

The Merfolk, The Sahuagan, and The Deep Blue Hole

Adventure by Jacqui Smith

Autumn '03 (1st Fruit - 14th Fruit)

Adventurers

Grendel Beetleknos	Mind/Water	Human	Male	Mil Sci
Aqualina	Water	Human	Female	Scribe
Vanderhand	Non-mage	Human	Male	
Drum	Namer	Giant	Male	Leader
Thorn	Non-mage	Human	Female	

Employer

Patrice Wavesinger - a Pasifikan merfolk.

Places Visited

Lower Pasifika

A village fifty miles to the northwest

Lantern Reef

An unnamed Pasifikan island

Sahuagan Hideout

People met

King Kierl

Firence Foambrother - leader of the village

The Chief and Shaman of a Pasifican iwi

Mission

To rescue some merfolk from the clutches of the sahuagan and find out what they are up to.

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Summary Page

1st Fruit '803

Received our mission objectives from Patrice and made preparations.

2nd Fruit

Sailed out of Confederation Bay in the merfolk submersible, the *Marianus*.

4th Fruit

Reached Lower Pasifika. Had an audience with the King.

5th Fruit

Headed out to the village where the abductions happened. Reached the village and discovered that 18 merfolk were taken. We headed north after them. Camped for the night

6th Fruit

Attacked by a sahuagan hunting party that morning. Managed to beat them off - just. Reached Lantern Reef that evening.

7th Fruit

Explored the reef, discovered it was a sunken ship, defeated the undead and looted.

8th Fruit

Reached one of the more northernmost Pasifikan islands.

9th Fruit

Divinated the items found and got restoratives off the local shaman.

11th Fruit

Sailed off on a coconut tree raft. Found the sahuagan lair inside a Blue Hole on a nearby reef.

12th-13th Fruit

Scryed the interior of the lair. Couldn't scry all of it because of scry shields. Sent copies of the maps to the Pasifikan Palace and the Guild.

14th Fruit

Snuck over the top of the reef, dispelling the wards, then disguised as sahuagan, quickly swam down to the bottom of the hole. Fought the guards and three mages, rescued the petrified merfolk that were left and swam away. Was chased but were met by the *Marianus*

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Aqualina

We congregated in Guild Meeting Room #1 for this assignment. With us was our employer, Patrice Wavesinger, a Pasifikan merman. Our mission was to rescue some merfolk that had been captured by the sahuagan, infiltrate their base, and find out what their plans are. To help us, he was providing a Pearl of Waterbreathing each and special belts of Disguise were also going to be provided.

Adventurers were:

Grendel - Mind/Water mage hybrid, male human

Drum - Giant warrior and Namer

Thorn - Lady warrior

Vanderhand - another human warrior with an extra pair of arms

Aqualina - female human water mage.

We were told to meet him at Pier 3 at the docks where the transport awaited. Once he had left, we sorted out who was doing what. I was the scribe, Grendel the military scientist, and Drum the party leader. We also added bits to the contract. Drum wanted the remaining bits of dragon armour, I was after a magical trident, Vanderhand was after clothes, and Grendel wanted a magical crossbow that worked underwater (which I also agreed with). I also chipped in a six pack of Waters of Healing and a six pack of Waters of Strength. Vanderhand also wanted a healing six pack.

Many of us partied that night on the Sea Haven Goddess. Somehow, I got the feeling the idea was to get Aqualina drunk that night.

2nd Fruit '03

Certainly the next morning I had a headache as we headed out to Pier 3 at Seagate Harbour. At first glance, there didn't seem to be anything there. However, when we looked, there was a semi submerged swordfish shaped boat in the dock, called the *Marianus*. So I sat on the edge of the dock and transformed to merform before jumping in. However, before I could do that, I was called upon to waterproof all the gear and put waterbreathings on those who needed it. Fortunately Grendel had the ability to create a high mana zone. Plus one of Patrice's lieutenants was also able to help.

We got on board. Nearly all the vessel was full of water apart from a couple of air bubbles that had been provided for us. It was powered by water elementals but the details were still secret. Once we were out of Confederation Bay we were able to move very rapidly.

4th Fruit

Two days later, we reached the abandoned raft, just off the coast of Gwydonia, over Lower Pasifika. That was when I discovered I was stuck in merform. Oh well. It can hopefully be fixed later.

Once we were ready, we swam down to Lower Pasifika to see King Kierl. Much of the city had been rebuilt after the earthquake, including the palace. It consisted of controlled coral atoll rings. Basically merfolk dwellings consist of shaped coral growths that are grown rapidly by special rituals. The royal court had no idea what the sahuagan wanted the captives for as, it just seemed

to be a random group that was snatched. The primary theories were for food or slaves although there was a possibility that they were attempting to summon an avatar of their dark god. That, we would have to prevent. At least they hadn't managed to reach the Gate to Perelandra yet.

.2.

The abduction took place at a village fifty miles to the northwest, three to three & one half hours away by mage current. It was located close to sahuagan territory. Twenty people were thought to be taken but twenty eight were missing. After discussions, there was entertainment, including dancing after which we spent the night. Nothing unusual occurred.

5th Fruit

Next morning, Grendel did a Mage Current and we headed out. After a while we reached a coral reef. A net was draped across the gap with guards posted. After identifying ourselves, we were let in and conducted to the authorities. Their leader was Firence Foambrother. He confirmed that eighteen were actually taken and the attacking force consisted of fifty sahuagan, armed with crossbows, spears and tridents and accompanied by a dozen sharks. This had been the first serious raid on the village. Usually it was the hunting parties that had been attacked. No prisoners had been taken, but they had a dead sahuagan, killed in the raid ten days ago. They had left due north.

So we headed off north, using the mage current. Seven hours later, we stopped to camp. Thorn had erected her magical fortress and I managed to put an air bubble in the top. I then decided to summon an octopus for dinner but something went horribly wrong. However, there was no obvious effect so I tried again. What I got was a large, white, octopus, about eight foot long. They avoid the 'devil fish', and the new island. The nearest place they avoid is to the south and west. There were many ways to find the 'devil fish' and we had to beware sharks.

Drum used the air bubble to remove the curse I had picked up. Fortunately the others kept me wet during the six hour ritual.

6th Fruit

Next morning, after purification, Grendel went outside to have a look. It was still dark outside but he was able to detect three intelligent minds, emanating curiosity and animosity.

.3.

I quickly dived into my armour and the rest also prepared. Grendel then detected more of them, a total of eight sahuagan and seven sharks. We figured there were three times as many out there. Drum dropped a Forbiddance outside the door against sahuagan. Once we were ready, we clustered outside the door of the keep. We couldn't see them because of the darkness and the murk outside. Drum determined there was a magical component to the murk. I also used my Water Form to become more difficult to see.

The plan was for me to summon the sharks then control them to attack each other and the sahuagan. Unfortunately once I saw them in the murk it was more of a case of trying to defend myself rather than control them. Drum had dropped another Forbiddance further out against the sharks but they were more ineffective underwater as the sahuagan and sharks just swam over and around them.

Grendel was firing phantasms at the sahuagan while the rest were fighting them off. Vanderhand was running into trouble. Drum then quickened us all while I backed into the doorway so only one shark could get at me at a time. Now I had a better chance of getting the control off.

.4.

Unfortunately the control didn't work the first time, and when it did work, I only got two of them. This meant I was busy dealing to sharks although one shark was sent to bother a sahuagan. Meanwhile Vanderhand was holding his own against the sahuagan attacking him, disarming three of them.

Basically the battle raged for what seemed to be a while. Suddenly the sahuagan that were left withdrew. Grendel had sent two phantasms after them. I had to drop the controls on the sharks in order to get a Mage Current going. Once that was done, we swept through the murk. However, when we finally got out of the murk and could see them, we quickly ascertained that the sahuagan were in their own mage current and it was faster than mine. We had no choice but to let them go. So we turned the current around and headed back to the fortress. And all this time we were beating up sharks.

Finally, when it was all over, we scavenged what we could from the bodies. 11 sahuagan barbed tridents, (D+4, PS:16, MD:17) two underwater crossbows, and pouches containing non magical pearls and marked pieces of nacre. We concluded that those were the local currency. I estimated around 1033sp worth.

.5.

We rested most of the day then headed out again in a southwest direction. Before we left I made sure all the waterbreathings were updated and all the pearls were fully charged. We travelled by Mage Current and I was getting a tad annoyed as we were travelling deep and in the dark. It was alright for some - those that could see in the dark. I was getting concerned we'd run into something and, if the sahuagan attacked, we'd have a decided disadvantage as they live in these kind of lighting conditions. I should put my tailfin down and insist we travel in the light. Plus I was concerned that attacking the sahuagan head on could be suicide. I was more in favour of sneaking around.

Four hours later, in the late afternoon, we reached a reef wall that extended to the surface. It was nearly dark topside and low tide. So a spot was found to put up the fortress, still underwater and the others decided to have a hot meal on top of an exposed coral head. I was forced to stay in the water.

Watches were set that night. About midnight, a glow was reported on top of the now submerged reef. It went away an hour later. When it was my watch, I noticed an unusual formation on the wall. Something was nagging at me about this place as well.

7th Fruit

We went over the top of the reef at low tide. I was being carried over Drum's shoulder like a sack of potatoes and not feeling very happy about that. Now it was light, we could see that the atoll was an elongated shape, 200ft long and 50ft wide oval. There were two projections in the middle and I suddenly realised this was the remains of a two masted sunken ship with the masts broken off.

Grendel then detected nine minds inside the atoll. They were almost emotionless so we were sure we were dealing with undead. I was put down on the edge of the atoll and Drum started hacking at the top of the reef.

The undead were shown to be sentient. They had been raiders and had failed in their search for profit. A darkness spell was revealed to be under the reef top. Drum took it down and we could see the deck of the ship below but, ten seconds later, another Darkness appeared.

So Grendel started firing phantasms at them. I created two Waters of Healing then slipped into the water and started a ritual to summon an elemental to go in there and take them out.

.6.

Just after I started the ritual, I heard a bell tolling from the stern of the ship. So I stopped the ritual and told the others before ducking back under to restart it. I hoped there weren't any sahuagan in the vicinity. Meanwhile Grendel was taking them out with phantasms. He took out three of the six he had on telepathy before taking a restorative/WOH combo, then the remaining three. He then went to cast another telepathy to pick up the remaining ones followed by a phantasm. However the phantasm started to attack him instead so Grendel went for it. Drum saw what was going on and dropped a Mind Special Counter on the area.

Once that was sorted out, and another restorative/WOH combo, Grendel was able to take out number seven, the only one on the telepathy. So, he recast it and succeeded in getting the last two. One of them seemed different to the others. The similar one went down quickly but the last one was knocking out phantasms nearly as fast as Grendel was sending them. Finally, as Grendel was nearing the end of his limits, the last one went down. It turned out we had dealt with eight nightgaunts and a wight.

Drum Daed Grendel for last spell to impact, nature of last magic, and magic required to cancel the last magic but gained no useful information. So he took the top of the reef off that was resting on the remains of the sails, and had a look at the deck below. Once the darkness was removed they saw the skeletons down below.

Two hours later, I had an elemental appear and it was sent to clear out the ship. After it trashed them, Thorn, who was the only one with enhanced vision, searched the ship for anything interesting. While this was going in I realised where we were. This was Lantern Reef, an area that my people avoided as it was haunted. Some canoes had already disappeared in the past and stories ranged from vengeful ancestors to a monstrous taniwha. So we started composing the song of the warrior hero Grendel who vanquished the monsters of Lantern Reef.

Several items were finally brought up. An oaken table, an oak desk, and a oak bed, all still in good condition. There was also a small chest and the nine bodies of the officers. Each one had a small lantern shaped earring in one ear. The ship's log was in the desk and it had a black star with white edging on the cover. We estimated it was 200 years old. Barrels of tar were contaminating the water around the reef. There were also pouches and medallions, a spyglass, and a lantern. All that was magical was the lantern(illumination), spyglass(preservation) the captain's boots(adhesion) and the earrings(correspondence).

It was getting dark by now so we set up the fortress. I spoke to an octopus and was told that there were no sahuagan in this area.

8th Fruit

I knew there was an island about a day and a half paddle away but it only took us a few hours to get there by mage current. It was one of the more northern islands in the group and is inhabited. Unfortunately when they saw Drum and Vanderhand, they were rather fearful and wanted to run them off the island. So I negotiated with the chief and managed to arrange for



them to stay on the shore. However, they weren't allowed to enter the village. Fortunately, they had good relationships with the merfolk so I didn't have any problems. Besides, after I told them my lineage and tribe of origin I was accepted as one of their own.

Of course, upon arrival, I was picked up and slung over Drum's shoulder again. So I pulled out a charcoal stick and grafitted the back of his armour. Grendel and Thorn had to take over the duty of carrying the mermaid for a while. Fortunately, that night, Drum was successful in resetting my

merform belt so I could have legs again.

9th Fruit

It was bananas and coconut milk for breakfast. The plan was to make a boat so the day was spent searching for suitable pieces of wood that the tribe had no use for. So we selected driftwood and fallen coconut palms. It took us nearly a whole day to get the selected logs to a pile on the beach.

That night, while Grendel and I negotiated for the restoratives, Drum divinated the items. The lantern produced a light that could only be seen by anyone wearing the earrings. The spyglass was ordinary apart from the preservation magic. The boots allow the wearer to adhere to wooden surfaces, formally living wood that is, presumably to allow a good grip on a wildly tossing and slippery ship deck..

As for the restoratives we were able to get them for a payment of 750sp each.. So we asked for eighteen which were split between Grendel, Drum, and myself. We were also able to get the village shaman, a wiccan, to make some restoratives for us. He wouldn't divulge the recipe, because of tapu reasons, but it certainly tasted nicer than the standard ones. So we paid over 4500sp and, finally, ended up with fifteen. It took a couple of days for him to make them.

Once the wood had been collected and, while we waited, some of the party went hunting wild boar while Grendel and I played in the harbour. I even summoned a dolphin to join us pearl diving. It was a good break but we couldn't stay long as merfolk were still in peril and it was up to us to rescue them.

11th Fruit

Finally, everything was ready. Grendel did the Ship Strength and turned the pile of wood and, palm fronds into a barge. The entire village turned out to see us sail off. After clearing the outer reef, I summoned a dolphin and discovered that there was a large collection of sahuagan about one days swim in the direction Grendel had previous determined. He told me it was a hollow in

a reef, a bad place, very deep. However, it took me six tries to get the school of fish I had promised for a reward. As a consequence, I napped for most of the trip.

It was late that evening when we arrived at a wall of coral that was very close to penetrating the surface of the water. I used a Waters of Vision to get an overhead view of the reef and saw a dark blue circle in the centre of the wall. It was surrounded by a coral wall and, closer examination revealed what looked like netting over the gaps.



More Water's of Vision later told me that this was indeed their fortress. The top two layers were dedicated to farming. Nets were draped from one side to the other where they were growing shellfish. It was clearly obvious that a direct approach was completely out of the question.

.8.

13th Fruit

So I was doing Waters of Vision after Waters of Vision to try and determine the layout of the place. I lost count of the number of restoratives we went through but, in all of that, I only backfired twice.

The first one teleported me sideways and dropped me in the water. Thank goodness I was dressed for swimming but it was one grumpy Pasifikan girl that swam back to the boat and helped back in.

The second one had me thinking Drum was a fearsome taniwha. So I leapt back off the boat and proceeded to attack him with a Water Bolt spell I was then grappled, sat on, and put to sleep. It took five hours for the effects to wear off.

So, it took a total of two days before we had the basic layout of the place. Also there were some places I couldn't view because there were scry shields up. Probably rulers quarters but we were sure behind one of those were the prisoners we sought.

Basically the lair is 250ft across and 200 ft deep. The top few layers is dedicated to farming but as it got deeper and darker, there was what looked like residential areas, arranged in decreasing rings down the wall. The entrances were circular holes with baffles to prevent water surges.

At the 120ft layer were also 5' across domes with holes in them. Inside those were small globular objects. We speculated that was the nursery with sahuagan eggs inside.

The 160ft level had openings that were guarded. I tried exploring one of those corridors but ran into a scry shield. I also spotted a sahuagan who was wearing yellowish shoulder markings. More such sahuagan were subsequently seen. The tunnel was lavishly decorated. We figured this was where the rulers lived - here and in the level below. Also there were glowing objects providing some light. I had spotted some unlit ones on other levels.

The 180ft level also had guarded entrances. Below that, at 200ft, was what could be an area with a covered tune going into it from the west. I also poked into that and discovered guards, gates, and a scryshield. There was a grated hatch at the top of the tunnel as well - presumably for the

guards. We were sure this was where the prisoners were kept.

I also poked into a hole at the 60ft level. There, the tunnel was plainer and not decorated. The tunnel also curved upwards into an air pocket where the workshop and forges were located. Two narrow vents led up to the surface, presumably for ventilation.

While all this was going on, basic maps were being drawn. Also Grendel was able to send messages to both the Guild and the Pasifikan merfolk - in case we needed backup or rescue.

.9.

And after we did all that scrying, we rested.

14th Fruit

We prepared to go in. I summoned two water elementals which I christened Hone and Heke. Grendel also summoned a large spidercrab and handed Thorn his Rod of Insect Control so she now had a pet. It was also waterproofings, waterbreathings, resist colds, and buoyancies on those that needed them. Drum added shadowforms to the mix. I also burned off a charge from my witchsight ring and skulled a Waters of Strength.

We picked a spot where we could walk across the coral tops, fifty foot wide. Fortunately we scanned the area first and discovered a network of wards so Drum was busy dispelling them. There were also hidden traps as we found out when Drum's foot went through and got stuck. He shrunk to dwarf size but was then attacked by two coral snakes. Needless to say, they didn't last long - thank goodness as those things are lethal. The crab then pulled Drum out.

The two elementals were trying to sneak through the nets but one must have touched a ward as it vanished.

Meanwhile we were working our way through an assortment of wards, some of them containing spells from collages that Drum had no counters for. So we had to dodge those. Meanwhile Grendel detected 14 guarding minds on ESP. A couple had perked up at the noise of the combat but soon settled down. So we carefully worked our way across taking half an hour to do so.

Drum - Do you want me to sit here and divinate it for three hours?"

Rest of party - NO!

One last ward was dealt to before we could enter the water, which was located just below the surface. However, in the process of cancelling it, Drum managed to give himself visual hallucinations, affecting his DA. I was beginning to think we were going to have to abort this attempt.

.10.

I was in full armour and, once we were in position, we activated our sahuagan illusion belts. We then waited for a clear path before dropping down. Half an hour later, we did and dropped with the use of a mage current. On the way down, I got the impression this was not usual behaviour as we were getting some very odd looks. Fortunately we weren't challenged.

We ended up on top of the tunnel. Nearby a bunch of sahuagan were fighting in the arena.

Vanderhand disarmed the trap on the top hatch. Grendel detected sahuagan minds on the other side so we entered carefully through the hatch and formed up at the door. Once we were ready, the fight started with the guards.

It wasn't just guards. There were three sahuagan mages as well, a wiccan, earth and namer. The water elemental was rolling into a warrior at a time, while the spidercrab was watching our rear. Thorn was at the back with missile fire. I was firing water bolts, Grendel had phantasms, while Vanderhand and Drum were engaging in hand to hand. I'm really going to have to practise that bolt spell - it was more effective than I realised. We were all quickened, and so were some of the opposition.

.11.

We were slowly working our way through them. I had just shot off a Water Bolt when I was caught in a Hands of Earth. Even wriggling didn't help. Thorn had to haul me out. A bit later, Drum was turned to stone and Vanderhand used his magical hammer to restore him. Another Hands of Earth popped up a bit later and, again Thorn had to come to the rescue.

Finally we were running out of warriors. Grendel rushed on, and got petrified. Meanwhile the elemental, rolled over a warrior and onto the wiccan mage. It managed to kill her before being banished by the namer.

Finally the last large sahuagan warrior went down, thanks to Drum and Vanderhand. Grendel plowed into the sahuagan earth mage, or stone mage they were called here. I went into help hold her down while he attacked. After a tussle Grendel went unconscious and Drum piled in. Meanwhile Vanderhand shot the namer through the heart.

Once they were all defeated, we found the merfolk. Most of them were petrified so Vanderhand freed them. Meanwhile I was making Waters of Healing for those who needed it. I then reassured the merfolk while Drum checked out the magical items and Vanderhand broke the locks. Drum also took a couple of sahuagan bodies as he was planning to use the hides to cover shields. They told us that the ones missing were used for food. They had also discovered that the sahuagan were up to something near Rangifero. We had no idea where that was.

We then mage currented out. We had just cleared the nets at the top when the alarm went off. Shortly we were being chased - and their mage current was faster than ours. So we were doing what we can to delay them with missile fire and bolt spells.

Suddenly, when it looked like they were going to catch us, they suddenly turned and fled. We soon found out why. The merfolk had arrived, with their submarine. With that, it was a quick trip back to the village. There, we found out that Rangifero was their name for Gwydonia and, literally translated, meant 'Red Sky'. Hence I sent this missive back to the Guild via proxy, as I decided to stay to see if I could find out what they were up to. Grendel also decided to stay.