

Scribe notes for "Jhensi Hallenger's Birthday", written by Valery.

Autumn 801 WK

GM :

Gordon Lewis

Characters:

Brundar (Ian Hassel) party employer, sort of.

Valery (Sally Jackson) party leader, scribe

Faith (Andrew Withy)

Thauess (Stephen Martin)

Wordsmith (Errol Cavit)

Lucius (Bridgette Johnson)

Places Visited:

Brightrock, Old Brightrock, (northern dwarven underground city)

Summary:

Hired to escort/help Brundar to his home city, because his mother (Jhensi Hallenger) is cursed and dying, needing Brundar to save her. Travelled north (via Destiny) to village, then overland to Brightrock, attacked by mercenaries aiming at Brundar. Meet Jhensi Hallenger at Brightrock, attend feast, meet Vin & co, mercenaries hired to protect Brundar, and betray us to Pan e' Leke. Travel to Old Brightrock (deserted dwarven city), encounter Manticores, Gnolls, led by gnome Pan e' Leke (aide to Jhensi). His imps summon demons to remove curse on Brundar, and begin ritual to sacrifice Brundar to give Jhensi power. Pan e' Leke, 2 imps, 1 cherubim killed; 2 cherubim, Jhensi escape.

## Persona of Brightrocks

- Gaia the earth mother, the force whom people ask for help in their magics, astrology etc.
- The King who is possibly, ruled by the Queen. He is the head of the House of the Highbright (i.e. royal) family, in his seventies, but doesn't look much different from the other dwarves, other than his bejewelled clothes. The Highbright family tend to be Wicca. Apparently some high up members have connections with people high up in "the Sanctuary side of Sanctuary".
- Sonia, oldest of the next generation. Leader of the young social set. Asked Faith to bring her back a dozen truesilver ingots from Old Brightrock. Has the theoretical knowledge of the Noble mages, though not apparently a practitioner.
- Sarah, (Sonia's cousin?) a Noble Mage, helped Brundar's curse effect, after talking with Nosander's soul, thought removing curse would kill him.
- Sammy, young boy, appeared at the feast.
- 13 Advisors, (and always 13, as one dies, the next in the queue assumes the mantle automatically). They give advice to the dwarven King. Members include:
- Joseph Lockenleach, the only hereditary position (others voted on by consensus of the others, or royal favour). His son/heir is "just a boy" aged about 30.
- (Aunty) Shaeile Verhichan, hostile to Jhensi becoming an advisor. Addressee of Kali's scroll (which gave detailed and accurate information about Brundar's deceased father, giving his movements since he left Brightrock. This scroll was greeted with hysterical laughter, some disappointment to her, presumably.
- Earth mage, trained in Southern Parts - unusual to have a defined college.
- Dark celestial mage
- Tav Lowenrock, is the about to retire advisor, who is leaving with good will, to go away to study some stuff.
- Jhensi Hallenger, a very good "Noble Mage", i.e. she asks Gaia to create something, and it is. This involves talking in an ancient draconic? language. Since her illness her creations are whimsical, and without heed of her current energy levels. Her dreams have physical manifestations in her room while she sleeps. Everyone asks how she is, generally well respected, and feared? by the city, due to her sharp tongue, and Noble Mage status, presumably. If she dies, estates go to Brundar, and failing him, reverts back to the House of the Bright. Ascertained she will die by 1<sup>st</sup> of Vintage, confirmed as permanent death by the Priests. Vin says that Jhensi DA's as having infinite positive and negative health. Although Jhensi has some of the draconic tongue that she has been speaking in (apparently the language of magic), she is more fluent than expected and than what she was before she sickened, this perhaps being just a reflection of her increased magical abilities. Her curse makes her more attuned to Gaia, so this may be an attack on Gaia via all the noble mages eventually.
- She was in league with Pan e' Leke in Old Brightrock, to use Brundar in a ritual to give her more power. This ritual was uncompleted, and she banished herself, possibly to Hell, or some other fire/brimstone looking place. Still requires Brundar for her ritual if she finds an alternative for Pan e' Leke. Perhaps her sickness/craziness was entirely a ruse to lure Brundar home.
- Secretary does as she is bid by Jhensi, keeps track of things in notepad in rear pocket. Was rather helpful during our stay. Says Jhensi had a couple of human visitors before taking sick, from Bowcourt and MMHS, although this is typical for her.
- Brundar's father was a carpenter, left decades ago, with Brundar to look after him. Father took to working and drinking, in many towns. Jhensi had started rumours that he was a traitor leading him to leave Brightrock.
- Hallenger House after Jhensi disappearance, Brundar was allowed to take some personal effects, and the the house and it's contents were handed over to the Highbright coffers.
- Healers Guild keep Jhensi alive by the herbal tea. They tend to not ask for help from Gaia, instead relying on their own herbs, empathic and alchemical skills. Figure she should have been dead several times, don't know what's keeping her alive other than their tea. Gave some tea for Brundar too.
- Astrologers three were doing a divination/reading on Jhensi (casting stones), when the curse 'bit back', and they've been at the healer's guild ever since, with fits etc. Similar to Dark Circle effects, from the sounds of it - related? They have continuous nightmares about a demon dancing on Jhensi, which took fright at something and fled. By demon, implication being imp sized, with claws, fangs, wings, possibly bat like. Also, a wee holy (and holey) pot, being wielded by said demon. Ties in with our Guild reading.
- Magic Usage college per se are rare, however not unheard of.
- Namers banned by the advisory, at the beginning of somebody or other's tenure, didn't like nosey parkers divination stuff. Possibly tied in with Kali's missive to Verhichan. The priests say that Namers

were expelled 30 years ago because a commoner learnt the college, then misbehaved a lot, compelling people to do things.

Illusionists also expelled, possibly only gone underground (unliterally).

Mind mages are about.

Necromancers are about.

Noble Mage The ability to be a Noble Mage is an innate talent, which the dwarves check for. Using Noble Magic uses a lot of energy (as much as a GK spell and a SK spell if asking, twice that much if demanding), and mana is treated in many ways as an entity in its own right. noble mages rarely speak while performing magic, and even more rarely speak Draconic.

Jhensi Hallenger noble mage extrodanaire. Not a good teacher of the arts, despite being the best about.

(Princess) Sarah Highbright advocates using the existing substances around her rather than creating from nothing - much easier apparently. Effortlessly summons food across the table at the feast.

Frederick a trainee Noble Mage, not highly trained, he seems to like working in the mines. A relative demon expert in Brightrock. He hasn't used magic to directly check what is happening to Jhensi, because it is dangerous. We ask Frederick if he can assign his 'Trace' to Lucius' Locate - apparently not.

Miner created the fortifications for the table ballista competition at the feast.

Priests Their house had a forest theme (Faith's reading?), and they (a young one, and a \_very\_ wise one) seem reasonably forthcoming. Their work confirmed what others had said about Jhensi (permanently) dying in Vintage. They had a vision of an imp travelling from New Brightrock to Old Brightrock (a symbolic vision, not an image). No-one in Brightrock is known to have any dealings with demonics either for or against them. Provides Roland, to guide us through the tunnels to the Canal to Old Brightrock.

Vin and Co are all male human experienced mercenaries from Carzala (yet not associated with Seagate Guild) who is compelled (mechanism unknown, but failure is fatal) to protect Brundar, as Jhensi's survival is linked to Brundar's well-being. His employer (from down south) is not stated, but the others in the group are reporting in to the Advisory. They are staying with Advisor Lockenleach. They have worked together about 7 years, and are very professional, last been at Brightrock 3 years ago, doing separate business. They had astrology reading done indicating three daggers (2x binder, 1x ensorcelers) would be of help to us in protecting Brundar, and presented them to Thaeuss at the feast. (+10% to spell base chance when wielded in off hand, silvered, also rank 9 weaponsmith, with base chance bonus) These daggers also give some locating to their group. The daggers were used by Pan e Leke in the rituals for Brundar and Jhensi and were destroyed. They also presented us with drawings of animalistic totem poles, carved with old dwarven runes, alongside a river, as being a place for us to visit to help cure Jhensi. Seems to indicate Old Brightrock, not they have visited there. They had also been employed by Pan e Leke, to deliver Brundar, which they did by betraying the party as a Pan e' Leke and some nolls approached, by kidnapping Brundar.

Vin is a Namer, which is sanctioned by the Advisory. Skills include woodland ranger, and fighting with quarterstaff. Under effects of Lesser Enchantment, but no curses. He has no tattoos or runes branded on him. Works for fear of his death by his employer. Crystal vision "will Vin betray us?" : Shadows moving, fire erupting, play of swords and dash of fur, then Vin stuck on sword. i.e. Yes and we get revenge, or No, he betrays his employer to us, and dies. Was killed in Old Brightrock, near Pan e' Leke's house in Goldentyne.

Lowenk Grabsfarr, Mind mage, "communications expert" (8people mind speech). Uses falchion (magical) and crossbow. At large.

Kurr Felt, Dark Celestial, specialising in walls and wings. Uses (magical) Katana, apparently won through a competition of agility and stealth. At large.

Employer of Vin (& others?), Baron from Aquila, has ostentatious bedroom, seen via crystal. Compels Vin with fear of a long excruciating painful death if his identity is revealed, or Vin fails in his mission. Has hold over Vin because of something Vin's grandfather did. Was out to stop Jhensi completing her ritual, hence knew of it beforehand somehow.

Old Brightrock :

Stories (mainly from the wise priest at New Brightrock) Around 1000 years ago, the dwarves of old Brightrock were quite involved with the Hoar Dwarves, trading in Coal, metals, and jewellery. There was some kind of falling out (who with is unclear, perhaps a Hoar Dwarf faction, or possibly other short people), and 'armies rode in and flushed' the Brightrock Dwarves out of their homes. Also interpreted as a revolutionary faction within the monarchy was encouraged by external tribe of Hoar Dwarves. In some versions of the eviction from Old Brightrock, the story

imply demonic involvement in the eviction. However there are no specific details like names, titles, numbers, types, etc. The guild had said 3/4 of the Old Brightrock population had got dealt to by some underground predator in the eviction. The route to Old Brightrock is underground, and the distance is some leagues.

Dwarven History	The evidence of the artefacts of the previous dwarven occupants that have survived the time (no wooden bits, but there were lots of stone bits) indicates they left the city in haste. There were records showing weapons were being made to ship out to Hoar Dwarves.
Geography	The city is set in a huge cavern, about 5 miles across, with an indiscernible roof. It seems to have half a dozens sub cities within it, each walled and separated by a swathe of rocky outcroppings with normal underground plantlife and Noll paths through it. Pit, one of theses subcities is a huge pit, which Robin said none lived down, known to provide good quality gold, for the previous dwarven smelting works. Graanyte (where the New Brightrock tunnel entered unto) was a stone mason area, including smithies. Goldentyne was where the truesilver was. It seemed to be houses and merchant/warehousing area. Commons, Temple, Lower and Upper. The central city was Saphirestyene. The 2 rivers are natural egress to the outside. They are bridged at paths connecting the subcities.
Wards	are set through Old Brightrock : edge of civilisation: spIllusionist, spFire; city gate: anticounterspell (swam around) next to gen binder; flying wards, targeted on insects, genIllusionist (alarum);
Inhabitants	an army of Nolls, (without women or children) was brought to Old Brightrock by their leader, more than a year ago, but other scale of time indeterminate. The manticores were in residence, but nothing else nasty towards them. The leader had also brought 3imps which set up the defences of the place. They all tend to live at The Hill, at the centre of the city, and not routinely venture/live in the other subcities. After the party left, probably just manticores remain.
Imp/s	<p>Astrologers have continuous nightmares about an imp (with claws, fangs, wings, possibly bat like) dancing on Jhensi, which took fright at something and fled. Also, a wee holy (and holey) pot, being wielded by said demon. Vision of Priests indicating the imp went to Old Brightrock. Frederick does a "Trace" on the imp involved in Jhensi's illness. Thaeuss possesses his small rag-and-string, and follows the trail of mana footsteps. These lead through a prohibited area to a natural (but 'improved') cave system, where they disappear. Origin of Jhensi's draconic speaking?</p> <p>Seen to use fire magics. They implemented the magical defences/wards in Old Brightrock, which we encountered, and surmised their colleges to be Fire, Illusion and Binder. Not known to wield weapons. Not always in residence, and/or at the same time. A clay golem is remembered by the guard captain.</p> <p>The major imp, known as Something, was a summoning of otherimps/demons. These had different numbers depending on hteir size/strength. Number 3s were capable of throwing stone ballista, and number 7's were black cherubim used in the ritual. Seemed to be helping Pan e' Leke, but with his own style of humour, doing random violence for fun.</p>
Pan e leka ?	Gnome Leader of the Nolls, the holey cooking utensil (from his name), an E&E mage, possibly other magics too. Known to talk with 3imps (also called demons). Flies on manticores. Wiolds weapons, a sword made of rubies welded together. Known to have a supply of truesilver, (which may be more than the stuff in the chests requisitioned for Sonia Highbright). Was expecting Brundar, having hired Vin and Co to deliver him. Aparently in league with Jhensi to perform her life enhancing ritual. Was killed by party, head removed and all burnt, to prevent ressurect. Jhensi was very upset at having him killed. Individual True Name is known by Valery and Kali, head of the guild Namers.
manticores	have a set of arms which is extra to manticores I've seen in books : human torso, bat wings, lion rear & tail with spikes. We think they are taken by Nolls when young and trained up for the Nollish army. They carry Nolls in their arms, but the gnomes had a saddle of sorts to ride in. They have armour or clothes according to Robin, and are chained at the neck at The Hill. They are an active part of the defence of The Hill. Their neckrings are part of the controlling device. They like to eat a Noll a day, however prefer other creatures, since nolls are too furry.
Nolls	7' tall humanoids, with dog fur and face, smelling quite strongly of dead dog. Many use silvered glaives, magically imbued to allow Nolls to use it, (despite their low dexterity); and net to catch bats and heavier nets to catch manticores. Captain (middle hierachy of Nolls) used dozen throwing daggers. All seemed to wear magical silvered chainmail, which was very light to wear. The upper hierarchy was four Nolls. None were magic users. Captain had heard of Brundar and Jhensi, and had seen friendly humans and dwarves visit Old Brightrock at different times, within the year. The Captain and his men were staying in Graanyte to capture a manticore. Once Pan e' Leke was killed, they seemed to abandon Old brightrock, presumably to return from whence they came.

Daily Scribe notes for "Jhensi Hallenger's Birthday", written by Valery.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Fruit 801 WK

The mission started with a typical exchange of opinions about other people's abilities and race. Brundar started off introducing himself, and his golems. There is Mary Bell who lives in the pocket of his big leather apron, amongst the tools and stuff that one would expect to find in a binder's working apron. Mary Bell is a rag and string golem, and the other one he has is called Sally Jo, but I haven't seen her yet. Brundar has a big clay golem called Boris, by big I mean, 6' or so, which is big compared to Brundar, who is only 4'3".

But he is taller than the other dwarf in the party, Wordsmith, who is 3'9". He's a Namer, but I've seen him a bit working in the library recently. Apparently, the Namers are experimenting with him, but that doesn't mean he can resurrect himself, or others, he admitted. Wordsmith comes from Novadom, but hasn't been home of late, since it was taken over by the dark circle, in fact. He was wearing quite sensible sort of clothing, and admitted to having a fondness for things mechanical, but when questioned by Brundar, said he didn't really know much about it yet. Brundar seems to like mechanical things, and has a fondness for Ballista in particular. He was coming up with ideas of how to use Faith in combat, but we'll get to her later. Brundar has an elvish great axe, that he got from a elf that had poisoned him, so he chopped his head off, the elf's I mean, and had it preserved. I'm not sure if Brundar is that keen on elves, but there are three in the party, so I hope that doesn't mean trouble.

Thaeuss is the most elven elf. He's 6'1", with no weapons, but some large gloves which I think he uses to fight with. He has a golem too, and claimed to be a binder as well. In fact, he went even as far as to suggest that if there was any binding that was required to be done, that we should go to him. A very generous offer I thought.

Lucius also offered to cast lots of spells, quickness, then slowness, then wizard's eye then sleep. I'm a bit confused as to whether he really wanted too, because then he complained of getting killed afterwards and having seven crystal balls broken. (Faith and Wordsmith said it must have been a coincidence and a conspiracy, since they didn't break all at the same time.) Lucius was quite keen to get another crystal to take with him, but unfortunately, I didn't have one thousand silvers to lend him, so I couldn't oblige. I think Wordsmith did later though. Anyway, Lucius is quite a tall thin pale looking elf, wearing quite ordinary tan coloured clothing. He said he was from Alheim, so Faith concluded he was a wood elf, despite him growing up on a farm, and not actually living near trees. Lucius was quite adamant that he shouldn't die, so I offered to protect him.

Faith is the other elf in the party, but is a bit different from the others, because she has copper-tanned skin and long straight black hair that comes all the way down to her ankles. She was wearing quite a pretty sort of dress with flowers and things embroidered on it, and which must have had quite a few pockets, since she often brings out food to eat, whenever we stop in fact. Faith said was an envoy of the Empire of the Sun, which is in Terra Nova. She's said that its not quite as official as an ambassador, but is useful in court situations, or as a reason to go places. She speaks all the elvish languages like Drow and Ehrelaine, and says she studies people and dwarves and humans, in a philosophical sense. Apparently, she is an E&E mage like Lucius, but the Lucius is better at casting the spells than her, so she will wear her plate mail armour and perhaps be a front line fighter with me. She said her tactic was to jump into people, and knock them over then wait for someone else to kill the opponent. I'm not that sure of hitting into close combatants like that, since I don't want to hurt her, and I'm not sure if her platemail will withstand the glaive very well. I did offer to clear the matter up now and then, with some martial practise, but the guild security guy wasn't looking very approving. I think she moves quite quickly, despite her short legs. I did say she was only 2'6 ¼" didn't I?

And I'm Valery, a female human wearing leather armour with a few weapons - silver glaive, longbow, handaxe, sling, dagger. I've long wavy tawny brown hair, which was really useful a couple of years back when I was staying with the Children of the Traveller, one of the nomadic tribes in the Sea of Grass. I learnt all sorts of useful skills from them, like healer, herbalist, tentmaker, armourer, whittling as well as how to go about in plains. I'm also a Wicca mage, able (and willing) to cast any of the general spells, and cat vision and converse with animals. I haven't done much casting of late, since I've been living in Seagate for a while, and there's too many people here. I've been working helping get the guild library sorted out, but mostly in the afternoon, since I practise the glaive in the mornings before it gets too hot. But if there's anything you want me to do, I'll try to help you.

We had a dwarf, who introduced himself as Jack watching us while we talked. He was the representative from the Bright Traders, who have a house in Trader Street in Seagate - the one with the good security, Faith vouchsafed. He looked like a local, wearing Seagate City attire, well, as is appropriate for a merchant dwarf. He was waiting for Darryl, Brundar's x cousin, who had made the announcement at the guild meeting. Apparently Darryl had retired to a pub instead, and so Jack wasn't able to give us much information, beyond that Brundar's mother, Jhensi Hallenger, had taken sick and was in bed, and was asking for Brundar. Jack offered us all some toys, and tokens for travelling to Bright Rock and invited us to go to the trading house at some later stage to settle things up. Since he was such a busy man we let him get on, and got to the business of sorting out party leadership and such. After quite some discussion, I think it was decided that Faith would be Military Scientist, Valery as scribe, and since the elves wouldn't take orders from the dwarves, and the dwarves wouldn't take orders from the elves, as the human, I volunteered to be leader, and each day I could decide who was going to be the leader for the day. Kingmaker, was the title the security man(?) gave it. So that was settled, and we headed off to find Darryl, who was now in the Foxglove Pub. Faith led the way, I met Jess, on the way who came along with us, and asked me to drop by on Uremwin who needed a favour done up North, where we were going to. Of course I agreed, but it wasn't till the next day that I managed to walk over to meet him. He's had a box stolen, which matches one he still has, and would like me to get it back. I've borrowed the one he has, as I hope Lucius or Faith might be able to study this one, to be able to locate the other one, once we get North enough. He said the stolen box hadn't been opened yet, as the one he held hadn't opened and it was linked to it.

Anyway, at the pub, Brundar and I joined Darryl and a few other dwarven friends who were having a few drinks, at the corner table, then we decided to head back to the Bright House, and eventually found it in Bright Street. There, Brundar and I chose some toys for the others in the party - something appropriate for each person : Rod of energy for Lucius, a medallion for Faith (since it was the

smallest thing) which does something empathic (since I already do that), a broach of silence shell, for Wordsmith (since words are his forte, getting other's to be quiet might help) and Marybelle had a cute leather cap with nightmares, since she doesn't sleep, and Brundar got a whittled carving of mass fear. We decided that we weren't going to be flying, so Thaeuss was left with the silver ring for breathing. Not very exciting perhaps, but probably suitable for Thaeuss.

I think the others had gone off to do stuff they needed to do, since I don't remember seeing them in the pub when we left.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Fruit

We all met up together eventually, around dawn the next morning. I hate that time of day, and that morning was more worse than usual. The party ignored my request of meeting in a meeting room, so we talked over breakfast, and Darryl joined us to give us some more information about Jhensi. Apparently, it was about 2 weeks ago that she took ill, for no particular reason that anyone has ascertained. The symptoms include being weak and not very talkative, which is unusual for the woman, renown for her bitter tongue. It is more than healing stuff can fix, since she is a healer, or at least does healing, but that might just be because she is a mind mage. Darryl said she does persuasions and something like telekinetic rage when she got angry about five years ago, so she sounds like a mind mage to me. Jhensi is about to be voted onto the advisory - a group of thirteen, who give advice to the dwarven King. Quite a political force, if they happen to agree with each other, which didn't sound too common. One of the existing councillors, Auntie Shaeile Verhichan didn't like Jhensi, and so might have wanted her out of the way. Nobody seems to mind if others are magic users, which seems nice, there is a dark celestial and a earth mage on the advisory already, according to Darryl. Astrologers in the kingdom had led them to Brundar being in Seagate. Darryl couldn't help us with details of the route, having got into the carriage at the station in Bright Rock, and getting out at Middlemarkhalpstadt a few days later.

The Astrologers at the guild, gave a few helpful words "Mayhem, Death and large profits". And something about to beware the holy cooking utensil. Not especially helpful, but what does one expect if you look at the stars and not use Tarot. The guild's information about Bright rock is a bit out of date, and they couldn't give a reasonable estimation of the population, but think around 5,000, although it's built to be able to accommodate 20,000, but they lost a lot of people a few years back, when they shifted from Old Brightrock, to New Brightrock, when 3/4 of the population got dealt to by some underground predator.

As it was her forte, Faith arranged our transportation to Brightrock. Rather than using the overland route of accompanying a trade carriage to MMHS, then riding over the wild tall mountains to the far north, as was suggested by Jack, from the Bright House Traders, or even taking a quick or slow portal to Elfenberg or somewhere, with enhanced wings from Lord Vance, the guild celestial, to fly over the wild tall mountains, and then ride or walk or something from there; Instead we took passage with a ship to Destiny, and thence to a fishing village close to Brightrock. Jack wasn't so keen on us dealing with the Destinians, likening them to elves in the way that only dwarves can do, but agreed to underwrite the cost of our transportation that way. Faith arranged for us to leave the next day, the 4th, and 12 days later we arrived at Destiny. The sailors had ignored us, to a point, perhaps due to the racial mixture, perhaps to the different languages the party were learning from each other.

During the trip, Faith mentioned her suspicions of the connections between Seagate and Brightrock. She had had a vision "I saw two daggers: one silver, one black. They were both bleeding (yes the daggers themselves were bleeding) into a bowl made of stone, with trees growing out of it. The bowl was tipped and I saw a 'Waterfall' of gold and blood. In the background - I could make out a big chair with a person sitting on it. That human was wearing a gold circlet on his/her head." and her interpretation "It seems that someone (a human) is manipulating the Brightrock dwarves into turning on themselves, creating violence & bloodletting, and allowing gold to be diverted elsewhere (towards the person?). I have an idea that the daggers are not entirely metaphorical, and may themselves be fairly magical artefacts of some kind."

We slept overnight in Destiny quite a nice house with a courtyard and terraces overlooking the harbour. Faith kept to her word of organising things well. The Destinians had even put Hope in a room of the house, which was very generous of them. I must introduce Hope here, she is Faith's horse, and is suited to Faith, in that Hope is 8 hand high, apparently a miniature horse, from Flugelheim.

## 16<sup>th</sup> Fruit

We boarded a flatter bottomed ship, with a smaller crew, with less powerful mages, and it took us 4 days more sailing till we were set ashore.

## 19<sup>th</sup> Fruit

Brundar (and to a lesser effect Wordsmith) was greeted with great enthusiasm by the local dwarves, who were more than happy to help him get to Brightrock. We had landed about 10 in the morning, and were just in time to help the locals pack up barrels of fish to fill an order that had just come from Brightrock. We left the village a couple of hours after noon, accompanying Hamish and Stuart, who were driving the loaded cart. There were no foothills per se, once we left the village it was pretty much wilderness, and very mountainous right from the start. There was a reasonably well formed track we followed, that led directly (as opposed to straight) to the signal cave, where the dwarves from Brightrock would come to collect the fish, and us, we hoped.

We had been going for a couple of hours, when we noticed a cloud in a searching pattern, obviously piloted by an air mage. We just hoped they weren't looking for us, and stopped to hide when they started to get close. However the occupants of the cloud were distracted by the appearance of half a dozen griffins, flying towards them. Thaeuss managed to observe the fight of the griffins against the five cloud occupants. There were two male elves, one looking rather sick, an earth mage called Nosander, as it turned out, and the other was Ava, the air mage. There were three male humans, a Wicca called Sal, a E&E mage called Marnie, and Harry the Smith, a rather gung ho warrior. One griffin plummeted, presumably to his death, after the effects of a sleep spell, and another took a mortal wound, carrying off Harry's hand and half sword, before the rest of the griffins dispersed. WE took note of the directed the dying griffin went with the sword, and after a little discussion with the cart mules, who could hear it's dying gasps much sooner than

we could, Thaeuss and I went to retrieve such an impressive weapon. We arrived, just as the carrion were waiting, some a little too impatiently for their own good, for it to die. However Thaeuss the kind soul, helped put it out of it's misery, and I went to retrieve it, having enough time to leave just before an inquisitive troll appeared on the scene.

We carried on travelling despite the mules' protestations, to the normal night resting spot, which had some provisions set aside for us travellers. We arranged the watches thus: Lucius and Brundar first, Valery & Thaeuss second, and Wordsmith and Faith third. In addition the three clay golems, and Marybelle were all activated to help our vigilance.

## 20<sup>th</sup> Fruit

The travelling continued, getting, steeper, colder, rockier, cloudier and less noisy in general as we went. An hour before noon, we noticed a storm front approaching, and I offered to go a few miles away and summoned it over there, so that it didn't rain on the caravan, but it was thought we didn't want to draw attention to ourselves to the cloud party in the area. A cold rain started shortly afterwards, and it was pelting down, so didn't notice the approach of an invisible figure until Faith yelled 'ambush' when she nearly ran into Harry. I started to charge, but was hit by a slowness, courtesy of Marnie, so they had us at a bit of advantage at first. But Thaeuss and his golems weighed into close combat with Harry, and then briefly, Marnie, helping out Faith and I. Marnie was windwalked away once he was getting a bit hurt, as was Harry, once his armour started falling off, courtesy of Brundar. Wordsmith was helping shielding Hamish and Stuart who were under attack from arrow fire from Sal, hidden uphill in the bushes, who managed to get away unscathed. Part way through the combat, Nosander rode up from behind us, yelling "Flee Brundar Hallenger", but then got taken out by a poisoned arrow from Sal. Lucius was casting his magic, as promised, before spotting the cloud the air mage was on, above us in the rain and sleeping Ava. Thaeuss and Faith went after the cloud and recovered Ava, while I stopped the bolting injured mules, and healed up Hamish (or was it Stuart?), before being introduced to our 'elven saviour', and healing Nosander too.

Once the others got back, we had an interesting conversation with Nosander, who gave us the details of the party that had attacked us. He was part of that party, which had been hired in Ranke city, for quite a considerable sum, with Harry the Smith as the leader, a couple of days after we had been, at the guild meeting. Their mission was to stop Brundar getting to Brightrock, which they considered was an assassination order, as the easiest way to achieve this. The more interesting bit was that Nosander signed a bigger contract, for 20,000 sp up front, with an off-planer retirement for later payment, to keep Brundar alive and to ensure he gets to Brightrock. This hiring took place, for what it's worth, at the dog and bone in Ranke City, by Charlie the Chipper, a well established middleman, who preserves the anonymity of the each of the parties to the contract concerned. Considering the amounts concerned, Nosander thought it likely the Destinians were involved, but then thought it strange that they would then let us sail with them. He said that us sailing had thrown them for a bit, since they had planned to ambush outside a pub north of Bowcourt, and that might explain how unprepared their attack on us was. He didn't seem to know anything of Jhensi, or the political situation in Brightrock, merely taking the job for the money. How crass. One thing in Brundar's favour was that they didn't seem to know which of the four dwarves he was.

We proceeded to the signal cave, though Thaeuss and Faith went ahead to light the signal fire so the Brightrock dwarves might arrive earlier. Considering that Sal would be flying the others up to attack us again, which we were working on the premise that they would, then we figured we would be safe until dusk, by which time we were ensconced in the cave. Lucius said his crystal seemed to indicate a night time attack, but what can one make of such imprecise visions, really?

I did a tarot reading, which, upon reflection, did describe the attack to come, but none of us were prepared for the manner in which it occurred. We had spent a couple of hours scouting out the cave, building wooden and stone walls across the entrance to funnel the attackers inward. All the golems were activated, so in total there were 21 of us, counting the mules and horse. Thaeuss turned Ava into stone, and wanted to do the same with Nosander, since he may have been planted amidst us by Harry to have an insider to get to know what we could and would do. Brundar wanted to put his head on a stake to tempt Harry to blunder into the cave enraged. The rest of us were convinced that under the affect of the hypnotism and charms that Nosander would be okay, and might be useful even. Nosander was helpful enough to heal some wounds from the previous encounter, do the stone walls and some strengths onto people, but in the meantime was listening to our plans and concocting one of his own.

It must have been getting close to midnight when the attack came. Robin, my new bat familiar noticed a group of bats flying in formation, very quickly, straight towards us. While Thaeuss and I were outside, discussing when these bats might arrive, they flew in over us, dropped several bags (of a alchemical flash and sleep dust) on our comrades inside the cave and quickly flew out. Thaeuss and I were waiting for the arrow fire that started up, and were heading back inside, when Boris, Brundar's clay golem, alerted us to the fact that Nosander, had picked up Brundar and was taking him out a newly formed tunnel, in the way that only earth mages can make them. Thaeuss tried running after him, but since Nosander was quickened by his helpful associates, wasn't catching up, so started to fly after him with a bubble of force keeping him from harm. Brundar managed to come round with the help of Sally Jo feeding him a potion just as Thaeuss caught up and rammed into Nosander. Brundar fought his way free from the distracted elf, and lay to him with his axe. Sometime during the melee Brundar had a rune branded into his forehead poisoning him into the nauseous state. Nosander ran off, but Thaeuss pursued, buffeting him with the force bubble and then getting into melee with him. However the fiend used a blinding poison on his dagger, and made off.

Once I saw I had no chance of catching Nosander, I returned to the cave, where the others were coming round. Faith and I went out to deal to the others, but they had run off. With the help from Lucius' quickness, we managed to keep up with the sound of their running footsteps. I stopped once we came to Brundar, to check out his poison, but it's the sort that wasn't going to kill him for a few days, at least. I was taking him back to the cave, and met Wordsmith and Lucius and a golem coming to find us, and passed Brundar into their care. I had seen through the eyes of my bat that Faith had encountered trouble. I ran to help her out, and between he two of us, managed to deal to Sal (Wicca archer) and Marnie (E&E, unarmed). Unfortunately, it gave Harry (warrior) the chance to enter the cave, smash to smithereens the statue of Ava (air) and lurk in the shadows, awaiting the weakened Brundar. After dealing several blows to Brundar, Harry was scared off by the golem deigning to punch him in the chest.

Thaeuss, Faith and I tried to follow Nosander, with Faith's locate, to finish him off while he was still weakened. However the dastard had hidden himself in a labyrinth of caves, probably having tunnelled himself in. We gave up, and returned to the cave to assess our situation. Our opposition now consisted of a warrior and an earth mage, if they could find each other in the mountains. They had lost their flying magics, locates, sleeps and much of the distant attack abilities. Brundar was alive, but cursed. Nobody else was badly injured, and the dwarves from Brightrock would hopefully be coming the next day. It was back to the tarot, to decipher when Harry and Nosander might attack us next. It wasn't that night, and for once the tarot were unforthcoming.

### 21<sup>st</sup> Fruit

In the morning Thaeuss and I buried Marnie and Sal under a cairn of rocks, and Thaeuss turned them to stone, just on the safe side. We left Ava in a pile of rubble, but couldn't find his head, presumably Harry had taken it to prevent us resurrecting him. Wordsmith sat down for a really long ritual of divination on Brundar, to find out the nature of his cursing. It seemed to be linked with the burnt on brand, so that the brand wouldn't heal 'til the curse was gone. Basically it means that if Brundar dies, he will turn to ash, that is, permanently. He did toy with the idea of killing Thaeuss, just to make it doubly permanent, but decided it wasn't worth the bother. In addition, he gets tired, out of breath if he tries any strenuous activity, including special spells.

Partway through the ritual a group of six dwarves step through the back wall of the cave, recognise and respect that a ritual was going on, and sit down quietly in respect of it. Considering how magic users seem to be different at Brightrock, it was intriguing behaviour. Once Wordsmith had finished, the new dwarves introduced themselves and set about organising some food from the stone benches at the side of the cave, which we hadn't really noticed. Meanwhile Hamish and Stuart transferred the fish barrels to the new cart from Brightrock, and we farewelled them. The meal completed, we all headed through the stone wall, and found us in a spacious, 20' high tunnel, which we walked along, for about 3 hours before we reached "the Shaft". This was a big hole in the rock rising up before us. There was an abundance of pulleys and cogwheels and heavy machinery that looked very important. The fish was loaded onto a big gantry, and hauled up, while we waited about an hour for our turn.

The other dwarves set about an intriguing card game, while Wordsmith did a bit more divination on some of the new items we had - a pair of rings imbued with strength of stone, an ebony ring invested with Trollskin, and a black crossbow and bolts. It was tedious being slowly lifted up the shaft - it took another three hours. I don't think it was purely mechanical device, since the activation was by some music played on a grass pipe directed at the wall. At the top we were in the spacious wharf area, for want of a better description. There were lots of dwarves bustling about, all being very busy, transporting stuff amongst the warehouses. It had a warm and damp feeling, which was typical of most of Brightrock. In general there were too few dwarves to fill all the rooms and size of the city, but it still felt like a city to me, luckily the mana level was normal though.

We had to wait 20 minutes until our welcoming party arrived. This was Advisor Joseph Lockenleach, with his two flunkies, (who studiously ignored us, the flunkies that is). He gave us some tourist maps, which showed the layout of the city, on it's different levels, including parts that had been shaded grey, which we were informed not to go into, because otherwise they would kill us. The elves were reassured that having made it so far into the city, that they were on legitimate business, so shouldn't be accosted in the streets and so forth. Besides, we were working for the house of Bright, the royal family, as it turned out.

We proceeded to an area called The Commons, which is where the normal city stuff seemed to be : the inns, markets, pubs, houses, shops and the like. It seemed care had been taken to ensure no dust from the mines were in the area. We caught sight of a couple of other humans across the way, but otherwise the populace was all dwarven. There was a militia of sorts, who seemed very friendly, not quite like we're used to. We entered the Hallenger household, through a doorway in the façade of a house set into the rock, carved with trees. It's a very posh house, with servants in livery opening the doors etc. We were shown into a library to await our presentation to Jhensi Hallenger (without our weapons, of course).

Jhensi was lying abed, with her hair all loose, and apparently unclothed beneath the covers. She welcomed Brundar with joy, told him she was dying, and then proceeded to make some tea. That is telekinesise the teapot from across the room, conjure from nothing a real teacup, and drank it. This magic had no college. From my empathy, she was very near death and should be unconscious by all rights, but the tea revived her, bringing her energy up to about half. Rank 8 Healing had been the spell in effect. We left her shortly, and began other avenues of enquiry, to her secretary, the healers guild, the astrologers, the priests, and another Noble Mage, that Jhensi was teaching, Sarah Bright. Information as follows. Wordsmith informed us of a scroll he was instructed to give to Advisor Verhichan, from the Dean of the Namers Guild. This came up as Jhensi wanted to see it, without her being told of its existence, we tried to talk Brundar out of giving it to her at this stage.

22<sup>nd</sup> Fruit During our last watch (we set watches, and intend keeping to our existing sleep pattern, despite the town constantly being 'awake') a human ranger-mercenary type comes to visit Jhensi. Faith and Thaeuss (with Brundar in a rag-and-string) exchange information with him (he is called Vin). When Vin goes to see Jhensi, Thaeuss and the rag-and-string go along to observe. Vin says that he is 'charged with protecting Brundar', and Jhensi goes into one of her rants, making a construct that looks like Brundar. Brundar goes back to his own body, Thaeuss escorts Vin to the door of the house, Brundar goes to visit Jhensi. Jhensi, still confused, fires a bolt of magma at Brundar as he leaves. In order to confuse Vin and Co (plus Lucius), Brundar and Wordsmith are Hypnotised with slightly shaky cover story versions of their own lives. We are about to go clothes shopping in the Commons (to make it harder for the mind mages) when Frederick, the junior Noble mage who knows a bit about demons, arrives from the mines. Spend the day getting ready for "The Feast" that evening, with shopping and clothes preparations.

The Feast:

In the way that "The commons" was a town within the city, the feast was held at another, royal province almost, "The Halls of Justice". There were about 200 on the guest list, including Vin and Co and ourselves as the only non dwarves and visitors to the city. The market square and streets of the Halls of Justice were set up with tables set next to kegs of beer, and food aplenty. The party split up to further their investigations. Brundar and Wordsmith settling in with the dwarven populace, learning the formal drinking songs

and instigating a table ballista competition. Faith made the rounds of the advisors and the royal set, learning the court drinking songs. Thaeuss, Lucius and I got to know Vin, Grabsfarr and Felt. Some very drinkable mead (but undrinkable wine) was brought over to us to complement the dwarven beer, much to Thaeuss' relief. We didn't sing, though Lucius had a very appreciative audience to tell his tale of woe that his life is. The King and Queen made an appearance part way through the Feast, once a section of the populace had been sent off and cleaners had been through. The dwarven court (including Faith) were presented to their majesties, which included the dwarven traditional quaff from their steins of beer.

**23<sup>rd</sup> Fruit** Recover from the feast, then set off to organise our expedition to Old Brightrock - visit priests for a guide, deliver Kali's scroll to Auntie Sheilla Verhichan, see Sarah and Sonia Highbright, who help tone down Brundar's curse, so he is less tired. Followed the curse back to the caster, Nosander, and she chatted with his soul (only one, however he is made up with three persona, hopefully the cause of his betrayal of us). He's still stuck in the caves, annoyed with Harry. Apparently the only person who knows the curse on Alusia. Sleep the afternoon, while provisions are sorted. Vin & Co join us at the gantry to the mines. They are added to our watches thus Vin, Lucius, Brundar; Grabsfarr, Thaeuss, Valery; Kurr Feldt, Wordsmith, Faith. Travel for 8 hours through mined and then unmined tunnels.

**24<sup>th</sup> Fruit** Sleeping during the day, travel through the tunnels at night again. Camp an hour or so away from the canal, which was noisy enough to disturb some people's sleep.

**25<sup>th</sup> Fruit.** Sleep during day, at night head off through tunnels again, to the Canal. Roland, our guide farewells us there. We walk along the "mule" path beside the canal for half an hour to enter a large archway, the edge of civilisation. Just inside, a manticore is slept, then slaughtered, and we are soon attacked by his mate, who tried to make off Thaeuss. These manticores have extra set of arms than usual (bat wings, lion rear & tail with spikes, human torso with arms, spoke some common words(?)).

We carried on, following the canal for another 2½ miles, through caves/tunnels. On the way, we found two interesting sites, both about 2 weeks old. The first is the remains of a manticore feed: a 7' tall humanoid, with dog fur and face, smelling quite strongly of dead dog. Its wounds indicated it had been ripped and rent by a manticore. After an astute DA, it was ascertained to be a Noll. Tossed to one side was a broken glaive, which was magically imbued to allow Nolls to use it, (despite their low dexterity); and a net which seemed to be used to catch bats. Talked to this dead spirit, and found out the city is occupied with quite a population of these Nolls, with an E&E Gnome leader (see persona details). They have armies that volley forth out from the caverns, but didn't seem to be targeting dwarves especially (but this pleb might not know of dwarven contacts or not). This Noll spirit had seen imps (no more than a handful (4) (or was it more than a handful?)) which talked to their leader, and done some fire magics, no earth magic. He did allay our fears somewhat by saying there wasn't anything bigger than manticores that hunted them in the tunnels.

Not too far away from this first bloody scene was a slightly more civilised carnage scene: bats had been cooked over a fire, again, about two weeks ago.

Before entering the city proper, we noticed a couple of wards in the gateway. Wordsmith volunteered to swim past the first, which was triggered by any counterspell being cast through it, to land on the ledge across the canal, to target the second ward - a bound speech requiring a special binder counterspell. He only backfired a couple of times before succeeding, but nothing too obvious. Robin said that the Nolls were on guard near the gate.

As we were trying to find an out of the way place to hole up and suss out the city a bit more (there's was too much of it to try to search for imps room by room), we were noticed by a Noll at a window to a building, despite us all being Walking Unseen. They seemed to notice the golems especially, perhaps since they exuded no smell, they were interesting/confusing to the Nolls. The Nolls themselves are very dog smelling, and each has unique smell to track others, in the way that wolves and dingoes do.

We attacked the building, which turned out to contain five Nolls, four "guards" with more magical glaives, approaching two astride both directions of the central corridor, and the leader standing in the middle firing daggers at us. Thaeuss was killed during the combat before the four guards were dealt to, and the leader taken aside for questioning (having been under control of Grabsfarr). He wasn't being communicative, though it wasn't easy to understand what he was saying as Wordsmith being the best able to talk to him only had his immaculate Dwarven skills. We're sure they were speaking in military tones before we attacked, hence the guard nomenclature.

Faith decided to return to New Brightrock with Thaeuss to get him resurrected. In the meantime, we did further investigation with the dead Nolls, (speaking with the dead Captain) and tidied up the fought in house. The Nolls had been away from The Hill for over a month, and weren't expected back within the next week, at least. We figured it was safe to stay there quietly for a while.

**26<sup>th</sup> Fruit** We rested and recuperated, Brundar reanimating and taking over control of Thaeuss' golems, renamed as ThaeussThaeusson (TT) and Thumper. At night we headed over to Goldentyne, to have a look at the truesilver, while we waited for Thaeuss and Faith to get back to us. The city was looking pretty normal, until we found a house, with new gnome rune over the door "Do not enter. This place is mine. By Order Paneleka." Wizard eye indicated five rooms off a central corridor. The kitchen had a trap door down to a basement with a 10' diameter circle on the floor, indicating demon summoning. The first room on the right held a stack of 10 travelling chests, with poles with which to carry them in the corner. The window to this room had been built in. The chests contained : (1) 5x 2lb truesilver ingots; (2) 5x 2lb truesilver ingots; (3) empty; (4) magical dirt, emanating a high mana zone; (5)empty; (6) empty; (7) 5x 2lb truesilver ingots; (8) 5x 2lb truesilver ingots; (9)magically trapped, warded, or cursed, when opened other than with the setter's hand; (10)gnome sized clothes. Between Brundar and Thaeuss, the 20 truesilver ingots were shaped and itemised into a small elf pendant.

While we were thinking of investigating the warded chest with transparency, Lucius (from the building across the street, via wizard eye) used his telekinesis to open the chest, there was an explosion of some sort, he was blinded temporarily. Brundar used his transparency to see into the room, and we saw a (female) succubus which promptly left the room and went down to the basement. Faith and I quickly followed, myself, armed with a book of Thoth, from Thaeuss, that he said would banish the succubus. Once I

penetrated the circle of protection which had been only just reset with fresh demon blood (warded with harm entity spell) I interrupted her spell/ritual involving shaping some clay, engaged her in combat, and while she broke my arm, pushing me into the realms of unconsciousness, I banished her with the book. Faith and Thaeuss brought me round, and we regrouped with the others in the chest room.

Shortly afterwards, the sky was filled with three manticores, each holding a Noll. Thaeuss set of to distract them, luring away two manticores with his horde of illusory goblins. But the Nolls followed their sense of smell, and found us in the streets not too far away from Paneleka's house. Vin had given me a potion to drink, which stopped my arm from hurting, so I charged to engage with the Nolls. Faith overtook me on the way, decimating one Noll, which wasn't fighting back. A second Noll had it's armour undone courtesy of Brundar, who then backed off into a house, at the insistence of Kurr Feldt, who was undetectable. Actually, Grabsfarr and Vin were undetectable too, the former on the roof, which I could sense through Robin.

A side effect of the potion from Vin meant I was moving incredibly slowly, eventually tripping. It was a weird sensation to be under the effect of Lucius' Quickness, as they didn't cancel each other out, instead, my body seemed to move incredibly quickly compared to the ultra slowness with which I was trying to command it. I sensed betrayal.

Faith took me out of view of the others, and we became invisible. Wordsmith seemed to be trying to follow Brundar, and Lucius was running off down the street. Thaeuss was flying over head in his Bubble of Force, trying to attack a Gnome riding in on another manticores, surrounded by other guards.

Lucius, Wordsmith, Faith, and Valery regrouped, and Lucius had the good idea of feeding me a waters of healing potion, which did indeed cure the effects of the poison from Vin. The interesting thing, was that my broken arm was healed, so perhaps it was such a traitorous act after all.

Faith and I decided to quietly approach Grabsfarr and Kurr Feldt, who were sitting on top of a roof, watching Thaeuss' antics in his flying bubble of force. While Faith crept up on them, I aimed at my bat Robin, who had the strict instructions to keep Kerr Feldt and Grabsfarr, as targets, directly between himself and me. That way my bowfire would be aimed at the undetectable humans. When Faith encountered Grabsfarr, and landed a couple of blows with her dagger, before he jumped off the building and flew away. I think I managed to hit Kerr Feldt with an arrow, before he did the same manoeuvre. Those two flew off, towards the city on the hill, according to locates.

Faith came down to the street level, and Vin was approaching. I engaged him in conversation, asking what his plans with Brundar were, while Faith engaged him with some daggerwork on his back. Just as things were the conversation was getting interesting, he said he had to go since the gnome approaching us, was probably going to kill him. Faith, with a quick slash to his throat, did the job instead.

The gnome, was Pan a' Leke, and he wanted his dagger back. The third dagger from Vin, which currently, Thaeuss was flying around holding. We came up with a deal, involving him removing the curse on Brundar, and restoring Jhensi to her unafflicted state. He said he would, but needed the dagger first, to use in the rituals. We were struck with the problem of what surety we would have that he would complete his side of the deal, once we had handed over the dagger. He retired to his castle, which was where Brundar had been taken, while we talked and thought about it.

I attempted to talk with Vin's spirit, while Thaeuss' spell wore off, but I was disturbed part way through by the ground shaking as something large impacted, towards the hill. Faith suggested it was Brundar trying to break out, but as we found out later, it was a ballista that had been tossed to one side by a number three demon, summoned by the imp to amuse Brundar. The building it landed on was smashed and the stone construction of the ballista the only thing saving it from being unrecognisable. Perhaps it was meant as a display of the strength and whimsy of the demonic forces we were up against. Perhaps part of a ploy to get us to agree to Pan a' Leke's trade deal.

We walked over to the city on the hill, having decided that only myself would know the exact whereabouts of the dagger when we entered negotiations again. And the plan was that I would have mind cloak on. Unfortunately Thaeuss was under the effects of his trying to itemise the dagger, muscle spasms, entailing me carrying him as we went. Thankfully he was weightless at the time.

The castle on the hill was open to us, and we followed the lit stairs up to a great dining hall. Pan a' Leke met us there shortly after we arrived, with Brundar and the imp. The imp decided to stay at the doorway, something about Faith's dagger I think. We chatted briefly, where Pan a' Leke confirend the pun on his name to tie in with our astrology readings of holey cooking utensil.

As a way of keeping his surety, I learnt his individual true name, with the deal being that I unlearn upon completion of the rituals, necessitating a few days memory loss, but I thought that as I was leader of the group, that it was my responsibility to undertake the negotiations. Wordsmith, Lucius and Faith, who could have actually used the name, declined the opportunity. I figured it would be useful knowledge in the long term, besides, losing memory of Faith killing Vin wouldn't be all bad.

I went into the next room with the imp, who gave me the knowledge of the name, with a reverse effect hypnotism. When I returned, it was getting hot and uncomfortable, so I figured we may as well go ahead with the rituals. I produced the dagger for Pan a' Leke, and Brundar led us the way to the throne room, which he had already help set up with a sacrificial looking table. Pan a Leke and the party agreed to stay within the circle of protection during the rituals as further surety.

It was a 50' square room, with a pentacle inscribed on the floor, inset with a circle and a triangle within that. Brundar lay on the table, and was bound in place with leather straps. The imp quickly cut him down the sides letting lose a flow of blood filling the channels. I began to monitor Brundar's health. The imp was bored at having to wait so long, so asked Pan a' Leke for some Nolls for more blood. This was done, since I figured it would need less of Brundar's blood, which must be better for him. Once the Nolls blood had been added, he was disintegrated with a firebolt from the imp. The imp then summoned three number seven demons, he called them, that looked to us as negro cherubim, with bats wings rather than white feathery wings. He gave each a dagger, then proceeded with the

song and dance bits. This was an hour of chanting and such around the circle. At the end of it he swiped at Brundar's forehead, and removed the curse rune, where it hovered above him. The mana flowed from the daggers, focusing on one point, which was brought to intersect the rune, whence it disintegrated. One ritual successfully completed.

We were about to release Brundar, when they insisted he remain, for the curse removal on Jhensi. So I fed him a healing potion to regain his strength, while the imps were pulverised and mixed with the blood on the runnels on the floor. The daggers remained at the three points of the triangle where it intersected with the circle. The imp began the next ritual, and a blue glow started on the wall, resolving itself to an image (or reality?) of Jhensi, dressed in her Sunday mining best. Against Pan e' Leke's advice, she began to indicate what was in store for the next part of the ritual, Thanking Brundar for giving up his life for her cause.

At this stage Brundar and the party thought it might not be such a good idea, so launched an attack. Faith took out the little imp, while Wordsmith attempted to go at Pan e' Leke. I engaged Something, the larger imp, and was helped out by Thaeuss after he failed to take out a dagger from the ground (as did Lucius). Lucius was trying to sleep Pan e' Leke, once he found out the daggers were too deeply into the ground to pull out. One of Thaeuss' rag and string golems was helping Brundar get untied from the sacrificial altar, then got Pan e' Leke's sword. Once Thaeuss and Faith came to deal with Something, I charged over to Pan e' Leke, getting a good hit on him. He called for help, and the cherubim came to his defence. Lucius engaged one, Brundar tried to grab one to the ground since it was flying above, beside me. I swung my glaive across and down, smiting that cherubim, and Pan e' Leke. Thaeuss and Faith had damaged enough of the imp for it to turn into a black slime that oozed down Thaeuss' armour (where it had been attacking him at the neck) and across to the circle of protection. Jhensi had been whacking Wordsmith about against the circle of protection the rest of us were fighting against (he had been thrown out of the circle by Pan e' Leke earlier, and couldn't get back in, hence at the whim of Jhensi, who also couldn't enter).

Jhensi called out to leave Pan e' Leke alone (who was slumped in a bleeding heap at my feet) or she would kill Wordsmith. In the next instant Thaeuss moulded elements to move the stone floor from under the circle, which broke the protection. The wall turned into flame, which burnt the oozing Something imp. Jhensi and Wordsmith fell onto the floor, so Faith charged over and jumped off Wordsmith to attack Jhensi, and Brundar added his smite too. Lucius had come over and cut Pan e' Leke's neck. At this, Jhensi disappeared, and I found myself next to the circle of blood, apparently trying to cup as much blood as possibly into my helmet, with it smeared all over my face, hands and hair. I don't really know why, though I do remember feeling hot just beforehand, so I guess I was just cooling off.

Two of the cherubim had escaped, flown off through the portal which Jhensi had arrived through. This was still open, and once it was ascertained (from Thaeuss' golem) the portal went through to Jhensi's bedroom at Hallenger House in Brightrock, the party went through. The house was all quiet and the servants thought Jhensi was still in her room. Jhensi had got away. Brundar and I cleaned up a bit, while Lucius and Faith got some bread and stew from the kitchen, before we went back through to Old Brightrock.

Most of the Nolls had left the city, and we freed the manticores, who presumably reverted to their wild state. We went back to Goldentyne to get Brundar's gear, and have a wee chat to Vin's spirit. From this we found a bit about his employer, a Baron in Aquila, who had employed them to stop Jhensi. Vin and co. had also been employed by Pan e' Leke to deliver Brundar to Old Brightrock for him. Kurr Felt and Grabsfarr had been captured by the Nolls as they approached the city, but had escaped while we were at Hallenger House, presumably shadow winging their way back south.

After a few days' trek back through the caves, we arrived at Hallenger House, and was met by Joseph Lockenleach, 'head' of the advisory. He wasn't very happy with us, since Jhensi had disappeared and we were the first mysteriously and momentarily on the scene. However once we explained what had occurred in Old Brightrock, about Jhensi's power attempt, they came round to our way of thinking.

We gave the truesilver to Sonia which she required, and traded the rest for services as payment for our help.

**10th of Harvest 801wk** They sent us back to Seagate in their trading wagons, where we entered the wagons, it was all covered up, and then after a couple of hours, they were opened up and we were back in Carzala.



Old Destinian sailing proverb : "Idle hands look better in shackles."

When faced with kegs of beer, and struggling to find the dwarven word for wine, someone suggested "Elf Beer", hastily correcting themselves, "not the red stuff".

"Can you see invisible smells with witchsight?"

"Why did you have to kill him? Why couldn't you just hit him 'til he fell over?" asked Lucius. "I did" replied 2'6" tall Faith. "That's how I could reach his throat."

Thaeuss decides to fly into an unknown cave system, but just in case he lands in a ward or something where magic stops, he decides to activate his magical levitation device.

Lucius "I knew it was a trap. I knew it was a trap." Loudly, after using his telekenesis to open a "magically trapped warded or cursed" chest, and was momentarily blinded.

When paranoid Lucius is presented with a magical dagger to enhance his spell casting, he dithers, instead preferring his shield to defend himself.

Partway through a tunnel to the infested ruined city of Old Brightrock, Brundar suddenly realises, with a great lifting of spirits, that he has 8 people and three golems, solely dedicated to keeping him alive. Valery immediately retorts "Yes, but don't do anything stupid."