

Return to Lorgos

Cover Sheet

Adventure by Greg Taylor

Duration: 25 days (01 Fruit '799 - 25 Fruit '799)

Player Characters

Grendel	Mind	Human	Male	Mil Sci
Cher	Binder	Surame	Female	
Faith	E&E	Hobbit	Female	Leader
Bath Wader	E&E	Human	Male	
Brigetta McLeod	Bard	Human	Female	
TDP Roberts	E&E	Human	Male	
Aqualina	Water	Human	Female	Scribe

Plane

Norden/Lorgos/Viryum/Eradin

Places Visited

Cities on the top level of the above planes
Second level of Lorgos, Norden, and Viryum
Third level of Norden

Employer

Lord Shaygin - Water Mage - Lord of Lorgos

Major NPCs encountered

Sern - Lord of Norden
Nebran - Sudarian in charge of third level plantations
Lassie - playful water elemental
Squeak - Lorgosian dolphin
Gerla Larks - community leader on Viryum (now located on Lorgos)
Phil Larks - Gerla's daughter.

Mission

To remove the threat of the squid creatures from Lorgos

Return to Lorgos

Adventure Summary

1st Fruit

Party employed by Lord Shaygin to assist in eradicating squid creatures from the plane of Lorgos. Calimar have decursed all the planes and are now allowing interplanar travel but Sudar is still off-limits. The water level on Lorgos has been dropped and Shaygin is preparing a force to attack the squids. To do this, he requires special wood to build the ships and the main source is from the third level of Norden. The people there will give him what he requires in exchange for assistance of ridding the area of a large blobby monster that is causing havoc.

2nd Fruit

Arrive at Norden. Spoke to the person in charge of the plantations. Monster appears every few days and destroys plants in a random path. It's not due to attack again for a couple of days. Probably sleeps deep in the swam mud between times.

3rd Fruit

Trained with the Lorgosian troops in the lake and developed strategies for catching the squid. Later on, tags were laid in the swamp in the hopes the monster would eat one and hence be locatable.

4th Fruit

Located the monster buried deep in the mud and used a water elemental to coax it to the surface. Once there, it was attacked and was severely damaged before it retreated again. A ritual later told us we were dealing with a giant amoeba.

5th Fruit

Found the amoeba again and destroyed it.

6th - 12th Fruit

Continued training with the Lorgosians

13th Fruit

Prepared to move on to Lorgos on the newly constructed ships but had to postpone for a day owing to a magical backfire.

14th Fruit

Sailed through a portal onto the shallow sea covering the second level of Lorgos. Located a Lorgosian dolphin who told us that the squid creatures were known as Viryms. They live in the deep ocean over the third level and chase off any intruders. That evening, reached one of the island portals.

15th Fruit

On a hunch, and since one of the other planes was called Virym, we managed to find a way there. On the top level we discovered that the humans were all the descendants of the missing Lorgosians. The Viryms had sent them here when the waters began rising on Lorgos. Now that the waters are rising on Virym they were going to send them back but the humans didn't trust the squids. So we arranged to send the humans back to Lorgos. Surmised that Virym and Lorgos are

liked i.e. when the water lowers on one, it rises on the other. Same thing happened to Chos and Kerax. When Chos warmed up, Kerax cooled down. Also all the squid creatures were originally from Virym. Showed the ex-Lorgosians how to use the portals to reach Lorgos then returned to the boat and sailed on to the deep ocean.

16th Fruit

Finally reached the deep water

17th Fruit

Negotiated with the Viryms. They wanted no contact with the 'drylanders' since they don't trust them, and insisted on remaining. The upshot is that the Viryms keep to the third level on Virym and Lorgos, both deep oceans, and the Lorgosians have the rest.

On the way back to the portal, a message arrived that a guard had been killed while guarding a second level portal on Norden.

18th Fruit

Finally arrived back on Norden. That night, a local wiccan spoke to the spirit of the dead guard and discovered he had been killed by necromantic magic by an undead, one skeleton and a vampire. Suspect they came from Sudar.

19th Fruit

Found the vampire's coffin in a copse of trees on the second level of Norden and destroyed the vampire within. Retrieved three rings, an amulet, and a crystal ball from the coffin. All magical.

20th Fruit

Went back to the copse looking for the skeleton but couldn't find it. Meanwhile, Lord Shaygin managed to contact the plane of Eradin. It's a bright plane and is covered in mist. It is probably paired with Sudar as Eradin got brighter as Sudar was enveloped in darkness. This makes Norden the odd plane out.

21st of Fruit

Still can't find the skeleton. No sign of it leaving the copse either. An owl said it had seen it fade away after planting the coffin.

22nd Fruit

Celebration party on Lorgos that evening

23rd - 24th Fruit

Rested

25th Fruit

Return to Alusia with payment. Discovered that the amulet is a skeleton summoning amulet with a limited duration

Return to Lorgos

Aqualina

Surprise! Lord Shaygin turned up at the Guild meeting wanting a party of adventurers to eradicate those squids that had infested Lorgos. His request was for people who had experience underwater and in swamps. Naturally I signed up. I had said I would before we returned last time and I intended to follow through.

My fellow adventurers were:

Grendel: A 5'9" human male mindmage with waist length flaming red hair streaked with bone white (or was it the other way round). One eye was sapphire blue. The other was emerald green. He carried a copper staff with orcish runes and was wearing leather armour and a tight fitting neck torc. I earlier stated that he was a mind mage but I suspect he had missed his calling as he knew some water magics and was pacted to Itimanuka, one of the Pasifikan deities that I worshipped.

Cher: A female lizard person and Binder wearing a loincloth and what she said was a flight harness. Her skin and scales were a sandy yellow colour and she carried a maingauche, dagger, short sword, and bow. She stood exactly 5' off the floor but I suspected from tip to tail she was a lot longer.

Faith: 2' 6.25" female Hobbit who had coppery skin and knee length dark hair. She used to be a traveller and a diplomat from TerraNova but recently joined the Guild and became an E&E. She said she had finally learned how to do cantrips and was very good at organising things. Her principal weapon was a dagger and she had been a party leader before.

Bath Wader: A tall and bulky guy covered from head to foot in hard leather black armour and a closed helm. He told us he was one of the Giddy Knights, a Sammialite Order of Holy Knights. He was also an E&E.

Brigetta McLeod: A Bardic Mage and Master Troubadour as well as a ranger and spy. She is 5'4" with long red hair and a freckled face, wearing a hat, kilt, white blouse, tartan sash, a sporran and carrying her harp.

TDP Roberts: 5'10" human and slightly portly, wearing white shimmering sparkling robes. Another E&E mage and a renown navigator. He also had a bottled boat and miniature canoes. He told us he doesn't like fighting.

Finally myself, Aqualina, 5'1" Pasifikan human female water mage with light brown skin and hip length black hair. Currently I was wearing a pareu over my two-piece swimsuit. I told the others I did most Water magics, and was a skilled swimmer.

Before Lord Shaygin arrived I gave the others a brief description of what Lorgos was like (see Return to Norden). Somehow I got the impression there were some things that they didn't believe such as the fact that the sky curved down to meet the ground in the central tower.

Shortly, Lord Shaygin arrived and told us he had learnt many things since the last time we saw him. For the benefit of the others he gave a brief description of what had occurred then told us

that, soon after we left, Arondel had died of old age. However, before that happened, he had passed on his plane-walking abilities to Shaygin.

The rescue of the Sudarians had attracted the creators of the plane and they were arriving just as we left. No wonder that Arondel had been so anxious for us to leave. As I had surmised, they had been the Calimar. Arondel cast permanent Mind Counter spells on Shaygin and that helped him resist the charm that the Calimar put on the rest of the population to make them think that the Calimar were benevolent. They did remove all the curses from the planes and have allowed the inhabitants to speak freely and travel between the planes except for Sudar which was declared off-limits. The Calimar are in the process of cleaning that plane up of all the undead. I also presume they returned the Sudarian Eye to Lorgos. Shaygin mentioned that the curse was lifted by a strange looking Calimar in a very strange looking outfit.

However, thanks to the Counters, Shaygin suspected that they have an agenda of their own. They have since left to chase after the Sudarians who escaped in the ziggurat.

Now that he has regained control of Lorgos, Shaygin is able to drop the water level. His intention is to have it just above the second level. I guess he'd be able to grow coral reefs after that. However, the grey squid-like creatures with eight tentacles, two arms, and exhibiting mind-mage tendencies are still there. They arrived when the water did, and anyone who was near the water just vanished. There seems to be no defence. Lorgos was down to thirty people when we arrived.

Since then, Shaygin had been training forces on Norden and was now ready to make a counter attack. There was also another problem, this time to do with the Sudarian refugees. They have no world to go back to and they're in the progress of tidying the swamps of Norden on the bottom level. They've been growing swamp banyans which produce a wood which is excellent for ship building. Shaygin wants a lot of it to build a fleet but he can't afford to buy it but he wants us to go to the swamp and help the Sudarians deal to some large blobby monsters that are causing problems such as eating the swamp plants. For a reward, they'll give him all the wood he needs to build boats to reexplore Lorgos and fight off the squids.

Another piece of information that Shaygin passed on that the wife of Lord Sern, the Lord of Norden, has since had twins.

After some discussion, Faith became the party leader and I was the scribe.

Brigetta used a Crystal of Vision to look into the future and saw a vista of avenues of trees with buttresque roots. Bushy flax was also growing while mist floated over everything. In the background was a stone pillar.

She then did a ritual of recitation on Shaygin and got the same reading that he did which brought on the curse on Lorgos. Shaygin was rather astonished by that.

Just after that, I sought out Starflower and managed to obtain three herbalist salves for infections.

2nd Fruit

It wasn't until late afternoon that we were finally ready to go. Other herbalist salves were also obtained and I had made up some potions: 2 WoH for Grendel, 2 WoH for Bath and 1 WoS for Grendel. Fortunately there were no failures. Also an astrology reading was requested, which cost

Grendel 700sp from Mr Toadswart, which asked 'What is the nature of the treat from the monster and it's strength and weaknesses'. The answer was:

To grow a large body and pseudopods
All you must do is eat trees and clods
But beware of fire and magical dwemour
Because they are likely to harm your demeanour

Once we were ready to go, Lord Shaygin extracted a doorknob from his pocket, then produced a piece of chalk from inside the knob and drew a door on the nearby wall. He then placed the doorknob inside the drawing and used it to open the resulting door. Inside was a room where the walls were glowing with a bluish light. The room itself was bare but there was a door on the other side.

Lord Shaygin told us to go through and he'll join us in another hour since he'd have to planewalk back. So we went through and came out in a large courtyard which looked like it was set up as a marketplace. All sorts of people were walking about, mostly Nordenites but there were several people from other planes.

From where we were we noticed that we were on top of a small hill. Surrounding the hill was the city, consisting of stone buildings. Surrounding that was a wall. A causeway crossed the lake from the main gate, and disappeared into the forest beyond. In the centre of the hill was the tower. The others were amazed to see the sky curve down and enter the top of the tower. Also, half the sky was dark. We could hear a faint rumbling sound from the tower.

Lunch was being served so we sat down at a table and requested some. Turned out to be fish, rice and steamed vegetables. Brigetta pulled out her harp and played some soothing music. Meanwhile I was throwing crumbs to a sparrow that was hopping about.

An hour later, Shaygin arrived.

"You're my charges" - Shaygin.

"So if he gets more than 100 of us does he explode?" - Bath

He told us that the people refer to the Calimar as the 'Elders'. After we finished eating, he led us down the hill. A short distance later we were walking past stone buildings. A bit later on we walked past a building that people were walking in and out of. The front wall was basically a row of pillars. I recognised it as the building containing the city portal. There were large stone statues, sitting on pedestals, at the road intersections.

Finally we stopped at a two-story building which had a large doorway with a panelled door. A middle-aged woman was inside making up beds. I recognised her as Nildain, the lady who had helped us when we were last here. She told us that she was now married and expecting her first baby.

Once she left, we settled down for a rest

"If we'd brought a wicca with us..." - Brigetta

"... then we'd have a fire" - Faith

Brigetta and TDP were looking very happy. It soon transpired both of them were Solar Aspected and here, it was behaving that it was noon all day. That implied that they'll be feeling midnight effects all night.

An hour or so later, Lord Shaygin arrived. We explained about the astrology reading and Brigetta asked if he knew of a fire mage. The only one he could think of was one of the leaders of the plains tribes on the second level and she has a rather grumpy disposition. I had to suppress a smirk at that comment.

He had also arranged for us to meet the person in charge of the plantations. He turned out to be a swarthy looking Sudarian, named Nebran, who was grim and gaunt looking, wearing brownish robes and had dirt stained hands. He told us he hadn't seen the monster but had seen signs of its presence. It only appeared at night and seemed to be a large creature browsing through the foliage leaving a trail about ten feet wide. As far as he knows there's only one of them. After every 'attack' a team of planters have to replant where it had been. The last time it had appeared was two days ago.

"Sounds like a typical wandering monster" - Brigetta

We were also told that the water level in the swamp averaged about a foot above the soft mud. It wasn't a good idea to go swimming or even to fall in as anyone would get sucked into the mud and disappear forever. The planters use rafts. The monster hadn't attacked the rice paddies yet but that may only be random chance. We then discussed how we could find and deal with it. TDP wanted to make small metal tags that we plant in various locations and hope that the monster eats one of them. If that happens then we can locate the monster using the tag. Brigetta then requested jars of swamp oil that we can use as firebombs. I'm not sure that we should kill it as it seems to me that it may just be a harmless plant-eater that was in the wrong place. But, if we had to kill it, then maybe my Water Purification spell would affect it like it did to the gorps on Gloranthia.

Another possibility we discussed was laying wards and other such spells that would sound an alarm when the creature triggered them. Brigetta said that an 'Ah-Wooga' sound would be the best so Bath started referring to the creature as a 'Wooga' monster and the name stuck.

Even though it was late afternoon, it was decided we would go down and scout out the area. So we prepared for an excursion and possible combat in case we met the thing. In my case, I decided to dress light.

Nebran took us to the portal building where we joined a queue of travellers. Finally we stepped on the dais and were transported to the top of a large pillar overlooking the swamp. It was surrounded by large, bushy trees and there were avenues of trees heading off in six different directions. A wooden rail ran around the edge and a stairway wound downwards around the outside of the pillar and disappeared into the trees below.

As well as the trees we could see a raised flotilla of punts that were roped together which made up a floating nursery of seedlings. There were also fields of flax etc.

We descended down the stairwell. On the way we noticed a group of people pulling punts

coming along one line of trees and walking around and under the network of roots. The root lattice formed a walkway along each side of the avenue, supplemented by 3 foot wide wooden floorboards. The swamp water looked murky and smelt. Just in case, I renewed my Waterbreathing and put a Waterproofing on Faith while Cher cast an Install Flight.

Five minutes walk down the avenue and we reached a group of tired planters. They had just finished planting where the creature had last appeared and they told us that the next attack starts from near the last one finished. That implied to me that the creature oozes into the mud to rest between feeds and that there is only one - so far. One of them took us to the nearest point of the avenue to the end of the last feeding track. As he marked that point on the nearest tree, the line of darkness whizzed by. Now we were under a starlit sky with a featureless full moon in the place where the sun was.

After TDP cast an Enhance, Grendel tried an ESP but didn't detect anything except for a dim intelligence from the trees. Our guide later explained that the tree's growth had been enchanted by Brin who is an Earth Mage.

There was nothing more we could find here so we went back to the city and then to our house where a meal of beef stew and bread rolls had been provided. Cher wandered up to the marketplace area looking for some uncooked meat.

By the time she got back, most of us were snuggled up in our sleeping while TDP told us what his previous party had discovered when they went back to the time of the War of Tears. This led on to rumours of impending Armageddon. The one that got me was the one about the Spawn, who had conquered most of the northern half of Terra Nova, were planning to wake up an ancient demon called Leviathan, who was rumoured to be sleeping under the mana storms that rage constantly over the seas to the north of Pasifika. Pasifikans avoid that area and all that have gone there have never returned. We believe that it's full of evil spirits.

Anyway TDP said that it would happen very soon and that tied in with what another party had reported about something causing the sunken city of Pasifika to rise which would cause death and destruction all through Pasifika.

.3.

3rd Fruit

Breakfast turned out to be hot porridge - much to Brigetta's delight. Nebran was also there. He told us that the pitch soaked torches were ready, some of the tags had been constructed, and a large barrel of rock oil was waiting.

Shaygin's men were drilling in boat and underwater combat in the lake, on the far side of the causeway. So we went down to see what they were doing, after dropping in to the house in order to prepare for a swim. All I needed to fetch was my trident.

We met up with the Lorgosian troops near the city entrance. The mile long causeway crossed the lake from the gates to the opposite shore where a road disappeared into the forest. On the far side was a narrow, shingle, beach. We followed Shaygin and the Lorgosians down a narrow side path which ran close to the lake shore and terminated near a hut where three flat-bottomed boats were pulled up. They were made of swamp bunyan planks and looked like it was easy to disassemble them in sections for easy portage. Each one could carry four people and an oversized crossbow was mounted on the front.

Once all the required Waterbreathings had been cast, some of the Lorgosians prepared the boats to practise quick loading and firing the crossbows while the others practised one on one underwater trident combat.

I sat up to my waist in the water and started a transformation to merform while Lord Shaygin explained his plans for dealing with the squids. He told us they had mind mage talents but only seemed to be semi-sentient. Their tactics seemed to be to control their victims, drag them under and drown them. Mind Counter spells would be a useful defence and he was currently seeking out a Mind Mage to cast them all. Also, he was preparing a secret weapon. Something called a 'depth grenado'. We then discussed the possibility of using nets in order to catch some alive in order to find out more about them.

We then entered the water. The depth increased rapidly from the shore before levelling off at thirty feet. The water was exceptionally clear and the bottom was covered in small stones and patches of aquatic plants. I was tempted to join the Lorgosians for trident practise but Faith and Grendel wanted us to stick together so I ended up sparring with Brigetta, in trident versus javelin, and both of us were swimming. We were reasonably evenly matched as I had the better swimming ability but she was better with her weapon.

Meanwhile Cher had cast Install Flight on her harness and was seeing how well she could 'fly' in the water. It turned out that she could only travel at about half normal speed because of water resistance. I suggested a game of 'tag' but she wasn't keen. Someone then suggested that she should use Install Flight on a log which has a metal spike in the front then fly it to hit ships below the waterline to sink them.

Finally lunch time arrived so I shifted out of merform and joined the others. It turns out to be fish so Faith went scrumping for apples in the nearby orchid. When she came back, she said something about encountering singing apes in the trees. Shaygin told us they were harmless.

Just then a Sudarian messenger arrived. There was no sign of any attacks and the rest of the tags should be ready by the end of the day. TDP replied that he would like to pick up what they had later that afternoon and they'd lay those. Meanwhile I was talking to the Lorgosian trident trainer, Ostave, about getting some underwater trident combat practise.

Afterwards it was decided to try out some of our net ideas. The first suggestion involved a net stretched between two boats and a mage current in the middle to pull the squid in. It soon became apparent that the boats would also be pulled along so that idea was quickly dropped.

Next involved two water mages, one on each boat, who had the same rank in Mage Current. This time, each mage current was made as narrow as each boat so they'd drag the net between them. This seemed to be more successful so it was decided to try it out. To do that, they wanted volunteers to be caught. Three Lorgosians and I volunteered. I wanted to see if I could out swim them in merform. So Shaygin and TDP took a boat each. With the first attempt, I slipped under the net as it dragged along the bottom. On the next one, I allowed myself to be caught but I was able to roll down the net and under it again.

"Aqualina's probably smarter than those squids and she's a darn sight more wiggly" - Brigetta.

Because of that, everyone else went into a huddle on net design. Cher offered to cast Adhesion

on the net but it was soon discovered it would take her several casts to cover it. However TDP had the idea of having a rope top and bottom of the net in order to form a scoop - or a 'purse' as TDP put it. Some adhesion spells were added and the result proved to be nearly impossible to get out from, especially with the force of the water pushing me back into the net. Actually I thought that being towed along in a net was great fun. At one pass I actually leapt over the net as it went by. It was generally agreed that the squids weren't likely to do that, and if they did, we could always put crossbowmen in the boats. They'd just have to be careful that they didn't shoot the occupants in the other boat.

By the time everyone was satisfied we had a working strategy it was mid afternoon. Time to get the tags and put them around where the creature last appeared. Unfortunately I discovered I had got myself stuck in merform, something that has only happened one before. I was rather embarrassed as I told this to the others. TDP looked rather resigned and said he'd have to unbotle his boat so he could do the curse removal. Lord Shaygin looked rather concerned but I reassured him I would be ok. So, while the others went to sort out the tags, TDP started the ritual to unbotle the boat. It took an hour and, after that, a large boat was floating on the lake. He then launched my outrigger we had previously stored onboard. Shaygin was rather impressed by the bottled boat and asked if it was teachable. Unfortunately it wasn't. TDP and I then went aboard to do the ritual. By now it had got dark.

Meanwhile, the others were down at the swamp. Brigetta tried to do a sound ward but failed. Faith went for a swim in the swamp which resulted in her being covered in muck. Finally the tags were laid in a rough circle around the area where the creature was believed to be. By then it was night. The swamp looked rather spooky in the pale moonlight.

Back in the city, dinner was roast meat with raw fish for Cher. Shaygin had joined them and it was wondered whether or not it was a property of the plane which caused Lord Shaygin's Mind Counter to be permanent or whether it was just something about Arondel's spell. So Grendel put a mind counter on a volunteer Lorgosian. Cher then did a Detect Enchantment a bit later on and discovered the duration was permanent. That meant we could use Mind Counters as a sort of immunisation against the Calimar's charm effects.

Later on, at the house, Grendel did a Limited Precog, assuming he went down to the swamp during the night. All he got was a vague vision of himself doing that. All he saw were the trees being slightly luminous and little lights playing in the flax bushes. The entire effect made it appear that the swamp was on fire. No sign of any monster though.

Finally, after the first attempt, the curse was removed and I regained legs again. TDP rebottled the boat. He looked exhausted after that so I helped him back home.

4th Fruit

Grendel did another Limited Precog and saw a vision of a wide swathe cut in the flax heading away from the path. At breakfast, this was confirmed when a Sudarian messenger arrived to tell us saying "We got one!" So we headed down to the third level and down on the board walk.

Once there we could see the start of the trail and, after checking the markers, discovered numbers 1 and 12 were missing. Baths managed to locate #12 which was slightly down and away in the swamp. Grendel used an item to get a fix on number #1. Hopefully they are where the creature is, i.e. it's swallowed them. So we got a couple of punts and punted in the indicated direction.

After ten minutes we could only see row upon row of flax plants, each around six to seven feet tall. Faith was looking over the side and noticed that the plants were originally planted in clay pots which broke when the plant got bigger. Faith then tasted the swamp water and spat it out when she realised it wasn't very nice and would most likely make her extremely sick.

After a while, the arrow dipped and Bath soon concluded that the marker was 300 feet down in the mud. A short while later, we reached the end of the swathe and both arrows were pointing straight down.

I tried a Waters of Vision to scry down into the area and all I saw was darkness. Now why wasn't I surprised. Faith borrowed Brigetta's Crystal of Vision and had a look as well. She also saw darkness, but there was a patch that was colder than the surrounding mud.

So if we couldn't go to it, could we get it to come to us. I tried summoning it, assuming it was an aquatic creature but, after a few worrying moments, nothing happened. The only other thing I could think of was to summon a water elemental to find out what was down there. So I settled down for a two hour ritual. At the end of it, nothing happened.

I was halfway through the second attempt when a third punt arrived with lunch. Fortunately my concentration wasn't disturbed too much. Guess chocolate wasn't on the menu. This one worked and a small wave appeared. TDP spoke to it and relayed my instructions to go down and see what was there. When the elemental returned (TDP told me that its name was Lassie) it reported that there was lots of mud down there all the way down to the original rock, 300ft below. There was also a rather large cold creature resting down there, something larger than the two punts combined.

Lassie wasn't behaving like any other elemental I had dealt with, mind you this was the first time I had summoned one in the field. This one seemed to have a mind of its own, sort of like a dog wanting to be helpful. We were wondering how to get the creature to come to us and, without prompting, it sped back down again and prodded at the creature. A short while later, Bath shouted over that the arrow was moving. All the punts backed off and TDP cast Quickness on us all. Grendel had an ESP running on it. From its thoughts he concluded that it had a very primitive mind, rather less than an animal, which was mainly driven by instinct and sensation.

It was only a few seconds later that the creature and the elemental surfaced. We could feel the cold radiating from the creature. It looked like a very large blob of jelly. Faith grabbed hold of Cher's flight harness as Cher took off. As Brigetta started emptying the rock oil onto the water, Cher flew over top of the creature and Faith slashed at it as they went past.

"Do you have any ranks in flying?" - Cher

"Yes - but not in dangling" - Faith

I tried casting Speak with Aquatic Creatures in an attempt to communicate with the creature but the spell backfired. Fortunately there weren't any dire consequences from that but the creature suddenly reached out with two appendages. I was engulfed by one and the elemental avoided the other. It felt really cold in there so I cast a Resist Cold. The creature didn't like the heat my modified spell created so it withdrew rapidly.

It liked the fireball that Cher triggered even less. That impacted on the creature and the oil on it. Fairly soon, part of the creature was on fire. The initial flash of fire nearly set my fringe on fire as I did a Liquid Purification on it. It didn't seem to have any effect, unlike what happened to the gorgs on Glorantha, but it was rather difficult to tell.

Cher and Faith continued their attack from the air. Faith jumped off Cher in an attempt to leap on the creature's back but she disappeared straight into it. At the same time, the creature sank back into the mud. Cher dived in afterwards. On my instruction 'Lassie - Fetch Faith', the elemental also zoomed in. Meanwhile Faith was attacking from within until she was grabbed by a hand.

A minute after the creature vanished, Cher reappeared with Faith.

"Look what I caught for dinner." - Cher

"It's too small. Throw it back" - Aqualina (Sorry. Couldn't resist.)

It was getting awfully hot in my krakenskin armour, and parts of the burning creature were stuck to it so I rapidly divested myself of it and washed it in the swamp water. Meanwhile Brigetta was collecting samples of what was left of the creature.

We headed back to our quarters on the top level. Brigetta started a ritual of recitation on part of the creature while I sought out the luxury of the bathhouse. Meanwhile Faith discovered that salt did nasty things to another bit. When I got back, I tried a liquid purification spell on another bit. It became more watery and a sediment formed at the bottom of the container.

By now Brigetta's ritual had finished and she got the following story.

"Long, long ago, there was a teeny, tiny creature called an amoeba. One day there was a big upheaval and everything was lifted up and stirred around. This continued for some time. However, because the amoeba had no shape, it survived all the constant whirling and battering. After a while it stopped and everything dropped to the ground. The amoeba found itself in the middle of a huge expanse of thick viscous mud. These conditions were a perfect medium for it to grow so it got bigger and bigger. It even found some delicious things to eat on the surface of the mud.

The amoeba was very happy until, one day, while it was resting on the bottom of the mud, it was poked and prodded to the surface. There it came upon a group of witches which toasted it horribly and hurt it a lot".

Lord Shaygin turned up an hour or so later and we informed him of what had happened. He was rather pleased with our progress and he suggested that we try one of his 'depth charge' javelins. So far he's only got four and they consist of a modified javelin with some sort of grenado embedded in it. A string runs out of it and when it's pulled tight, the grenado goes off. Faith also requested another barrel of rock oil and a second barrel containing salt.

5th Fruit

Once we got down to the plantation again, I did Water Breathing on everyone and a Resist Cold on myself (just in case it tried to engulf me again). TDP got a locate on the amoeba and discovered it was quite a bit further away from the point where we found it last time. Just before we got there, I gave Faith and Brigetta a Waters of Strength each and TDP quickened us all.

Finally we spotted it, floating on the surface and looking smaller than it was before. Cher and Faith took to the air again and Faith threw the salt barrel at it. The barrel landed on the amoeba and sank inside it. Brigetta threw the special javelin which also penetrated so her and I pulled on the rope. There was a dull 'thump' from under the water and some of the amoeba disappeared. As it started sinking Faith dropped off Cher and disappeared inside it again. Brigetta threw her Javelin of Shocking at it (connected to another rope for later retrieval) which also hit. Cher dived in after Faith. Meanwhile I was looking around to see if Lassie the elemental was in the vicinity so I could send it home. No sign of it though.

.5.

As Bath and I dived in after Faith and Cher, Grendel felt a death-buzz. Fortunately it was neither of those two as we dragged them back up, still alive. Just in case, I created and drunk a Waters of Healing to neutralise any poisons. Our guide then mentioned that the mists were unusually thick at the moment, perfect conditions for will'o'wisps to appear.

It took us most of the remainder of the day to return to the tower. On the way, Faith was complaining of being cold so I wrapped up a blanket around the both of us so I could keep her warm.

Once back in town, we headed for the bath house to clean up. After that we were settling down back at the house when Lord Shaygin arrived and offered his congratulations on a job well done. He also told us that it would take a couple of days before the wood would be ready for the boats. They would need to be built on Lorgos. After some discussion it was decided to use TDP's barge as a base and have three smaller boats, one as a spare, to run the squid nets. Some of the Sudarians had offered to help so they needed to be trained. In total there would be 30 Lorgosians, 30 Sudarians, and us. A further week of training was to be done in order to try and get everyone ready. It would also be that long before the water level on Lorgos was down to the level Lord Shaygin wanted, i.e. 30ft deep on the second level. The stone circles would be just above the water line. Meanwhile Grendel was to put Mind Counters on as many people as possible.

6th Fruit

We headed down to the lake for practise and TDP unbottled his barge. I was hoping to join the Lorgosians in trident practise but was assigned to assist Lord Shaygin by manoeuvring the barge while everyone practised catching squids. I did get some personal tuition in underwater trident combat from Lord Shaygin afterwards.

13th Fruit

The week went by in a similar manner. It was decided that TDP would control one boat, with Grendel as protection, while Lord Shaygin controlled the other with Brigetta as protection. Since my Mage Current was slower, I would be propelling the barge.

This day was the day of preparation. At the previous evening was a large banquet to celebrate readiness. Lord Shaygin confided that the Sudarians were ready but they lacked confidence in themselves. It was hoped that, once they succeeded against the opposition, they'd be better.

Finally, at the wall side of the lake, Lord Sern drew a very large door. Meanwhile Lord Shaygin was handing out rings. Each ring had one charge of Rank 6 Waterbreathing in it, to be used in emergencies. All the troops and we got one each. He also gave Cher a ring of lightning protection

and I was given a special ring to look after but he wouldn't say what it was.

Once Lord Sern drew the door and opened it, Lord Shaygin, accompanied by Brigetta and Grendel, planewalked to Lorgos to open a door on the other side so we could sail the barge through. After a while, nothing happened and we were getting rather concerned.

Just then, the three planewalked back. Turned out that Lord Shaygin had backfired doing a Mage Current and blinded himself. Since that could last for days, they had returned for a curse removal. So we postponed the attack for a day. I waited outside the door while TDP did the curse removal. He then removed Cher's curse as, sometime before, she had managed to remove her ability to cast magic.

14th Fruit

We tried again. It was Waterbreathings all round. Lord Sern drew the door and Shaygin, Brigetta and Grendel planewalked. This time the door appeared on the other side and, after we all cast our Mage Currents, we were able to sail through. We emerged out of the cliff between the top and middle levels on Lorgos and nearly everyone was crowding the rails looking for squids. Half an hour later, we passed the stone circle island and hadn't seen any. Brigetta tried casting a Bard's Ear spell and all she heard were faint squeaky noises in the distance underwater.

Nearly two hours later we saw three triangular fins cutting through the water. Some sort of fish we presumed.

.6.

However, as they got closer, the fin shape reminded me of dolphins, and that was what they were proven to be. Brigetta cast Speaking Beasts on them. They told us that they called the squid creatures Viryms and that they were engaged in activities such as fishing and farming oysters. The dolphins had been warned to stay away from the giant clams. When asked how many they were, Squeak, the dolphin we were talking to, told us that there were schools of them and they frequented the deep water, mainly around the nine portal pillars. They have been observed to disappear and appear through the portals on top.

The dolphins wanted fish so I summoned some for them. They were rather pallid looking, compared to the Alusian species, with pale skin. They also only had the intelligence comparable to dogs, not like the Alusian ones I have had philosophical discussions with.

Just then, a seagull flew by. It seemed very odd that a seagull was so far from land so Cher, carrying Faith, flew off after it. It was thought that it may be a controlled creature, sent to spy on our movements. Faith tried to grab it but missed so resorted to throwing a rock at it, winging it. The bird fell from the sky and landed in the water. Squeak swam off and retrieved the body. I dived off the boat and, once Squeak returned, threw the bird onto the deck. It was discovered that the bird was dead, from a heart attack.

All the boats were now sharing the same current as we followed the dolphins towards deep water, I managed to convince Squeak to let me ride on his back. On the way I was trying to find out as much as I could about them and the Viryms. These dolphins were a bit slower than their Alusian counterparts and I figured that I could keep up with them in merform, something I can't do with an Alusian dolphin. However, the Viryms are a bit faster than they. Grendel was wanting to ride one of the other two but they weren't having that. Apparently they don't trust drylanders. Squeak

was one of the few exceptions and the other two were making sure he didn't get into trouble. However, they were unanimous in their hatred of the Viryms. I promised to introduce Grendel to some of my dolphin friends on Confederation Bay.

Back on the boat, the others were having a discussion about what we should do. Should we try and spy on the Viryms? Unfortunately it would be rather dark down at those depths so we'd need something like infravision. Lord Shaygin can obtain some alchemical compound that can be made to glow but that only puts out as much light as a candle. The Viryms would definitely have the advantage. Shaygin was planning to drain the second level completely. Originally it was full of freshwater lakes. It was interesting to note that the water here was fresh, only becoming salty over the third level.

Finally it was decided to turn around and go back in order to rethink our approach. I reboarded the boat. Squeak wanted to follow. The other two decided he should be all right and swam off. Grendel had some dehydrated fish that he wanted me to rehydrate and feed it to Squeak. I did so, even though I'm not good at that spell. Fortunately it worked.

Finally, that night, we reached the island portal.

15 Fruit

Dawn arrives. Brigetta had performed a Ritual of Recitation on the seagull and discovered that it had been manipulated for the benefit of others and died for it. Meanwhile Lord Shaygin had arranged for a vial of the luminescence stuff.

We used the portal to go to the Lorgos city. The temple here had barnacles and slime all over the walls. Also there was a prevailing smell of dead and rotting seaweed and other sea creatures. The whole city had suffered water damage. Dead kelp was lying all over the place. We had to watch our footing with all the slippery slime. Brigetta sat in the middle of the street and did another Ritual of Recitation, this time on the city itself. This time she sang the ballad of the city, being the sixth city, and of the fisherman inhabitants. It had been founded by the Elder Race and the inhabitants were all brave, true and good. However they were overcurious and brought down a curse consisting of forty days and nights of continuous rain, flooding the place. The sons of the Elders took pity on the inhabitants and gave them a new home, leaving a few behind to grieve.

It was then that Lord Shaygin remembered that one of the seven planes mentioned was called Virym. Could this be where the missing Lorgosians are? They weren't killed after all as we had thought? I hoped so. And were the squid already from Virym.

Now that the Calimar had allowed interplaner transportation through the portals, there had been a mixing of the planar populations. However, there had been no one from the planes of Eradon or Virym. So it was decided to planewalk to Virym and see what was there. The one that was most likely to know was the local Lord.

Lord Shaygin wanted someone to go with him. He decided that he wanted me. In fact he was rather insistent about it, even though Faith was arguing that Grendel was the more logical choice. Meanwhile I was blushing furiously with embarrassment and Brigetta was trying hard to conceal her amusement at my discomfort. And I wanted to go anyway.

Finally Shaygin acquiesced and, after conducting the ritual, he and Grendel planewalked to

Virym. After nearly half an hour, they returned, and reported the plane they had seen water, humans on boats, woods, and a henge portal on a grassy plain. Now that we had a visualisation we could teleport through. So we all gathered on the portal and Shaygin said the magic word. We disappeared from Lorgos ...

.7.

... and reappeared in a henge which was located on a grassy plane. We couldn't see any trees but could just make out an ocean in the distance. A fishing village was located on the shore. On the opposite side, towards the centre, was a high cliff, 400ft away, with stairs going up to the top. TDP tried using a Wizard's Eye to get a bird's eye view of the area but the eye was zapped by lightning which was conducted to TDP.

Instead of walking, it was decided to use the portal again. This time we reappeared in a city portal building in the city of Virym. We could hear someone outside using some sort of voice projection to address a crowd, saying things like "They can't be trusted", "Mutants, can't trust them". "Just because it worked once doesn't mean it'll work again". "What's their agenda?". We cautiously peeked out and sure enough. There was a guy on a raised dais in the marketplace addressing a large crowd of people using a conical megaphone. All had their backs to us. Grendel did a telepathy and detected various thoughts such as "We'll all be drowned, what'll we do.", "If a squid creature comes near me, I'll put a spear through it" and "I wonder how many boats I can sell?". From what we could figure out, the waters here were rising and the squids were saying that they'll take everyone away to a safer place but no one was trusting them.

Faith wanted to scout about so, after four attempts, Bath put a Walking Unseen on her. Faith snuck out and found a lone woman, in a building, busy sewing. Faith tried to sap the woman but missed. This rendered Faith visible and the young lady saw her, screamed, and fainted. Faith hid for a bit then rushed back and asked for a Waters of Strength and another Walking UnSeen.

A short while later the unconscious body of the lady flopped onto the floor near the portal disk. We managed to get her back in her room unobserved and revived her. She was rather frightened at first, claiming she saw a troll, but Brigetta calmed her down. Her name was Phil Larks and her father is the local haberdasher. Lord Shaygin remembered the Larks family on Lorgos who were haberdashers. Could she be a descendant?

We headed back to the temple. On the way we were seen so Brigetta did an announcement proclaiming the presence of Lord Shaygin of Lorgos, here to save the inhabitants of Virym. The entire crowd was stunned at this then parted to allow Brigetta, Bath (as bodyguard) and Shaygin to get to the front and the dais.

Virtually all the crowd were plainly dressed but the person on the stand was a bit more decorated. Some sort of community leader I presumed. When the others got there, the man on the dais introduced himself as Gerla Larks. Brigetta explained what the situation was and who Shaygin was then addressed the crowd saying that we had come to save them from the upcoming calamity. The crowd seemed rather pleased by this. Gerla told us that the waters on the third level had been rising over the last few weeks and the Viryms said that they would return everyone to their native land. However, no one trusts them. After a bit of questioning Shaygin established that he knew Gerla's grandfather personally and that these were indeed the descendants of the Lorgosians that were spirited away by the Viryms all those years ago.

Shaygin offered to teach Gerla how to use the portals to get to Lorgos and he'd be able to pass that on to everyone else. So Gerla, and his family including Phil, joined us on the dais and we popped over the city on Lorgos.

We showed Gerla around. The city was a real mess but Gerla agreed it could be cleaned up and made habitable again. He then told us that the third level on Virym had been dry until several weeks ago when water started pouring out of the top of the portals. We then realised that it started happening at the same time that Shaygin started draining Lorgos. Could it be that the two planes were linked? Shaygin decided to stop draining Lorgos, leaving the second level at the 30ft deep mark. This should keep the second level of Virym from being swamped as it was close to overflowing the third level.

Gerla also told us that there wasn't a Lord of Virym. No one controlled the Eye there. He wasn't even aware that there was one.

Brigetta went back to Virym with the Larks so Gerla could try the portal. Once Brigetta arrived back we teleported down to the second level portal island where the ship was.

Since our mission was now changed from aggression to diplomacy, as Shaygin admitted he had perhaps misjudged the Viryms, the Sudarians returned to Norden while the Lorgosians went to Virym. We then went back to Norden to tell the remaining Lorgosians to go to Virym to help with the transfer to Lorgos and also to report the new revelations to Lord Sern.

When we mentioned the link between Virym and Lorgos, Sern commented that there may be a similar link between Chos and Kerax because, as Chos thawed out, Kerax got cooler. So that begged the following questions. Which is the odd plane out as there are only seven and which is the opposite to Norden, or Sudar? Maybe we should have a quick peek at the other unknown plane at some stage.

Lord Sern then used his doorknob to open up a room which was linked to the door that was already set up on TDP's barge.

Two and a half hours later, we were back on the ship. An hour later, Lord Shaygin turned up with 30 people, 10 of whom were senior soldiers from Lorgos and the other twenty being ex-inhabitants of Virym. It was getting towards evening by now so we got underway, after my second attempt of getting the mage current working. Finally, after I selected a guide star, we set off into the night.

.8.

During the night, a messenger arrived from Norden. Something really odd happened on the second plane, near one of the portals, and it appeared to have an extra planar cause.

16 Fruit

Next morning I was sound asleep near the bow as the barge skimmed across the surface of the sea. Meanwhile Brigetta and Cher used the door to go back to Norden and find out what had happened. According to Lord Sern, the witness, a cloth merchant from Kerax, was camping near the portal and saw a skeletal creature and a woman carrying a baby appear out of the portal, run around a bit, then disappear back through the portal. She wasn't sure who was chasing what. The skeleton was humanoid sized and was unarmoured and weaponless. The woman was carrying a

cloth bundle that was assumed to be a child. Lord Sern decided to dispatch observers to each portal to keep an eye on things.

The day on the ship passed uneventfully. I spent most of it practising trident moves while Brigetta and Cher popped over to the city on Virym to divinate the eye. When they got there, they noticed the city wasn't as well kept as Norden. Weeds were growing in cracks formed in the pavement. Also the sun was weaker, shining as if through an overcast sky.

They reached the courtyard wall and made their way cautiously through the large wooden door and into the empty courtyard. The area looked like it hadn't been used in some time. Cher checked for any enchantments but couldn't find any. Once they reached the door, Cher made it transparent but could only see darkness on the other side.

Brigetta got the tower door opened and they both cautiously made their way across up the stairs, across the second level, and up the stairs to the third. On the way up they could see a bluish glow emanating from somewhere on the third level. Once there they could see, in the gap between the earth pillar and the sky pillar, the floating Eye, surrounded by a mana field, identical to what had been observed in the other towers so far. While Cher tried her divination on the Eye, Brigetta did a Ritual of Recitation on the room.

The recitation ritual gave a short verse on how the room was created magically, as a whole, by the Gods. However, there was an unexpected coda attached on the end which said "and the gods didn't do it willingly".

Meanwhile Cher's divination failed so she began another one. Back on the ship we were getting a bit worried as TDP's instruction was, if they weren't back in an hour and a half, we would go after them. After the deadline was up, they still weren't back so Faith and I went after them.

We got there, expecting a battle, by the time Cher's second attempt succeeded. All she discovered was that there were no curses on the Eye, it was a contained ball of pure mana and there was no hint of a controller. There was also a hint that a Mind Mage had cast a spell near the wall a long time ago but it was too faint to divine any more than that.

That evening we stopped about twenty miles from the start of the third level. While Brigetta laid a ward around the boat, I summoned a dolphin. This time I got one called Splash and it agreed to keep an eye out for Viryms in exchange for fish. So I summoned a school for it.

17th Fruit

Nothing occurred during the night. I was looking forward to diving in the water and visiting the squids so I put a Water Breathing on myself. However, it didn't happen like that. It took us an hour to pass over the ledge and another to get over the nearest portal tower, the top of which was 30ft below the surface of the water. TDP then dropped the anchor over the side so it banged on the column, several times.

I was then expecting us to go over the side but TDP wasn't having any of that. As far as the rest of the party was concerned, if the squids wanted to talk to us, they could come to us. So, instead, both Bath and I were lowered over the side in nets to watch for squid.

A short while later, Bath felt a voice in his head. It's one of the squid and they want us to come

down. I'm still keen but the others are adamant. So the conversation is done telepathically with Bath as a relay.

Basically they don't like people fishing in their territory and they insisted that the water was theirs and the land is ours. Lord Shaygin wasn't too happy about that, being a Water Mage. Bath then told them that there was no need for them to move the people as we had already taken care of it. Also that, as far as we were aware, the water level wasn't going to move anymore. The squids were very pleased about that.

They didn't want to trade. Basically the land dwellers had nothing that they wanted. They had no wish to cause fear or offense but they didn't really like the drylanders as they found them somewhat barbaric.

"We don't want to arm these things. They have enough arms as it is" - Bath

Initially the squids insisted that if anyone wanted to talk to them they should go and see them on the third level. However it was finally agreed that, if the squid wanted to contact the drylanders about anything, such as a grievance, then a marker could be left on one of the second level portals.

On a hunch, Bath asked about the second level of Lorgos. The reply was that the drylanders could use it for fishing etc, as it was too shallow for the squid's use. That led me to suggest that maybe Shaygin should create atolls on the second level. Maybe some coral could then be imported and adapted to grow in the fresh waters of Lorgos. It'll just be like home. Anyway the squid were still getting the better deal as the third level consists at least 90% of the entire plane.

As far as the water levels went, the squid agreed to wait and see what happens before they take any action. They then wanted to know if we knew why the water level was changing. Bath replied that we weren't sure. I just hope that they weren't using telepathy at that point because I was sure that was an absolute porker.

We sailed back to the second level. Shaygin announced that he believed that we had completed our mission and he would pay us and take us back to Alusia. Or we could stay and have a look at the latest incident. We decided to stay.

On the way back Brigetta went to get the song of Virym while Cher went to divinate the Eye of Lorgos. The song spoke of the sea people and the land people with the sea people taking pity on the land people and bringing them in as refugees then preparing to take them back. Meanwhile, the land people were being suspicious and faithless.

Cher's analysis of the Lorgos Eye showed it to be basically the same as the Virym Eye.

While on the way back, we were told that one of Lord Sern's guards was killed at the same henge where the apparitions first appeared. The party, except me and TDP, as we were looking after the barge went back to Norden to see Lord Sern. Meanwhile Lord Shaygin went back to the Lorgos tower as he had a lot of work to do. Before he left, I offered to return his ring but he said I could keep it as a memento of him.

Lord Sern told the rest of the party that it was possible to talk to the spirit of the dead guard.

When someone dies, their body is taken to the orchard and given to the apes. If the ape eats the body, it is possible to communicate with the soul with certain magics at midnight. An old bard is a Wiccan and can perform the ritual.

"Sounds like black magic to me" - Bath

"It borders on necromancy but it's their religion" - Brigetta

Lord Sern also admitted that he was reluctant to join Lord Shaygin in performing a strange ritual to summon the Elder Gods. Can't say I blame him.

It took us the rest of the day and that night to get back to the portal. While TDP bottled the boat, I went for a swim in the waters nearby. By the time we portalled to Norden it was lunchtime the following day.

.9.

18th Fruit

During the afternoon we went down to ward the henge in case the strange entities appeared again. Brigetta tried a ritual of recitation but all she got was a tale of an epic battle between unicorns and manticores. I think she backfired. Meanwhile TDP set up a levitation ward designed to levitate anything coming through that wasn't human and from the usual planes.

After completing that we went back to the city and while the others rested I went for a swim in the circular lake. That night the ritual was to be performed.

So, at about 8pm, Lord Sern arrived with his wife and four guards. It was a nice night out as we headed for the orchard. Bath and Faith elected not to accompany us. It wasn't until 11:30 that we were on a path going into the forest. At night the trees looked gnarly and creepy. Finally we reached a small clearing containing tents loosely arranged inside it. A large bonfire was burning in the centre. Surrounding it were people huddled around. All of them were old. These were the first old people we had seen since we arrived on these planes. We were offered a place around the fire and some hot tea

While we were drinking the tea, a very old woman hobbled forward. Lord Sern told us that this was the bard. She started a poignant ballad and, after half an hour, other voices began joining in from the forest. Finally the music reached a crescendo then faded to silence. A huge bulk then shuffled out of the forest and reached a spot by the fire that had been reserved and sat down.

We were able to ask 50 yes/no questions. The guard didn't die a natural death but was immediately killed by something that came out of the henge that used magic. The magic used suggested Hand of Death. Only one creature killed him but two had appeared. One was undead, a skeleton, the other was humanoid. The death occurred at midnight. It was believed that they were from Sudar.

We were getting highly suspicious by now and these were confirmed when careful questioning revealed that the skeleton was carrying digging equipment and a coffin. The humanoid was wearing black robes and jewellery. It was also extremely light skinned. The skeleton also emanated a faint blue glow. At least one of them wore rings.

"We should go down there and see what we can dig up" - TDP

"We're going to do a stakeout?" Aqualina

Once the questioning was over, the creature shuffled off into the darkness. Lord Sern told us that a Wolf tribe lived in the area but range about. In the area were two small copses of trees.

19th Fruit

After breakfast, we suggested to Lord Sern that the portals be closed down and blocked during the night and the other planar lords be warned about what is going on. No other incursions had been reported so far.

So we headed for the henge, accompanied by four guards. Once there, we looked around for tracks. Soon TDP spotted skeletal tracks heading towards the nearest copse. We followed them.

After a while, we got near. The copse was about 300 yards across, covering a couple of acres. The tracks went right to the edge and into the bushes surrounding the copse. Grendel put up a Mind Speech and a Telepathy while TDP looked around with a Wizard's Eye. We then cautiously entered the undergrowth, using a Shell of Silence to hide any sounds, then across the leafy floor. Inside we were surrounded by large tree trunks and the whole area looked gloomy. There was no sign of any enchantments about.

Finally we neared the centre of the copse. We topped a rise surrounding a hollow in the centre of the copse. Inside the hollow was a stone table, a dolman, covered in moss. Rocky outcrops surrounded the dolman. Something coffin sized was under the slab. There was no sign of the skeleton.

The only ward I could detect was on the coffin. Cher put a transparency on the casket and we could see two booted feet. Grendel's ESP picked up a malevolent sleeping mind inside.

TDP then summoned a firesprite and got it to touch the coffin. Nothing happened but neither did the ward discharge. Faith then went up and touched it. Again nothing happened. She then ran some ropes through the coffin handles and it was pulled out.

.10.

To make things easier I created some Waters of Strength for the coffin pullers. A frictionless floor was cast on the coffin to make it slide better. The coffin lid was then made one way transparent. Inside, we saw a human with black hair, pale skin, black robes, and booted feet lying prone inside. The eyes were somewhat red and were open. The occupant seemed to be aware that the lid was transparent. He was also fingering some jewellery.

Grendel wanted to telekinese the lid off and let direct sunlight fall on the vampire. I don't know why he wasn't allowed to, maybe they didn't want the vampire getting out. Instead TDP magelocked the coffin lid, then we proceeded to pull the coffin out of the copse and several hundred yards into the grassy plane.

Once there, TDP quickened us all and Cher tossed a fireball at it as, simultaneously, Brigetta launched a Great Shout and TDP tried Sleep. When the flames cleared there was no body and the interior was charred. I tried a Bolt of Water but nothing happened.

"If it's indetectable, it can't be that hard to spot" - Faith

I tried enhancing my perception and having a look but Faith was wrong. I couldn't see anything. That assumed there was something to see in the first place. Suddenly a Bolt of Water dropped from the sky and impacted on my head, forcing me to collapse to my knees. I was left soaking wet. I think my previous spell backfired.

Cher made the rest of the coffin transparent but the sun wasn't having any effect. Somehow I didn't think so as it wasn't falling directly on to the vampire. Brigetta took a javelin and pushed it through the lid and out the bottom. She either just staked an invisible vampire or just drilled a hole in the lid. I dribbled some holy water down the shaft of the javelin. As the water entered the coffin it began to sizzle.

Bath decided to take a chance and discharge the coffin's ward onto himself. So he touched the coffin itself and suddenly ran away in fear. Cher's response was "Thanks Bath. Bye bye." I felt wary and so did Cher. TDP started screaming. The coffin must have had a Mass Fear ward on it which was now dissipated. I tried carefully pouring the holy water into the coffin but got an attack of the shakes and spilled most of it. Faith pulled out the javelin and a small wisp of smoke emanated out of the hole. Both Brigetta and Grendel smashed into the lid with their battleaxes which stoved it in. All the bits fell inside. Suddenly there was screaming and wailing coming from the coffin as the direct sunlight got in. Finally it stopped and the bottom of the coffin was covered in ash.

Bath was caught, brought back, and we finally regrouped. Inside the coffin was ash, bits of cloth, three rings, and a pendant. We were able to determine that the rings were magical but we weren't sure about the pendant which was a silver medallion attached to a silver chain. Finally we covered the coffin with a tarpaulin and headed back to the gate. Unfortunately night had fallen by the time we got there so it would be impossible to teleport back to the city. Instead we teleported to a henge that was still in daylight.

The guards there were rather surprised when we showed up. They were even more surprised when we asked for all their bonfire wood for a funeral pyre. We told them it was to honour a fallen enemy. Well it wasn't strictly true but close enough. Our plan was then to scatter the ashes in the Lorgos ocean.

Just as we were setting it all up the transparency on the coffin wore off. However, one piece remained transparent. It turned out to be a transparent sphere. Once it was removed Cher determined it was a Rank 1 Crystal of Vision with some unusual properties. After checking for more hidden items, and not finding any, we lit the bonfire. While it was burning Faith borrowed my trident to toast some food.

We rested for a while until it was midnight at the first portal. Brigetta used a Crystal of Vision to scan the copse but there was no sign of the skeleton.

20th Fruit

Arrived at the city in time for breakfast. Most of the city dwellers live around the temple and basically keep temple time. I presume once the other side of the city is occupied, they'll have their own local time.

At eleven we met up with Lord Sern and reported what had happened. Later on Brigetta did a recitation on the crystal ball but got nothing of significance. The medallion was a different story

however. This story was about a good and faithful butler to an evil king. The king mistreats the butler but the butler remained loyal and staunch. Finally the king died and the butler was killed and buried with the king. In the afterlife, the butler became the master and the king was the servant.

The ritual was also performed on the rings. The first one gave a story similar to the Daedalus and Icarus legend while the other two gave no useful results.

.11.

That afternoon we headed back to the copse to see if we could find any trace of the skeleton. Maybe it had wandered off to the next copse. So, when we got there, we tried looking for any skeletal tracks leaving the copse by walking around the entire thing. Didn't find anything so it must be still in there. So we entered the copse intending to start at the dolman and spiral outwards from there. All we found on the way in was a very old campfire. However, as we descended towards the Dolman, TDP saw something underneath. Since there was only 3' clearance underneath, Faith ducked underneath to extract the object. It turned out to be an old, battered, rusty, short handled spade which hadn't been used.

I lit a candle and crawled underneath to poke around with my trident. There were no signs of any bones but, on the underside of the dolman, was a carved rune, covered in moss. The rune looked very similar to the travelling rune on the portals, in fact it looked like an earlier version. Grendel started transcribing it onto paper so we could show Lord Sern.

Meanwhile the rest of us were about to start a systematic search but then Brigetta realised there was an abundance of bird life in the copse. So, why not question a bird? She selected a magpie who told her that no, he hadn't seen anything because it happened during the night. But why doesn't she go and hassle that owl that usually sleeps in that nearby tree.

So Brigetta attempted to climb the tree, and fell right out of it, landing in an undignified heap at the base of the tree. Faith also climbed up to annoy the owl but also fell out of the tree. Just then a rather drowsy owl flew out of the hole, swooped down and landed near Grendel. Brigetta cast Speaking Beasts on it. The owl was very annoyed it had been woken up and said so, in no uncertain terms. However it had seen the blue glowing skeleton arrive, push the coffin under the dolman then vanish, fading out over the space of a minute. The owl also mentioned that other strange things happen around that dolman such as strange glowing things floating around in the middle of the night that keep scaring the mice away.

We headed back to the henge and popped back to the city just before night fell. Faith was still feeling rather battered so I gave her a Waters of Healing.

Later on that evening we saw Lord Sern and told him what we had found. He told us that he knew of three of them and that they appeared to be part of an ancient travelling system used by the creators. Each one goes to a particular place, not necessarily on-plane and that it's a one way trip. According to Lord Sern the skeleton could actually be a spectre.

While we were talking, Lord Shaygin arrived and told us he had been to Eradin. He discovered it was populated and was covered in mist.

"So that explains why people have missed it for so long" - Bath.

The mist helped stave off the effects of the bright light that permeated the entire plane. Average visibility has about 100 feet. While there, Shaygin contacted the local Lord, who was a Solar Celestial Mage. The bright light was a recent occurrence which implied that Sudar and Eradin formed a pair. This made Norden the odd plane out - unless there was another unknown plane out there, maybe the unfinished one.

Lord Shaygin had negotiated a large quantity of wood for TDP, enough planks to build another barge. The Sudarians had managed to construct a sawmill on the third level. Shaygin also had four bottles of the light-emitting chemical. I was hoping that it would be possible to make more of it using Alusian ingredients but that proved not to be the case.

Our payment was also available, a 500sp valued gem and 5000sp cash each. His intention is to banish us back to Alusia when we're ready. However we decided to stay a bit longer as we wanted to ensure that skeleton or spectre, whatever it was, was eliminated.

21st Fruit

So, that dawn, we headed back down to the copse and finally reached the dolman. Cher did a ritual and determined that it had a transport enchantment on it. The destination was offplane. Meanwhile Brigetta did a Ritual of Recitation and sang a song about a curious lord who wanted to know more about his world. So he went on a great journey and discovered many secrets. Finally he returned and gained revenge on those that had wronged him. This dolman was the starting point. I got the impression that the legend was about Lord Arondel.

Grendel did a Limited Precog to determine where the destination was and received an image of a small island with a jetty surrounded by void. This was the unfinished plane. If this was where the skeleton was, it wouldn't be back here in a hurry.

Finally we reported back. TDP's barge was floating in the lake completely loaded with wood. While he rebottled it, Shaygin told me he was considering my offer of a holiday in Pasifika while he waited for Grendel to finish training on Alusia. This would take 14 weeks then Grendel would return to help form a military force. I thought the holiday was a great idea.

22nd Fruit

There was a large gathering and celebration on Lorgos that night and we're the toast of the whole thing. I noticed that Lord Shaygin wasn't drinking much and was keeping an eye on things to make sure they didn't get too out of hand. He was rather busy getting his militia and administration together.

25th Fruit

We rested and relaxed for the interim then it was time to go back. However we would go back via two doors and Lord Shaygin was coming with us. So he planewalked to Alusia to open a door there while Lord Sern opened the door on this end. Once it was all set up, we went through back to the Guild.

Once there we got everything divinated. There was a ring of lightning proofing, an invested Hands of Death (6 r10 charges), a Shadowwings invested (6 r10 charges). The Crystal ball was able to view into the past and the silver amulet was an Amulet of Spectral Servant which could

only be used by a Greater Undead. So that explained what happened to the skeleton. Of course this item ended up in the Vaults.

The ring the Lord Shaygin had given me turned out to be a Ring of Returning that would basically banish me back to the Guild from offplane, or send me to Atui if I was on Alusia. I'd just have to be sure I didn't use it while I was on Atui otherwise it would be fatal.

Afterwards Lord Shaygin and I went off to Pasifika for a holiday.