incapable of uttering the truth. This, as we soon found out, is the Kingdom Isle of Knights and Knaves. Half of the native population here are habitual liars and the other half – obsessively truthful.

There is a scholar living here called the Sorcerer of Logic. He is studying these people. He is also an arrogant man who will only talk to you if you can solve his little logic puzzles. Luckily, Nendil is good at that sort of thing and so we got to quiz The Sorcerer. He provided us with some interesting and useful information about Snake Island. Not least of which was that he knew a knave that had returned from a visit.

Alex is the man who ventured onto the Snakes' Isle and returned to tell the tale. Albeit that we have to decode his untruthful answers.

And so – We set off the next day with Alex as our guide.

Snake Island

With our newly acquired oars we rowed out of the manaless waters toward Snake Island. Alex warned us about the wild life. The first on the list were the roving basilisks on the beach. They were fishing amongst the statued victims of the less informed. It was well worth noting the stone forms of basilisk also decorating the beach. Alex had a polished metal shield for that very purpose.

<< Does anybody think that we should come back to this beach with a binder to rescue some people? >>

As it happens – Nendil took care of enough of the ugly monsters from the barge for us to make our way into the jungle. The water mage used the saturated earth spell to make quicksand on the beach and therefore drowned the beasts. Sven tells me that there can be no pity for the gruesome monsters – they do nasty things to people you know.

Our destination – the temple on the mountain by the great lake of this island. This temple has a Naga guardian whom riptide wanted to question.

We saw some amazing species of lizards and snakes and were careful to avoid them <<clever us>>. Ms Hillborne did have to banish a salamander that got in our way but our travel was thankfully bloodless.

Alex tells us that the lake has juvenile kraken in it.

We crept past a were-python (stuck in animal form) and carried on to speak with the naga.

More Puzzles

It is the nature of nagas to challenge you with a riddle before she will grant any kind of favour. I am informed that this one was gentle in her handling of us. If we failed to answer her question then we had to step outside the temple and wait for our companions.

I was the only one that was humbled by her question. Sven proved himself gallant in giving his place to me – thank you my friend.

- Riptide found out that : The Big Juju had wrestled a page from The Book of Ildris from this guardian and had gone to seek the rest of the book from the naga's sister in Ildrisholm.
- Nendil won a spell as did Aurora and Ms Hillborne.
- Hammer of the Gods took an item that gives him the power to change into a python.
- Sven came out of the deal with a wish.
- I have asked for wisdom for solving part of my predicament. See the library notes on my own misadventures.

I hope that our trek off this island is as quiet as our arrival.

Water for Sand

Slavers on the beach

Our walk back to the beach was pleasant enough, treading on snakes aside.

Getting back into our boat was a different story. Two basilisks were extremely interested in The Spirit of A~ and despite Nendil's best efforts, they climbed aboard and she suffered backfire born migraines.

Sven decided that we (he as it happens) should summon food for them. I have no idea what he did but food was not forthcoming.

What did arrive was a roiling fog – that was in fact a trans dimensional portal and a huge black ship. << *In time honoured tradition, I will blame the nearest male ... Sven* >>

... and so we were captured by slavers, fronted by a Namer and two succubi. The crew were blue skinned people of a fishlike appearance.

We were shackled and compelled to strip. When part of the crew returned from their trip to (presumably) the temple we were hauled aboard and flung into a hold – fitted out for many captives.

Fed and Beaten.

I am told that the word for man hater is misanthropic. This describes the women on this slave ship. They used agony spells to torture Sven and Hammer. I would not be so incensed but they had no other reason than hate for this noisome abuse.

Sold (for 250 gold coins each)

We were carted off the ship into a port town in the region of Ahshan, at the top of the southern continent. In no time at all we were standing naked on the docks of the slave markets. The auction progressed in front of us in the gabble that they call a language. Two bidders vied for us as a group – Good luck would have it that one Gon Tchong outbid the local shivers.

Loxi goes shopping.

Gon Tchong had heard of Nendil the watermage and so bought us to do a job for him in return for our freedom. He told us that his peoples' sheep were being eaten by a big flying lion-beast (probably a lesser Sphynx).

Our painted master arranged for Nendil's headaches to be shriven into a potion. He paints his face every morning in accordance to his religious beliefs.

We managed to convince him that an adventuring party does better when it has its' adventuring kit. Sven and I volunteered to go back into town with him to find what we could. There was a small formality of tattooing a slave mark to our foreheads but I think I can remove those later.

The markets of Ahshan are bustling with a riot of colours and the babbling calls of these vibrant people. In my short time there I found traders of most useful and beautiful things. Gon Tchong had to do the talking, funnily enough, but I did find vendors who would speak in my elven tounge.

Between Sven and me we found most of our stuff. I had to find a replacement for Hammer's rune staff and also looked for other useful stuff.

Palace bound

We journeyed out off the river delta, on camels, along the trade road and turned east. Some days later we arrived at the walled town of * * and beyond that – the palace where Gon Tchong works.

We have silken robes to wander around in. So far this slaving business is not too harsh (okay we're not really slaves but indentured mercenaries).

I am afraid that I have lost count of the days – I will have to ask someone about that when it becomes appropriate.

Gon Tchong has allowed me to take the slave marks off Sven and me.

Business

From the palace we were given a guide and some mules – and off we went. Some days north to a tiny village where the beast had been attacking.

After one night's stay we trekked into the mountains to the herding grounds. We found an attack site and I collected a gryphon's feather. So much for meeting a lesser sphynx.

An adventuring first

... in my experience anyway. We came by a plan (with the usual amount of double talk and misunderstanding) and the plan met avoided and survived the opposition.

Our Plan –

We had talked about fighting this gryphon from some sort of an advantage. It being a flying beastly and all. Someone came up with the idea of Aurora summoning it into a cave where flying was not an issue.

Good plan – but the only cave around here is part of the river (full of water).

This led to an excellent plan – Let's drown the gryphon.

This will involve creative use of Nendill's bound water, Aurora's summoning spell and my wall(s) of stone. Nendill would clear the cave of most of its water for Aurora to cast. I would place walls of stone in strategic places and one final wall to trap the monster. The water would then flow into the stone box and, with any luck (actually – almost certainty) we would drown the gryphon.

The obstacle –

At the pool by the cave – we met a water spirit. It was not keen on having a doomed gryphon in his cave. After a while Ms Hillborne got bored with it and banished him.

Result –

Seagate Adventurers visiting team – Two – local monsters and mystic phenomenon Zero.

Loot –

Gryphons in this area nest in spun gold. Ours had four eggs. We got away with half a nest and two female eggs after the slave master took his cut. Oh and he gave us some money too. He did decide to not give us his blessing – oh well, it seems that we can't have it all but we're not slaves anymore.

Going home

Riptide has bought a boat (a Carrack I'm told), Ms Hillborne is reunited with her spirit dog and we are on our way home.

We dropped Alex off home – Thank you to Alex for his interesting assistance – and made our way back to Seagate. Note : We were very careful not to disturb the pod of killer whales in Federation Bay.

Gratitude swings both ways.

Our Ahshanian host was none to pleased with our view of what and who belongs to whom. That's my guess anyway. As I noted before we kept half of the gryphon's nest and two of her eggs. The price for that seems to be that our Greater Enchantments were reversed (all except Nendil the pirate killer).

We did a treasure split.

I could not stand the thought of the golden wire of the nest being melted down and so took it with a view of have something done with it.

Ms Hillborne was kind enough to take me on a quick trip to Grissholm(?) to meet Queen Alexandra. She has an arrangement with a shaper (I think).

The Queen is charming and she took the wire to her shaper – I hope he can come up with something worthy of our effort and sacrifice.

Sand for Rocks

With a few weeks left until the Winter Guild Meeting we went looking for more trou...gainful employment. We decided to help Grobbenbonk travel to the Temple of the White Goddess. Nendil tells me that there are waters of great healing there. This was enough to intrigue me.

Grobbenbonk, apart from being a goblin is the sheriff of his domain <<Insert Name Here>>. Not a good place to be pretty and/or an elf. Although his staff were cordial enough – improper suggestions aside.

<<I think that, Aurora passing out from the first sip of the local brew was the best thing that she could have done.>>

We are now several days into the mountains on our way to see the Temple of the White Goddess. This day is the 10th of Vintage.

Temple of the White Goddess

Up the hill and around a bit is the Temple of the White Goddess. It is a Naga house. There are puzzles aplenty and quizzes when you meet with herself (the Naga). If you get the answers right – she'll train you magical arts. We got a half right answer and so got half a training session.

We played around in the pools of water there – I got prettier and then we went home.