

'The Riddle'

By Venerable Father Broc von Hecklyn

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- get to the Seelie court, meet Wayland,
The queen and Thomas the Rhymer.*
- 48-52** *Chapter 10: We leave the court and portal
to the isle of Aran in search of the
Peacemaker. We explore some of the
island, meet the Peacemaker then depart
for Alusia via London.*
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*These are the certified true and correct scribe notes
for the adventure, as written by:
Venerable Father Broc von Hecklyn
For the period 30th Frost to 8th Seedtime 803*

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Prologue

Noon 30th Frost 803 (Alusia)

T*he wet, cold and generally nasty day wasn't
getting any better as the constant flood of 'good and
upstanding' townsfolk continued into my room at the
Church of St Eustace in Seagate. All these good
people with so much sin to confess, I was still
astounded by it all. If it hadn't been for my aching
headache¹ from the binge drinking the night before with
that party in the Green Dragon I would have got up and
left but it was easier staying put and listening
without the need for movement.*

*Several times during the morning I'd had to excuse
myself to the wardrobe so as to make myself more
comfortable after the nights excesses. I vowed never
to drink dwarven Rot Gut ale followed by Fenargh Brandy
again. Well not in the company of dwarves and a few
orcs anyway.*

*A knock on the door while I was listening to Miller
Sveltston broke me from the stupor that had developed*

¹ I know I could have healed it but they say suffering is good for the soul and it gave me something to help look miserable and down trodden which is better for my supplicant than me smiling and looking happy when they are so down.

over the past 20 minutes of listening to how much he loved his pets over and above his wife in a 'very special' way. Looking up I saw my acolyte Ga'Venton motioning at the small window beside the door. I realised that something of great import must have happened, as I was never to be disturbed while in 'confessional.' I quickly stopped the Miller and told him his penance¹ and he left expounding profuse thanks, vowing to all he can for his marriage and his good wife.

Once he had exited Ga'Venton came in and told me "A runner from the guild just passed by saying that the 'Mad Mechanician' Mortimer had returned to the guild unexpectedly and needed some help in an urgent task".

I had spoken to him of Mortimer's repute as a scholar of great experience and my wish to meet him. He is renowned as a great sage and good man so I would be furthering my work on Gabriel's behalf by enjoying a sojourn with him as well as my ability as a religious scholar of history and literature.

I asked Ga'Venton to excuse me to the waiting petitioners and I grabbed my warm cloak and headed up to the Guild with haste. I saw a few others heading in the same general direction but also under heavy cloaks to keep out the cold and light drizzle of the day so I failed to recognise anyone on route to the large imposing edifice by the river which is known as the Seagate Adventurers Guild (SAG). It's also known as 'The Guild' in the surrounding area due to its fearsome reputation or perhaps the fearsome reputations of its members.

Chapter 1:

1pm 30thFrost 803 (Alusia)

I passed through the guarded gates of the guild and asked the door warden where Mortimer was meeting to organise a 'party'. He indicated meeting room 2 at

¹ He was to sell all his animals to the church and to spend more time with his wife. He was to just talk with her some more. (She had visited me some days before and told me of her concerns and how she'd do anything to save their marriage)

the far end of the corridor. I entered the deeply shadowed and irregular shaped room; there I saw a few other adventurers including a few familiar faces.

Already gathered in this warm and cosy room (with dark& shadowed corner's were:

(The symbols in this area relate to the Endnotes section, which is the last one in this manuscript. There are more detailed physical descriptions can be found in the Endnotes section)

- ⇒ Thoric Farsearcher, a Dwarf male, renowned for his mattocks and thick accent*
- ⇒ Faith, an Elven female E&E, short in height but big in notoriety[†]
- ⇒ Clarissa, an Elven female Air mage, a lady of known good character[‡]
- ⇒ Thaeuss, an Elven male Binder, a fellow adventurer I know well[§]
- ⇒ Dawn, a Human female Air mage, a young lady of repute if not renown**
- ⇒ Kayseri a Human female Illusionist, as well as her small 'dog called 'Spot'^{††}
- ⇒ Mortimer, a Hobbit male Warlock, a mechanician of some note. ^{‡‡}

I bowed upon entering and introduced myself to the assembled mob and I then asked Mortimer to join him in whatever endeavour he had need of a group. He acquiesced, indicated a seat for me and then started on his story.

Other introductions were made, including Kayseri's small dog-like creature of the beagle variety. Faith commented "was it like an Alpaca?" several of us looked on in askance at this being a real word until Mortimer said; "it's like an ugly sheep"^I. The others were 'enlightened' with the range of warnings to do with Thaeuss^{II}, his special abilities, equipment & golem assistants, the rest of us seem quite pedestrian in contrast.

Mortimer has been asked by an off plane 'source' called 'M' to assist in the recovery of a manuscript

^I We do worry at this time that Mortimer classifies barnyard animals by their attractiveness.

^{II} Don't pick up his amulet when it drops, do pick up the sapphire or was it the other way around?

that had significance to the plane he was on, called 'Earth'. Mortimer had an established relationship with this 'M' who worked for a guild called MI-6 and they had called in a favour for past assistance. The letter read:

The Note to Mortimer

To: Operative Graves

Re: Research Mission

We believe that your unique abilities will assist us in the location of a manuscript that may be of grave importance to our world. Please assemble a suitable group of specialists and report to Headquarters as soon as possible. Skills needed may include puzzle solving, research abilities, information gathering from civilians, and some mode of transport and infiltration abilities. Please wear your existing garments, as we believe they will be more suitable than our current trends. M

Guild notes in relation to this manuscript are:

The Guild can confirm that suitable payment has been lodged (to the amount of 2 large gold ingots), and that the bearer of the message was genuine. His additional verbal comment was to the effect that they were calling in a favour. He also brought a fragment of a manuscript that has been left with the Guild for further investigation. The value of the ingots has been assessed as being 40,000sp.

A low, raspy cough from the far corner emanated at this point announcing a Guild security member, he stepped from the shadows dressed in customary all black garb, appearing dull, gaunt and seemingly distracted. He identified himself merely as "Geoffrey" and asked that we formally designate party members before going any further, he then returned to the shadows for the rest of our discussions.

After a brief discussion we proceeded.

Military Scientist was the first discussion with 3 possible of Mortimer, Faith and Thaeuss. Each of which have their strengths, Faith's being in mass battles, Mortimer's in sieges and Thaeuss's in small unit tactics. After a discussion we voted Faith in as the Military Scientist when in mass battles with her 2iC^I being Thaeuss who would control any smaller battles. In the event of us conducting, being involved in a siege we'd of course defer to Mortimer's experience.

The issue of who would be scribe was next. Clarissa volunteered that she herself was in arrears of several sets of scribe notes and would not be a good choice. Then a long silence reigned in the room and

^I 2nd in Command

people started studying their navel fluff in order to avoiding looking at others. The silence grew more uncomfortable but then Thoric started speaking in his heavily accented speech. I feared he would agree to be scribe which meant that we might all have mangled unintelligible dwarven gibberish¹ to read later, so I got in first, volunteered and was voted in without resistance for this thankless group task.

The thorniest issue of all was the Party Leader voting which came last. While it is usually highly contested and sought after it seemed we had an unusual group of retiring, standoffish guild members. Several of us thought Mortimer would be a great leader due to his breadth of experience and knowledge of where we were headed, however he declined to volunteer himself. Clarissa whom had been with Thaeuss and I on my last three 'missions' did in the end put herself forward as she correctly recollected that I had led one and Thaeuss had led the other. It seemed only fair that she should lead this one to round out the three missions.

We expounded on how the Party Leader does in fact seem to be a figurehead rather than a true leader at times due to the often democratic decision making processes that are common in guild parties. While there were some with reservations of being lead by one of the 'young, new' crop of adventurers it was soon smoothed over and Clarissa was voted in as our Party Leader.

With these petty administrative tasks completed we then undertook a short and brief examination of the piece of manuscript, which read as follows:

The Manuscript

'Neare a tree by a river there's a hole in the ground where an olde man of Aran goes around and his mind is a beacon in the veil of the night. He is the peacemaker. Do not let him pass beyond the veil. Ware the fey, they are'

¹ I'm sure it would have been perfectly good to other linguistically challenged non-inflective people who don't communicate via written form.

I examined the manuscript after others had looked at it, Thaeuss defining it as partially magical due to his innate magical talent for seeing such things. I looked at it and quickly assessed there was an embossing on the paper itself that I saw to be depicting a flying winged figure (possibly angelic) carrying a heraldic banner of some sort. I also used my ability to examine runes, symbols and writings to conclude that this manuscript details some sort of prophecy. It was specifically a prophesy of doom but I couldn't assess who or what's doom.

Others then looked more closely at the manuscript but could ascertain no further information. Thaeuss turned himself into one of his small rag and string golems and then started to interrogate the letter itself though an ability to speak with writings?¹

We all listened in some fascination to his interrogation of the poor manuscript and we couldn't help ourselves from interjecting in the conversation when he was asking

Thaeuss: "Did you see who wrote on you"?

Manuscript: "No I don't have any eyes"

Some of the party, "Yes you do, ten 'I's' in fact" followed by much laughter.

A number of other questions were asked of the manuscript but failed to produce anything more of substance or significance to us. He did get the following information though:

⇒ The letter is very old

⇒ It had been reused many times

⇒ A being identified as the archangel Gabriel is depicted

⇒ It was written in the blood of some as yet undetermined creature

After all this had been done we decided to leave in 4 hours by meeting back here at the guild as the note to Mortimer did stress the need for urgency. We all

¹ I did think he was being very rude to the poor manuscript and wasn't at all polite to such a nicely worded document.

left, completed our various travelling preparations^I and returned to the guild by 4pm.

We all rendezvoused at the appointed time back at the guild dressed in our travelling attire and we proceeded to portal up to the castle of Countess Anastasia in Barovia. Mortimer went a few minutes in advance to ask permission, pass on courtesies and to generally speed our passage. We exited the portal in an unusual looking bedroom in the castle and then passed onto another room at Mortimer's direction.

This new room was different in that the scenery depicted in the windows didn't resemble Barovia by any means but we were told by Mortimer that it was a scene from the plane we are going to / now on and we had already passed through the portal.

A voice in the distance shouted "Hello, is anyone there" and we hurried down some stairs into a large room where we were introduced to James Martin, an agent of M's and a member of MI-6. He was almost shouting when he said "HOW ARE YOU" and several other sentences. We managed to get across that we were in fact not deaf and could speak normally so the conversation then continued. We are to see the "boffin" in the morning to discuss the issue of the manuscript and in the meantime we are to make ourselves at home here in Kree's^{II} 'penthouse apartment'.

The night passes painfully for some while Faith almost gets 'el-ectric-ified' when she pours some wine over a rope leading between a 'jug' and the wall mounted 'mana conduit', she is ably joined by Thoric in this endeavour much to Mortimer's chagrin.

The 'lady' Faith also shuts herself in the safe of cold specifically trying to find out about the light therein. She also soon after seeing them 'borrows' James's 'Triggering card'^{III} and his speak to others

^I I asked Ga'Venton to look after my supplicants as well as my home here in Seagate. Also to pass on missives to my wife in Eastern Gracht

^{II} Count Kree of Borovia, he is a renowned guild member and warrior of repute.

^{III} It is some sort of device for inserting in small holes, which then triggers the doors and deactivates whatever security measures.

device¹ but later has to return these when he notices them missing.

Also Thaeuss in his 'being helpful to the Air Mages persona' manages by way of his magic to open a portal to the outside world via the wall of the 'penthouse apartment'. This sets off a rather loud noise that emanates throughout the residence causing us discomfort and James to run over to a wall and look at some lit up panels on a larger panel. We inquire as to what's causing the noise and he responds with "someone has penetrated the perimeter security measures of this abode", we all start to prepare for the expected assault in our usual ways (magic) but are unable to do so due to the distraction of the very loud noise.

Thaeuss at this time comes over and asks what's happening exactly, James explains that the penetration is in the dining room north window, at which point he turns around and sees Thaeuss standing there holding something vaguely window like. Thaeuss says "this one?" James nods in disbelief and asks "Why? How?" The response is "to provide fresh air and an egress for the Air mages to fly out, Oh and I used my magic to do this!" <Thaeuss was smiling as he said this> - thinking he had been a clever binder (we all know this to be an oxymoron in almost all cases - perhaps he is the exception to the rule)

James asks in a remarkably calm voice that he should replace it forthwith, which will then hopefully enable the reset of the alarm system, which he temporarily mutes by way of pressing some of the panels. James also states in a slightly calmer albeit higher toned voice that "there is a roof door for those who need to fly and I'll show it to all once the window is replaced". The window is replaced, the alarm reset and the roof exit is shown to those enquiring.

James comes to the kitchen, in one long swing finishes off some of the wine named champagne and then goes to pull out his speak to other device. Well he tries to but it's at this point that he discovers it (along with his 'triggering-card') missing. Faith pipes up and says she has them and returns it and his 'triggering card' to a now chary looking James. He

¹ A small folding box he speaks into apparently hearing the response of others at the same time as he speaks to them - most ingenious.

uses the device and asks for some more 'protection'^I and some food as well. He's informed they will be there shortly and he emits a small sigh of apparent relief, barely heard by any but those of us with trained hearing abilities.

Meanwhile young Kayseri goes exploring the local areas while unseen and we lose her for a while somewhere in this large tower we are in. She finds many other floors in this tower some 32 in fact by the count of the numbers on the panel in the elevating room. Most look like the one we are on and it is all well lit and warm. She returns in the elevating box when several of James's fellow workers bringing food in boxes, which turn out to be delicious 'pizza'. NB: I must make some of this upon my return to the guild; the hobbits would just love it!

I find a 'closet' full of Kree's 'local' clothes, which are about my size, and I spend the next while getting dressed in various garb which is very different from my Alusian attire, and no real place for my sword and crossbow to comfortably be hidden. But he has a range of great accessories and so I grab myself some sunglasses ('Oakleys') and a long leather jacket. I also 'borrow' two bags, a small (Backpack) easy to carry one for bits and pieces, as well as a large bag for all my Alusian gear which I can't wear here on 'earth' as it's a bit obvious and out of place judging by the pictures in the 'magazines' I have looked at.

I'll now wear a dark suit, black shirt, black leather shoes and a dark tie and carry a pair of sunglasses with me at all times while here on 'Earth'.

We also indulge in some ale and wine imbibing while staring at a wall depicting some local 'troubadour' tales titled "Die hard", "Die harder", "Die hard with a vengeance"^{II}, "Terminator", "Terminator II" and "Ever After". Mortimer calls this last one a 'chick

^I We aren't sure if it's protection for us against the outside world, for him against us or as a buffer to stop anything 'unfortunate happening' to/for/by/because of us.

^{II} We note that people in these tales don't die easily as the hero doesn't die no matter what 'weapons' are fired at him while others called 'innocent bystanders' or 'fellow actors' die as soon as one is fired in their general direction. The explosion's, which kill and maim many others, have no affect on the Hero.

flick'. Roger the other protection lad watches it with us!

Actions undertaken, decided or being cogitated over:

- 1. To wait for the boffin to tell us what they want us to do and how we can help them as it would be a waste of effort to start undertaking research or planning not knowing what we are to do.*

Chapter 2:

3am 1st Snow 803 (Alusia)
August 2003 (Earth)

18th

The various members of our 'party' amuse themselves in a variety of ways. While there is a number of beds (some large enough to accommodate 3 persons) very few of these are used. Some of them are being used to store / rest our heavy armour and weapons upon and only Faith seems to be using a pillowcase.

Thoric is in a deep slumber, slumped over a low table in the main room. The noises emanating from him are reminiscent of distant thunderclouds but the 'volume' of the 'troubadour' tales is increased until it becomes bearable.

Several members are asking James about local customs and he describes crossing roads as its very dangerous here with the speeding metal boxes and lots of people. Apparently you have to wait till you see a green man before crossing the road, and if you see a red man you should wait until a green one comes along.¹

I find Kree's library in another room, which contains a small number of books, but in a different printing style to Alusian type. The print is all smaller and quite uniform and the books are all

¹ Also what different signs mean – Kayseri has discovered that signs here differentiate 'garderobe's'. The males use a door, which has a picture of a figure not wearing a dress while the females would use the facility, which has a figure wearing a dress.

'hardbacks'. Very few appear to have been read but one 'Sun Tsu's - The Art of War' seems well read and I start reading this book. There is a great variety here including several 'cookbooks' and I take one of these to read on our journey as well as a few other tomes of various types.^I

There is a discussion about the killer metal golem's in the 'Terminator' series of tales; Thaeuss would like some for him and his protection ^{II}. The wee small hours pass for us and James and one of his fellows keep a watch^{III}, mainly on us. We fail to keep a real watch ourselves as we are lulled into a false sense of security or are drunk, engrossed in books, disturbed by watching the troubadour tales or by visiting various types of mental torture upon James and Roger.

730am 1st Snow 803 (Alusia)
August 2003 (Earth)

18th

Some of us had dozed off and we now awake to different sounds and smells. A strong scent of 'coffee' from a shop called 'Starbucks' pervades the apartment and I quickly get in and snatch 2 while continuing my perusal of Kree's books. I dispose of them in short order and find my senses more alert as a result.

I ask James if we have any more and he shows me how to grind and make coffee, which I do in large quantities for all and sundry - mainly me! Apparently my eyes have grown in size and I have become slightly

^I Lots of cooking books are in evidence here! Perhaps Kree cannot cook? Also guide books to distant realms like 'Tuscany', which seems quite similar to Mordeaux and other areas. The Paper the books are written in seems harder than Alusian paper and it shines. The pictures are brightly coloured and seem almost life like.

^{II} We are glad that these golems would be very difficult to make as in the hands of some deranged megalomaniac (present company exempted) they would be nasty adversaries.

^{III} The watch appears to be on us rather than watching for intruders. James and his companion take turns wandering the apartment checking on our whereabouts and various activities. I see James taking notes occasionally on one of his 'Spiral bound notebooks', no doubt for inclusion in notes on various SAG personalities and abilities.

agitated or 'hyper' from the coffee, but hey I feel great after very little sleep.^I

James is worried that it would be an effort^{II} if we were to travel across London to meet the boffin so he requests that the boffin comes here. To fill in the time we all discuss with James & Roger the logistics of supplying such a large city with food, political relations of the various nations etc. He provides us with a map of the world and shows us also a globe depicting the various countries. This keeps us amused some time and I take the maps once we have finished looking at them. Thoric wakes and decides to bathe, James show him the bath/shower and leaves him to it.

830am 1st Snow 803 (Alusia) 18th
August 2003 (Earth)

There is a chiming sound, the front door opens and in comes 2 rather large 'protection' chaps in dark sombre clothes with bulges^{III} under their armpits. Following behind them comes a small, frail looking old human female apparently of some 70 years of age with unnaturally curly grey hair and a small black bag. She says good morning and James invites her in for a cup of tea, motioning the 'protection' to wait outside the door and guard it against any intruders.

She sits down, looks around going oh dear, ummm, and other similar sounds. She explains that she has read reports of guild members' activities here on 'Earth' on M's behalf but had never seen Elves, before. We now note Thoric's absence and Mortimer quickly surmises his whereabouts in the shower/bath. He says he'll get Thoric 'out here'^{IV}, he then moves away from the direction of the bathroom and pushes a tap^V in the kitchen.

At this point there's a loud dwarvish scream from the bathroom and Thoric emerges dripping wet but very

^I Must procure some supplies of this 'coffee' for when we return to Alusia. It would have great use and I know of so many people who would desire it.

^{II} I'm pretty sure given his hard night that the effort may be in ensuring we don't do anything too out of the ordinary on our way across London or break too many things en route.

^{III} Concealed weapons called 'Guns' or more specifically 'Pistols or Revolvers'

^{IV} He has an immense grin on his face when he says this and a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

^V The 'Cold' one

red from apparent heat. Luckily he's wearing a towel as he emerges and states, "what just happened" or words to that affect. He looks around quickly and notices our new company, we all look at him with our 'The important person we need to talk to is here, so stop bathing and get out here look' and he says 'I'll be out momentarily'.

The 'boffin'^I introduces herself as 'Lorraine'^{II} and she speaks with a lyrical accent she identifies as 'Irish', we introduce ourselves to her and ask her to continue illuminating us as to what has happened here to promote the idea of hiring a party from the SAG to 'm' and also what is required of us now that we are here on 'Earth'.

The piece of manuscript was found inside an old book that was being catalogued as part of a collection that had been donated to the 'Crown' (AKA The Royal Heritage Society) by the estate of the 13th Earl of Yorkshire. The book was found in his library, hidden after apparently having slipped down the back of the shelves. The book was identified as a monastic tome probably from the nearby Monastery at Rievaulx (in Yorkshire). This Monastery and Abbey has been in disuse for some several hundred years (back to A.D 1500's) since the time when the church disagreed with the King's laws and voiced the opinion, at which time the King declared them 'outlaw' ordering their destruction.

The tome upon investigation by Lorraine was found to be a book of prophecies from several hundred years ago. The unusual thing was it's uncanny accuracy in that it foretold a number of events with exacting precision. The book was written in Latin^{III}, while the piece of manuscript that fell out was written in English but both were of the same hand.

The paper of the manuscript piece was dated as being from 1592 some 410 years ago and the writing

^I She finds it amusing when we inform her she has been labelled a "boffin". She explains that the term is usually reserved for scientific types. She admits to merely being a humble librarian who works for 'M' and is very familiar with the past deeds of fellows from the SAG due to the extensive notes and files she has catalogued away after each visit we or other members make here.

^{II} Short lived sentient, GTN Human. Later divinated to be part Fey (a very small part)

^{III} The language favoured by scholars and historians as well as the main language of the church in all its religious sects and factions.

dates from that time. However the style of the language, grammar and sentence construction is relatively modern and estimated as being used in the last 50 years or thereabouts.

Apparently Lorraine along with 4 other researchers from 'Housden Manor' had a good look at the book and took some notes and she arranged for it to be locked up safely in the vaults of the Bank of England for the night once they had examined it for just one day. The book was gone when they returned in the morning and they can find no way for it to have been stolen from the vault.

The funny thing she says is that for some strange reason only herself and M can remember anything about the book as the other 4 researchers can't unless reminded of the book persistently and even then they can't remember anything in it. Even if constantly reminded of it the individuals seem to be recollecting less and less information as the days go by. We ponder this as she continues.

They have found one other piece of writing in the collection near the place last occupied by the book, it is written in the same handwriting and has been dated around 1700¹. This reads as follows.

The latest Manuscript Piece # 2

**'In the land where horses born with eagle wings
And honeybees have lost their stings
There's singing forever
Lion's den with fallow deer
And rivers made from wine so clear
How on and on forever
Dragons fly like sparrows through the air
And baby lambs where Samson dares
To go on and on and on on on**

¹ Dated by a Carbon Dating process they have here on 'Earth'

**My fairie king can see things
He rules the air and turns the tides
That is not there for you and me
He guides the winds
My fairie king can do right and nothing wrong**

**Then came man to savage in the night
To run like thieves and to kill the knives
To take away the power from the magic hand
To bring about the ruin to the Promised Land
Someone has drained the colour from my wings
Broken my fairie circle ring and shamed the king in
all his pride**

We ask what they actually want us to do and she replies "We have bought you here because you are still strong in a magical sense where as most of the magic has gone from Earth. Most people don't believe in magic anymore but we feel there is some fairie magic going on here and wish you to find out what is happening and make contact with the Fairie court to establish communication on our behalf".

We ask her about herself and use our magical abilities to divine more of her, she has an old charm given to her by her great grandmother. Upon investigation we see the charm is magical in fact and gives the wearer protection of some sort against as yet to be determined beings, individuals or forces. At this point we take a serious pause and then take action based on the knowledge and information we have just discovered through our various endeavours.

I am to ward the apartment from outside magical influences, Mortimer & Thaeuss will take her through the portal to Borovia so they can divinate her on our world and Dawn will undertake one of her feathery astrology readings asking "Where is the most likely place we can make contact with the fairie court". The rest of the party will continue fact-finding and whatever else until our actions are completed.

The results of these actions are as follows

- ⇒ The amulet is protection vs Fey & Fairie magic and it prevents her from being touched by the fey and partially disguises the wearer's aura.
- ⇒ The astrology reading indicates 14 mounds around a circle
- ⇒ The warding goes well but takes twice as long as expected due to interruptions.
- ⇒ Mortimer and Thaeuss discover she has some small trace of blood not human and define it as fairie blood.

Mortimer makes the connection and propounds to her that her great grandmother 'had the sight'. She is astonished at his perception of this but agrees that she did. We illuminate her on her heritage being part fairie and she seems happy with this. Further investigation reveals she has been in an area of magical affect but due to the amulet the magic failed to take on her and she suffered no effects. The Borovia group then returns to the apartment and we cogitate on future actions once all is done there that could be done in the short time we had available.

Actions undertaken, decided or being cogitated over:

1. Lorraine will undertake research references to the isle of Arun, which she thinks is off the west coast of Ireland (her home country) and other such references in these manuscripts.
2. If a few of us who are skilled in 'research' techniques could visit the libraries or similar places here we could perhaps discover some more information.
3. Fairie mounds will be investigated as well as stone circles here in England as well as Ireland, Scotland and Wales^I
4. *Investigation of the vault the book was taken to, to see if it is merely magically hidden but still there in the vault^{II}*
5. *Visiting the manor house (including a search of it) and perhaps speaking to the previous owners*

^I This is a logical result of Dawn's feather reading.

^{II} Since this was the last recorded place for the book to reside. Perhaps our perceptive investigators could detect magic emanations.

- of the 'book' or Manor house may be productive via various means we have available*
- 6. Visiting and 'searching' the ruined monastery for more clues and information*
 - 7. Visiting Aran and undertaking some research on relevant sites there would be of use to us.*
 - 8. Possible links to the 'olde man' not actually being a person but rather a location or geographical feature related to 'Aran' in some way.^I*

Chapter 3:

10am 1st Snow 803 (Alusia)
August 2003 (Earth)

18th

We ask Lorraine and James that they begin their investigations immediately and they agree, they excuse themselves to another room and start to use a 'Laptop', which they connect to the wall by a small 'cable'. We ask what they are doing and they say we are going to 'surf the net' to see what information we can find for you all on the subjects you have asked about.

They do this for a short while and then return to us all with a great number of pages^{II}, containing concise information on a number of topics we asked after including: Aran; the olde man of Aran; Fairie stories; Stone Circles: Fairie king and a number of other short words or descriptions.

Once this is done Lorraine says that she has to leave and return to work. She takes her leave and we thank her for her help and invaluable information on the book, the research and her time. She leaves accompanied by her 2 'minders'. We all then sit down in chairs or on the floor as we are wont to do and we then start to read through the plethora of information and discuss what we read.

Findings and Details discovered.

^I Thoric has proffered that the 'Olde man' may in fact be a lighthouse due him to interpreting "where an olde man of Aran goes around and his mind is a beacon in the veil of the night" as 'He is a lighthouse in fog and his beacon goes around'

^{II} Printed off from the laptop by a printer

- ⇒ *It comes to light that there are several isles named or similar to Aran. The one northernmost is Arranmore and by itself off the coast of a 'County Donegal'. While south off the coast of 'County Galway' are the Aran Islands¹ named in order of size Inishmore, Inishmaan and Inishmeer.*
- ⇒ *The Abbey in Rievaulx is now a ruin after some monetary problems and then a later disagreement between the church and the King of England.*
- ⇒ *Numerous tales of 'The peacemaker' including ones from 'America'*
- ⇒ *'Films' titled 'The man of Aran' and 'The Peacemaker'*
- ⇒ *Clarissa upon reading a section connected with Prophecy asked, "did Jesus, OJ Simpson and Nostradamus ever adventure together?" We quickly pointed out that they were all alive n different time periods and so this could not have happened.*
- ⇒ *Details of stones circles on the Aran Islands*
- ⇒ *Ancient Celtic folklore regarding Fairies and what to do and no do with them.*
- ⇒ *Details of Rievaulx Abbey and it's history*

The hours pass as we pore over the screeds of information and soon rumblings are heard emanating from our stomachs. I ask James if he could get us some food and he says "of course! I'll be back in a short while". He returns in a short while carrying several 'plastic' bags, which says 'KFC' on then. He explains that this is fried chicken made in a Kentucky fashion. We all dig in to these delicious morsels as well as a lot of fruit he managed to 'pick up' for us.

We discuss the 'jaunt' to the vault and who should go to investigate the last known place where the book was seen and potential scene of the crime. Thaeuss is nominated due to his ability to talk with objects, Mortimer will go due to his DA ability and I am nominated for my spiritual aspect! We will also take along Dawn's glove, which enable the wearer to DA objects as well. James asks that we dress less conspicuously, perhaps in some of the attire in the 'wardrobes' here in the apartment. We dress in Dark

¹ Inish or Inis is the Irish word for Island

suits and grab some dark 'sunglasses' while others continue reading.

At 2pm James thinks now is a better time for us to visit the 'vault' is here as it's now after regular business hours and there will be less people to observe our activities. James has a car brought to the front of the building. We three along with James and 2 other 'minders' descend in the 'floating box' down to street level and then have to pass through an immense rush of people on the 'pavement' just outside the door to our tower. We enter a large black car, which he calls a 'limousine' and it starts moving though roads choked with other cars.

We arrive at the 'Bank of England', which is a great imposing stone structure in the busy 'Financial heart' of London and we pass through its doors on the basis of the credentials given us by James and MI-6. Our cover story already proffered by James is that we are a 'technical' team from overseas brought here to investigate the disappearance of the book from the vault. We pass through many security measures involving several people, keys, 'hand scans, and 'retinal scans' of the eyes.

We enter the vault and start our investigation: We can detect a very faint trace of magic but little else is evident in terms of detectable magic in this cold cage of iron and other assorted metals. Thaeuss floats above the ground very subtly and does his transform into a clay golem with the ability to speak to objects. He questions the drawer, it remembers being empty, then being opened, something heavy being placed in it and then being opened again. The 'surveillance cameras' in this room didn't witness the last opening apparently so we request to see the tapes for ourselves¹.

Mortimer when he undertakes his divination / Detect Aura in the area gets a surprising and unusual reading. He gets a sense of spicy scented flowers just for a moment; he likens it to a sense of carnal desire,

¹ We still have to go over the 'surveillance' footage from the vault to see if we could detect anything more that the guards there missed

somewhat lustful in nature. This concludes our physical investigation and we return to the apartment.

Meantime the rest have finished reading and since Dawn found references to snakes in the ground (which one of the 'minders' connects to and says that could be the 'Tube') they want to go see 'the Tube'. Some more protection is arranged and 4 more 'minders' arrive in short order to accompany the group consisting of Thoric, Clarissa, Dawn, Kayseri and Faith. Some better attire in terms of suitable clothing is found for the ladies and a 'child's poncho' is put over Faith's back to cover her weapons.

They take a short journey from the tower through the crowds of people that are of all types, sorts and colours. They have never seen so many people in one place and they are glad that the 4 'Mindings' are along to form a 'flying wedge ahead of the group to make the passage through the crowds easier.

They enter one 'Tube' stations^I and descend into the depths on moving stairs. They then travel underground in very crowded carriages via the metal worm termed an underground train to another station^{II} nearby. Kayseri along the way is 'picking up^{III}' a few things as she goes along. Once they reach the other station they again get up to the surface by way of the moving stairs and walk back to the tower taking some 20 minutes to walk through the crowds.

Once we are all back at the apartment we review what has happened and what we have found out. We decide we have nothing to lose by travelling to Rievaulx Abbey in Yorkshire to continue our paths of investigation. We discuss a number of travel options such as by train, vehicle, helicopter, plane and flying. We decide upon flying and prepare for immediate departure. James call 'control' and informs then of our plans, he asks at our suggestion for some of his 'people' in Yorkshire to rendezvous with us at

^I The station is called 'Knightsbridge'

^{II} This station is called 'Green Park'

^{III} Her 'haul' is at least 2 mobile phones and an attempt at the shiny bands worn on people's wrists.

Selby and we ill proceed from there. James and Roger will accompany us.

We all change and pack where appropriate and go to the roof. There we quickly explain to James & Roger^I the basics of flying and we also undertake becoming invisible or Unseen so as to not cause consternation in those who may see us in flight. We will fly up to the clouds hidden from sight and once above the cloud they become visible for our flight of some 4 hours to York. If we see any planes we are to dive below the clouds to avoid being seen^{II}.

We all take off around 5pm leaving J&R with Mortimer who is acting as instructor and rearguard. He tells them to "think of flying and jump into the air, the magic will do the rest". He turns them invisible and jumps into the air in the form of a little white owl.

They after a short pause jump in the air and Mortimer can see them flying up to the clouds and he follows. Once we are all 'together' in the same airspace Mortimer then flies around so that we can all see each other^{III} We all note their wide staring eyes that are looking in disbelief at us and themselves flying as we are unaided by any technology^{IV}. We should arrive at York around 9pm at night, once it is dark and we are to be met by James's associates and some 'transport'.

We fly in a 'loose' formation so as to cater for the protection and well being of inexperienced flyers. We tend to keep each other in sight and a wary eye on J&R. Dawn, Clarissa and Mortimer who are the best flyers are charged with keeping us all together and avoiding any unpleasant aerial 'experiences'.

^I Hereafter referred to as J&R

^{II} Whilst in flight a plane passed us and only a few of us were above the cloud and were seen by a small child in one of the windows who waved at us, we all waved back and then dived into the clouds fast, the boy apparently nudged his mother sitting next to him and told her what he saw, she looked out and said 'of course dear' in a very condescending tone.

^{III} James is in a pose with one hand outstretched ahead of him – reminiscent of 'Superman' apparently while Roger has both hands in front of him in a 'classic' flying pose.

^{IV} No doubt in the future once they have finished being assigned to us, their 'professional operative' façade will crack and they might suffer some sort of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or just go looney – who knows!

Actions undertaken, decided or being cogitated over:

- 1. We have completed our physical investigation of the Vault (exc TV Tapes)*
- 2. We will visit the Aran Island after the abbey (providing we find no other logical destination once our abbey investigations are complete.*
- 3. Based on the research undertaken thus far we shall concentrate our efforts in the Aran Islands off Galway rather than Arranmore the island off Donegal in Ireland. (However we don't dismiss this as a possibility either).*
- 4. The sites of ancient Celts at Dun Aengus and other related sites such as the 7 pairs of stones or mounds will be investigated¹.*
- 5. There's a very small, very old church there, which I would like to look at.*
- 6. We have flown to York in Yorkshire on our way to the Manor house where the book was discovered and close to Rievaulx Abbey*

¹ This directly corresponds to Dawn's astrology reading with her feathers, a most unusual occurrence.

Chapter 4:

10am 1st Snow 803 (Alusia)
August 2003 (Earth)

18th

Dawn and I undertake the task of navigating us to York using the canal network (until dark) and then the motorway network. The Motorway network is quite well lit by light hanging from large poles as well as the constant lights emanating from the fast moving 'cars & trucks' below us. Faith descends to the level of the 'vehicles' and with some manoeuvring to avoid signs and poles etc she lands on the roof of a truck and 'rests' for a while as it travels along the motorway. We don't worry about Faith too much as she has the ability to find us again. She rejoins us after a while and we continue on uneventfully to York.

We spot 'York' up ahead and confirm we should land near the well-lit tower or castle and near the large cathedral. We pass over the area and James spots the 'train station' where his 'associates' will be meeting us. Nearby is a park and we all go to land there. We all get down and land safely except Dawn who unfortunately hurts her shoulder when she disagrees with a tree as to where it should aesthetically be in the park. James and Roger land well after we explain to them about the effects of the 'feather fall' spell we had previously cast upon them.

We all proceed toward the nearby train station; once we are there James goes inside and says we have some time before the train with his 'associates' will arrive. He goes to ring his 'associates' but can't find his phone. Faith then scrambles closer and suggests he looks again. He then finds it and makes the call confirming they will be on the correct train.

Mortimer suggests a nearby pub and we go there and sample some local beverages. Thaeuss and I find the wine is quite good and Faith consumes her body weight in beer. We don't have time to finish the

bottle of wine before we leave so I put it in my pocket when we leave for later consumption. James reminds us of our cover stories and to try and hide the fact of our magic use from others who won't be quite as comfortable with the idea as Roger or himself are growing to be.

On our short travel on foot between the park and the station we notice a few people looking at us and as we pass some are heard to mutter under their breath (or so they assume) "bunch of tourerrists^I". They avoid eye contact with us in the main and we pass by.

At 945pm we enter the large 'old-ish'^{II} train station and head for the train now there and specifically the carriage towards the rear where two people are waiting for us. James goes and meets them and they hustle us upon the metal carriage of the train. We take seats and examine our new companions.

One is a tall middle-aged human male some 6' 3' in height and with a 'lanky' appearance but a slightly protruding belly. His clothing style is nothing to speak of since it is mismatched, crumpled and unkempt. His bespectacled face is pale, pasty and covered with a scruffy beard and matted black hair. And he smells slightly of damp and odour perhaps suggesting deficient sanitary habits as well.

The other is a short apparently middle-aged human female some 5'5" in height who appears to be quite 'plump' or 'heavy'. Her clothing consisting of knitted top, ugly skirt, scuffed plain black bag and 'sensible' flat black shoes mark her as another anti-fashion victim as none are matched or even try to act in concert to enhance her appearance in any way. She too has spectacles and her mousy brown hair is pulled back away from her face in a 'bun' revealing sharp blue eyes behind the lenses and a pale and pasty appearance similar to the males.

^I There are two meanings this word. One is people visiting from 'out of town' and sightseeing; the other is people who blow things up, cause death and destruction. We are perplexed but continue walking while wondering how they recognised Faith in only such a short period of time.

^{II} It's Old-ish because while it has an outside appearance of the older buildings around the town it has all the 'modern' contrivances like electricity, lights etc.

James speaks; " This is Algenon Brown^I and Jane Hennessey^{II}, they are scholars and academic specialising in antiquities and languages. They were present on the day of the theft". "As you know I am James, a security specialist along with (he points to Roger) Roger over there, and these (pointing at us) are specialist 'Insurance Investigators' we have called in to help answer questions about the theft".

We introduce ourselves and then settle back into our seats for what we are told is a 25-minute journey in this noisy contrivance. Mortimer and Thaeuss start up a conversation in Elvish and soon notice Jane 'appearing not to listen in' on their conversation. They ask her if she can understand them and she replies "of course! My French is a bit rusty but I can follow what you are saying easily".

They try a few other languages from Alusia and she seems able to follow them all but says "You must be speaking in sub dialects that I'm not very familiar with but I can generally understand you". I join the conversation and make a few comments in Titan, which she doesn't comprehend, nor can she follow Direwolf and a few other languages that I can speak. We decide at this point to 'clam up' until we can be alone to discuss this 'interesting' situation we are now in.

We arrive at a station that the sign beside the train states is 'Housden', we alight onto the platform and the train continues on its way. We are directed to a large black vehicle described as 'minivan' by Jane. She opens up the vehicle from some 20ft away by pressing a button on a black metal key, the lights on the vehicle blink once and a short sharp noise emanates from the vehicle. We all enter the vehicle and take seats for our journey that Jane describes as "just up the road a bit".

^I He is an antiquarian specialising in books and writings including the dating of literature.

^{II} She is a linguist specialising in religious languages as well as text dating. She can speak 16 languages. She is employed by 'National Heritage' which is an organisation dedicated to preserving history in the UK (United Kingdom). She doesn't appear to have political affiliations.

We drive for some 10 minutes and end in front of a large, imposing stone building. James tells us this is 'Housden Manor', it was here the book was discovered and we shall be staying here overnight at least. We enter the home and are shown to a drawing room where they offer us tea after our long journey. Jane informs us that only the cataloguing staff and a cook are here at present, "merely a skeleton crew".^I

Once we have had some refreshments we then moved to the library, which is a sizable room, some 70ft square full of books^{II} from floor to ceiling and plenty of shelving. We ask about the book that has gone missing. They look back blankly at this and reply "what missing book?" James sighs and states, "The book of prophecies that was found when Lorraine was here, it caused exultation amongst yourselves and was the reason that Lorraine was later picked up by Helicopter then whisked away to London. The book that later disappeared from the vault in which it had been placed".

They then seem to remember something but can't accurately recollect the book in question. We then try to deduce whereabouts the book came from in the large library by tracing the movements and work of the people who were cataloguing in the library that day.^{III} There were 5 people cataloguing that day who were Lorraine, Jane, Algenon, Jennifer and Peachy. We have some success in this line of questioning and investigation but not enough to trace the more exact location where the book was found due to everyone not being bale to recollect^{IV} anything about the book.

Faith asks Jane if she has Lorraine's mobile number, she tells Faith she does and passes the number to Faith. Faith calls Lorraine and asks her if she remembers where the book was found, Lorraine does and passes the information on which gives us a starting point for our further specialised investigations.

^I James quickly gets hold of Thoric who is closest and informs him that "a skeleton crew" simply means that there is a bare minimum of people here, not that the place is full of skeletons.

^{II} Since they were in the process of being catalogued the books are mainly in large piles on the floor for ease of access and examination.

^{III} It was the 4th of August 2003 – some 2 weeks ago.

^{IV} These people have exceptional memory and can 'rattle off' the last 100 books or more that they have catalogued recently and can recollect almost all the books they have ever read verbatim

The section indicated was one that Peachy had been working on and Jane then introduces Peachy to us. She is a pale slight human female with unusual orange hair, facial piercings in her nose and lip. She is dressed like a 'fashion victim' in the latest trends in 'cut off' shirt, which show her midriff, trousers only just stretching around her hips (hipsters) and large 'chunky' black shoes.

Peachy takes us over to the area of shelves she was working on; she then indicates the section as described by Lorraine. Mortimer leaps upon the shelves and starts pulling himself up to the indicated spot. Algenon who had been quietly observing until this time shouts "get down from there, that is not how you get to shelves in libraries". Mortimer drops to the floor and asks "Why not? That's how I do it in my library". Algenon replies "well that's not how we do it here in this library, here use this ladder" and he shows us the ladder.

When I look around the area with my talent I do notice quite a few spirits or Ghosts in this old place and note it for further investigation when we have some time.

At this point Thoric has one of his great ideas and asks Jane "is there an outside balcony?" she takes him outside to the front of the house and they look back not seeing any. Thoric then looks carefully at the structure of the house and then asks Jane to throw a whetstone over the roof of the building. She looks puzzled at this suggestion and Thoric volunteers "it's a local custom or superstition that to break a spell or bad luck on a 'place' that one should throw a whetstone over the roof to break the spell. She agrees and tries to toss the whetstone but only make it to the guttering where it catches.

They look downhearted at this setback but Mortimer comes along at this time and Thoric asks him to get it down, he flys up¹ and gets the whetstone. Jane seeing this says, "Bravo, I knew you were magical people, illusionists and the like". A discussion then ensues whereupon it emerges that she is reasonably open to the idea of magic and had sussed us out as being not from

¹ He pretends that he has some sort of invisible harness so that he may 'fly' up to the roof.

around here. It seems she is 'on our side' and would like to help but can't seem to remember much of what we keep asking.

Thoric gets her to write a note to herself so that whenever she asks herself "What are all these pesky annoying foreign folk doing here" she will read the note and turn it over where it will read "To find out and investigate the missing book, the one found here on the 4th of August 2003 by Peachy in the top far left shelf in the 2nd aisle in the library. The book about prophecies and is partially written in blood. The book that prompted Lorraine to depart soon thereafter back to London, whisked away in a black helicopter that landed on the front lawn of the manor "

After this Mortimer takes hold of her and raises her to a higher point with his flying (while she holds onto him with one arm) just below the lip of the roof and she again throws the whetstone over the roof, successfully this time. They return to the ground and Thoric again asks her about the book and she goes "what book". He realises that it hasn't broken the spell so he turns and returns inside to the others looking quite downhearted after his brilliant plan failed to work!

In the library Thaeuss looks closely at the shelf in question and finds traces of the magic still there and his DE^ITalent reveals the following.

- ⇒ General nature of the Magic: Magic
- ⇒ College Magic: Fey or Fairie
- ⇒ Exact Name / Nature of the Spell: Out of Time or Time Slippage

I wander the library at the same time and find a number of symbols on wall and panels that are identified by Jane as being 'Masonic' Symbols^{II}. I

^I Detect Enchantment

^{II} The secret societies of 'Freemasons' are misogynistic (men only) and know each other by secret handshakes as well as verbal clues.

also find some of the hidden 'servants' passages^I that the house seems riddled with, these haven't been travelled in some time as I see layers of dust in abundance. I follow one passage between the library and the upstairs landing where I check in on Kayseri and Dawn who are sequestered in a room so that Dawn may heal faster

The other rooms are allotted as follows: Algenon in one by himself; Jane sharing with Jennifer^{II}; Peachy by herself; Thaeuss and Mortimer; Clarissa and Faith; James and Roger; Thoric and myself.

Once the others return from their foray outside the house and everyone has retired for the night (Algenon, Jennifer, Peachy and the cook) we all congregate in a room at the far end of the house far from the others for privacy. Faith is despatched to ensure that the others are in fact asleep^{III}

With Jane's acquiescence we question her about the missing book, try to help her remember that events, what the book looked like and her general impressions. She happily agrees when we ask if we can do some magic to her to help her remember. I tell her I will draw a rune on her forehead, one of truth to help her remember and see through illusions etc. This has some effect and used in conjunction with Mortimer's hypnotic suggestions of "relax, breath deeply, listen to my voice" seem to assist her greatly.

Soon she has relaxed into her comfortable chair, she has her eyes closed and is breathing steadily. I move around the room lightly pinching certain party members to keep them from being under Mortimer's influence as well.

We then question her about the book and she recollects the following details:

⇒ It was an unusual book

^I Passages to enable fast and discreet movement between rooms in the house. It enabled the servants to remain hidden from the sight of visiting nobles where necessary and to expedite the passage of said servants when they were bringing victuals to the nobles.

^{II} Jennifer is a museum curator from the Ashmolion Museum

^{III} She does this by way of Enchanted sleep casting rather than the traditional 'sapping' of people.

- ⇒ *It was almost hidden at the back of the shelf amongst other books, as if it didn't want to be found*
- ⇒ *It was a book of prophesies that appeared to be quite correct in what it was prophesying for the few that Jane had reviewed.*
- ⇒ *It smelt a particular way. It reminded her scent wise of spring / Early summer, she describes it as a spicy flower scent^I. It was an evocative & emotional scent, as yet indescribable in it's intensity and potency.*

We ask her a number of other questions relating to her loyalties, connections to secret societies, religious affiliations, Fairies and the Aran isles.

- ⇒ *She has been to the Aran isles only one year ago on a walking holiday and she can recollect the 7 pairs of standing stones on Inishmore quite clearly as well as other archaeological facts about the isles.*
- ⇒ *She has had contact with fairies when she was a little girl she saw some at the bottom of her garden. Her parents didn't see them however and didn't believe her when she told them.*
- ⇒ *She acknowledges that there are things she has no knowledge over and that events transpire in the world that will affect her over which she has no control.*
- ⇒ *She is fascinated by magic and its use by us.*

At this point we note that we haven't seen James in some time, since our initial investigations in the library earlier in the evening, in fact we seem to have 'misplaced' Roger as well^{II}.

Having been able to determine some of the things we came for Mortimer brings her out of the trance with the only post hypnotic suggestion being that she remembers what she has just said about the book when we ask her about it again. At this point we plan to retire for

^I Very similar to the scent that Mortimer got in the vault when he investigated traces of the magic there.

^{II} While they both are 'security' types from here on 'Earth' they may in some trouble, hence our 'worrying' about their welfare.

*the night as it is now the early hours of the morning
and*

Actions undertaken, decided or being cogitated over:

- 1. We have completed our physical investigation of the Vault (exc TV Tapes)*
- 2. We have come to the place the book was discovered and undertaken some investigations. More to be done before moving on such as 'speaking to the dead Earl's here or the spirits that seem to abound in this house.*
- 3. We still plan to visit the Aran Island after the abbey (providing we find no other logical destination once our abbey investigations are complete.*
- 4. As per previous research undertaken thus far we shall concentrate our efforts in the Aran Islands off Galway rather than Arranmore the island off Donegal in Ireland. (However we don't dismiss this as a possibility either).*
- 5. The sites of ancient Celts at Dun Aengus and other related sites such as the 7 pairs of stones or mounds will be investigated¹.*
- 6. There's a very small, very old church there, which I would like to look at.*
- 7. We have flown to York in Yorkshire and this is close to Rievaulx Abbey so we may visit the site while here.*
- 8. We will look for and if necessary locate James and Roger who are not anywhere we know of and maybe doing things we would like to be aware of.*

Chapter 5

*2nd Snow 803 (Alusia)
2003 (Earth)*

1am 19th August

Before actually retiring we ask Faith to locate James & Roger. Roger she says after a minute is in a room along the corridor, we go along to discover him

¹ This directly corresponds to Dawn's astrology reading with her feathers, a most unusual occurrence.

quietly asleep in a large comfortable chair across the room from Dawn. He's covered in a blanket and on some cushions looking quite peaceful so we leave him to his rest and concentrate on James.

Faith goes off heading downstairs and ending in a room like the one in Kree's apartment where James is currently watching the box^I, which is playing views of the bank vault. He's looking puffy eyed and tired after watching these for some time. Faith offers to relieve him, which he gratefully accepts after showing her how to use the remote control for the video. He then moves over to a long couch, stretches out and passes out asleep.

We are informed of Faiths intentions and we all head to bed for whatever sleep we can get until we are required to be on watch. Faith spends the night watching this footage of the vault and fails to see anything James didn't see. The people standing watch for the night check up on her as part of the schedule. The rest of the night passes without significant interruptions until daybreak.

2nd Snow 803 (Alusia)
2003 (Earth)

6am 19th August

Kayseri gets up and wanders around the house looking in all the rooms trying to find anything of interest. She searches the house to no avail then gets one of her dogs and goes for a walk outside^{II}. She comes upon the vault in a nearby churchyard on the estate, opens the door to reveal stairs descending into the darkness so she relocks the door and returns to the kitchen for some food.

Dawn gets up and heads for the kitchen where she comes upon the cook. The offer of a hot breakfast is made and accepted with alacrity. While cook is doing breakfast Dawn enquires as to how the old earl died "he had gout, consumption, a bad knee and arthritis and for many a year co-morbidity but in the end it appears old age caught up with him and his heart gave out in the

^I Television

^{II} Must be well-trained dogs as they don't make any fuss at all or mess inside! - Must be an illusion dog thing!

night. A fine old man he was". No more useful information can be garnered from the cook so Dawn returns to eating.

7am arrives and we all stir from whatever sleep we have had. We pack James off to a proper bed for a few hours more sleep as we don't feel so threatened and Roger is about anyway. We all wander down to the kitchen except Thoric who is trying to get a bit more sleep¹.

After a good hardy breakfast I wander the house and find a likely room to talk with spirits. I draw my rune when I see one and ask, "who are you spirit", it replies, "woe woe woe is me" in sad, sorrowful and mournful tones, not at all helpful. Passing that line of investigation up for now, as it seems to be a very old self absorbed and menial type of spirit I return to the group in the kitchen and suggest we all move back upstairs for a discussion of what to do today. Mortimer points out that his talk with the dead ability is best at night which seems entirely logical and Thaeuss wants to do some linking life-forces rituals to successful conclusions rather than being interrupted.

While Thoric was asleep Thaeuss went to try linking life-forces on him which is a ritual, he got most of the way through until Jane came in the room and started talking with Thoric, waking him up and getting him to move which disrupted the ritual at almost its penultimate minute, needless to say Thaeuss wasn't amused.

However Jane had bought something rather interesting and what she thought was pertinent to our investigations. She has found a book of fairies literally; this is titled "Lady Coddingtons Pressed Fairy Book" It has squished fairies in the pages which we DA and find to be true fairies now dead some many years. They are associated with the Lessor UnSeelie fairie court. We get quite excited by this and set some people to look at the book with Mortimer to undertake 'Ask the Dead' questioning and also divinate

¹ Dwarves need more sleep? They tire more? I thought they were hardy creatures used to going without sleep and rest for long periods.

it. The general information gleaned from the questioning was that they didn't come here by portal, they were born in Tir-a-nan-Nog and there are at least 4 other fairie courts.

Fairy info:

- ⇒ *The age of the dead fae seemed consistent with the text about 100 yrs ago.*
- ⇒ *Gathered over a period from childhood to adult.*
- ⇒ *The last time they visited the lady was to get her to negotiate some sort of truce.*
- ⇒ *They were surprised when she caught them, and they had thought she would be reasonable in their negotiations.*
- ⇒ *The portal is operated by someone with the skill to do so, in the right place - stone circles (of varying numbers), and right time (equinox)*
- ⇒ *The type of fae at the unseeley court ranged from the typical fairy, gnome, pixie, elves, etc*
- ⇒ *There is a king (and queen) of the court*
- ⇒ *The fairie questioned had come by choice to negotiate the truce.*
- ⇒ *The Lady was not the only human to be able to talk with the fae, though she didn't know about the book of prophecies.*

It was found in the older section^I of the library on dusty long unused shelves. Probably collected by the 8-10th Earls. Jane also has a book as a gift for us called "the world of science" which covers a lot of subjects we have been wondering about like electricity etc. Faith starts to read this.

*2nd Snow 803 (Alusia)
2003 (Earth)*

10am 19th August

I would like to visit the family or estate crypt^{II}, which Kayseri has told me, is in the grounds some quarter of a mile north of the manor house, Thoric and Faith will join me to assist if needed as well as investigate where required. We leave the others in the room last night occupied by Thoric and myself last

^I It is the 4th Bookcase in from the back right wall, on the uppermost shelf.

^{II} AKA / graveyard and mausoleum

evening poring over the book and undertaking rituals of divination, ask the dead and linking life-forces.

We three walk to the indicated area; there we find a small church, a small mausoleum and a largish graveyard with many types/sizes of headstones in various states but of a generally well-kept maintenance. We look around the graveyard noting the dates and some exceptional graves¹ and then head for the locked door on the mausoleum. Faith makes short work of it and the door swings open revealing a well-worn set of stairs heading down into the dark. The three of us have no problem with light being elves and a dwarf.

At the bottom of the stairs we find a well-kept tomb. In the centre of the 30' by 30' room is a raised heavy coffin on a solid pedestal with little adornment. Set in the walls are 3 human sized alcoves with two being filled at present by stone effigies of human males in relaxed poses! We do a quick check in the walls for hidden cavities or passages and find several, which Faith examines by her ability to walk through the walls and find little of significance. Faith finishes her examinations and we have a skull to show for it, which I place on the coffin for later 'talking to' by various means such as Mortimer's speak to the dead ability or our divinations.

Thoric then examines the floor and finds a loose stone, which we lever up, and place against the sidewall. The space now reveals a wooden ladder descending some 20ft into darkness. Faith will go down and check it before Thoric and I descend. Faith gets to the bottom and jumps down to an earthen floor, has a quick look around and declares it safe for us to come down. Thoric and I descend and after the 20ft descent on the ladder and a short 9ft drop to the floor we find ourselves at the bottom of the shaft.

Once Thoric and I are down below Faith expresses a dislike for our environs complaining that it is in fact too 'old' feeling and she says "I'll leave you guys to investigate here, I'll keep watch upstairs in the open

¹ Notably a horse named 'Bruno', the inscription read 'A good and faithful companion, you will be missed'

and fresh air". She then leaps up to the ladder and bounds off leaving Thoric and I to assess our new locale.

The new area^I we are in stretches away left and right some 40 feet in length and around 20' in width with the centre which we currently occupy being a circular area of about 30ft diameter. It has 36 shelves attached to the wall, all are about 6'6" long by 3' wide and 28 of these shelves are taken up with what looks like bodies. The bodies^{II} are wrapped in a deteriorating velvety cloth of some sort and each has a metal brooch of the same style but one has a ring as well as the brooch.

2nd Snow 803 (Alusia)
2003 (Earth)

11am 19th August

Thoric and I judiciously avoid touching these items as we can't detect the magic without some investigation and will wait for the rest to arrive with their magical talents and abilities before doing so. We yell to Faith "have you any way of contacting the others fast"; "Yes I do" she replies. Faith pulls out a 2-foot long arrow along with a stone tablet, and casts a spell. Then the arrow disappears and the tablet glows for thirty seconds or so.

While the arrow is in flight to the house I realise that I could in fact contact the party as they are in or near the room I spent the night in and one, which I had prepared for some eventualities. I start casting my spell of Sending. Meanwhile the arrow covers the distance in a short period of time and impacts Clarissa causing some damage. Just after this my image appears in the room and seeing the party I explain what we have been doing along with requesting their presence for investigation purposes. They rapidly deploy from the room along with newly arrived James via an Instill flighted flying carpet^{III}

Soon after the others arrive a number of magical events occur. DA's, DE's and other such talents are employed before we attempt any physical exploration of

^I See Crypt map

^{II} They are more skeletons than bodies. Read corpses with some skin intact but mainly bone

^{III} With Transparency on it

the area and before the lengthy but more informative Divinations.

- ⇒ There's an area effect Preservation on the area down here, which is why the bones are in such good almost recognisable condition. This is a high mana area!!
- ⇒ DA of the floor is dated at 772 years ago.
- ⇒ The bodies are between 400 and 600 years old in general
- ⇒ The Brooches are all shaped magic and have a general magic of binding as well as an affect of Fealty and Loyalty on them.
- ⇒ There is discovered at each end an illusion that from a distance causes the wall to appear blank by causing your eyes to not see what's there. These appear to be heavily magical and will need divinating. They seem to be of summoning magic.
- ⇒ The bodies were tall for their time periods as they are all above 6ft in height.
- ⇒ There is a type of suspension magic in effect on the bodies and they will stay that way 'until woken or raised'
- ⇒ The bodies GTN are mostly human, partly immortal!!!
- ⇒ The bodies in the crypt are skeletons of which about a third are female. They appear to have healed over wounds etc would indicate they were warriors with some of them having breaks which would account for their deaths.

Mortimer and I will now undertake our rituals with me taking an end¹ and Mortimer taking the ring and a brooch since he can undertake two per hour to my one. I proceed down the end of the corridor and make myself comfortable before starting the ritual. I ask Thoric to stand nearby me to keep an eye on me while I lose myself in concentration for the period of the ritual.

While Mortimer and I are engrossed in meditation Kayseri decides to rummage around the crypt searching nooks and crannies. She does manage to find a secret alcove in the wall curvature under the ladder area. She decides to open the alcove while the magical investigators of Mortimer and myself are engaged in our

¹ It is the north end, which is to the right (on the area diagram).

rituals. She does so with no apparent affect^I. She then looks to open the box.

The results of the Divinations were:

Ring It has a Command / Leadership aspect to I, along with a Binding component which is all linked to the brooches in some way. Has a blood component.

Brooches These are similar to the ring but in a subservient manner. They are a conduit for communication as well as enhancing Fealty and Loyalty. Blood component as well.

The Wall This appears to be some sort of activation device for summoning. Its in the same shape and design as the ring & brooches. It summons its adherents / members via a ritual. It will activate wearers of the brooches or rings
It was created via a blood sacrifice ritual using fey / fairie blood.
It appears to be mostly a portal for souls rather than objects.

We end with Mortimer and myself coming out of our rituals, seeing most of the others bunched around a box of some sort, which has had a side turned transparent by Thaeuss and inside they can see an object wrapped in some cloth of interdeterminate type. We look up from this event and see Dawn on knees looking down over a corpse with her hand touching a brooch!^{II} It appears she has touched the brooch and has gone into some sort of trance like or catatonic state.

Actions undertaken, decided or being cogitated over:

1. We have completed our physical investigation of the Vault and have now watched the TV videotapes with no new information discovered.
2. We have come to the place the book was discovered and undertaken some investigations and we continue to do so. This is a WIP as we are currently investigating the vault through various magical and mundane means.
3. We still plan to visit the Aran Islands after the abbey (providing we find no other logical

^I A subsequent DA will show her as having a curse.

^{II} Some magic impacted on Dawn as DA/touched the ring, but perhaps the divination showed no affect of this.

destination once our abbey investigations are complete.

4. *As per previous research undertaken thus far we shall concentrate our efforts in the Aran Islands off Galway rather than Arranmore the island off Donegal in Ireland. (However we don't dismiss this as a possibility either). The sites of ancient Celts at Dun Aengus and other related sites such as the 7 pairs of stones or mounds will be investigated^I. There's a small, old church on Inishmeer, which I would like to see.*
5. *We have flown to York in Yorkshire and this is close to Rievaulx Abbey.*
6. *We will keep a closer watch will be kept upon these and their welfare.*

Chapter 6

2nd Snow 803 (Alusia)
2003 (Earth)

1230pm 19th August

Quickly assessing what may have happened to Dawn, Thaeuss DE's^{II} her and gets an affirmative answer indicating she is cursed / blessed in some way. He quickly relays this to us and we think fast how we can get Dawn away from touching the brooch without the individual grabbing her succumbing to the same malady. Thoric thinks fastest and stands beside Dawn and pendulums his arm then lets it smack into Dawn with a small amount of force thereby breaking her contact with the brooch.

Dawn suggests lunch as her appetite has peaked after her short sojourn or out of body experience with the brooch. We ask James to use his 'mobile phone' to call the house and have some food sent here to the meadow area just outside the crypt door so we may have a picnic lunch. He does so and informs us it will be

^I This directly corresponds to Dawn's astrology reading with her feathers, a most unusual occurrence.

^{II} Detect Enchantment – Determines whether the target of the spell / Talent is under the effects of an enchantment or some other such magical thing.

here soon as they have already prepared some lunch for us.

We ask her and Dawn relates her experience for us: "The instant I touched the brooch, I was "portalled" to a forest glen. First up, I checked that my body and stuff was with me, I used empathy to check my arm is still injured to determine whether it was my real body or not. I think it may not have been my real body, perhaps more my spirit in a real place? Out of time perhaps? It was sort of akin to the environment in Dom-Daniel. And although there seemed to be air, there didn't seem to be wind, my flying didn't work. And there was mana around, but I couldn't seem to draw any to cast with it".

" I could see a group of people around a large fire. There was chanting going on, although not in a language that I recognised. It was possibly the bonding ritual - bonding the brooch to the ring and the men to each other. The men are all tall and some could be warriors as they were heavily armed. Some could have been mages. There is no human or fey sacrifice going on - the bloodletting appears to be voluntary, and involving smallish amounts perhaps just the slicing of palms."

After this explanation we all then have a discussion for some 20minutes about the duality of blessings & curses, what one man might see as a blessing another would see as a curse¹. It's all a matter of perspective really!

We decide to continue our investigations of the crypt end walls and having just completed my divinations we now look to other methods to discover information about the interesting area we now find ourselves in.

Thaeuss then pulls out one of his Golems, kneels to place a heart in it to activate it when Kayseri turns around and has a loud invective at him along the lines

¹ Having a wife blessed with excessive fertility would be good for a man wanting to start a family or have a 'few' children, however after 16 children, no money to feed them because of the cost of raising children the same man might see the excessive fertility as a curse. I'm sure the wife might too after being pregnant every 9 months for the past 12 years with no break in between.

of "You just go ahead and do what you want... You tell others to wait and think about actions... Your ugly, nasty and troublesome little golems you just use them and... You are a rude and obnoxious elf and.!" This outburst stuns us all except for Thaeuss's interjections of "Sit down or you may get hurt... I know what I am doing... Just go away...".

Kayseri once she has finished decides to leave, heading upstairs to get away from here and the company she is keeping. The party is splintered^f for a short time in different locales with some of us staying in the crypt while others join Kayseri upstairs for some conciliatory discussions and some of the lunch that James informs us that has 'just arrived'. We all are getting our breath back and considering what to do I determine that there is palpable tension in the air which I see needs to be resolved smartly before we continue our investigations.

I ask Thaeuss, Clarissa and Thoric to join me upstairs for some lunch before we go any further. With some hesitation we all ascend to the surface on the rope^{II}, join up again and start partaking in this fine repast we find there.

2nd Snow 803 (Alusia)
2003 (Earth)

1pm 19th August

I stand up, remembering the many sessions of mediation and counselling I have undertaken for my supplicants in Seagate and start my tirade for this troubled group. "Now what is the problem here that you guys are having?" I started off with. Kayseri and Thaeuss both had their says and seemed quite set in their positions. I thought of what they had said and it boiled down to two important issues that were Communication and Trust. I get my miniaturised Spear stick and snap it, which enables my full size spear to appear in my hands. I pound it on a rock nearby to stop discussions and then I proceed.

^f Thaeuss, Clarissa, Thoric and I stay downstairs while Mortimer, Dawn, Faith and Kayseri return to the open air to enjoy the newly arrived lunch with James.

^{II} It's an Illusionary rope, created by Kayseri. Is this using mind over matter? We think its rope so it acts as such?

"OK here's how I think we can heal our ructions and issues. First of all we should all acknowledge that each of us have unique skill-sets and abilities. Some are magical investigators either using personal magical abilities or using magical tools (such as Golems), while others are superior physical investigators who excel in the investigation of mundane non-magical items, places or objects".

"Secondly we need to talk more about what we plan to do and what we are doing, the bettering informed we all are about each others activities then the better we can act as a cohesive unit to avoid unnecessary danger and anguish. Lastly we need to act more courteous to each other in our manners so as to avoid uncomfortable situations".

Thoric piped up asking if anyone had checked whether any of us had been checked for curses, geas's or other magical compulsions. There was resounding silence at this and a series of checks were done which revealed Kayseri under some sort of curse. We all thought divinations for everyone are called for and these will be done as soon as possible.

Meantime after my little rant the heavy tension seems to have eased a little and we are continuing on with lunch before going on to finish investigating the crypt then deciding what to do from there. The food disappears and we continue our work. We warn each other to look out for signs of actions that appear to be out of character from what we would normally do.

Someone makes a side comment about not going down into the vault for fear of death or losing our minds and Dawn perks up at this saying "lets go down and finish the job". We advise her to wait but she is quite insistent. She tries to run off towards the vault doors and is restrained. She looks like she may be getting out of the restraints and I prepare to knock her out with the flat end of my spear should it be necessary.

I'm assured it's not necessary to knock her out, so while she continues struggling I run over to the gate, relock the padlock and stand outside it until she calms down. Soon thereafter she seems to be calmed after

words with Mortimer and someone suggesting that she as an Air mage would much rather hate being trapped in a box. A box does magically appear a few moments later^I and she climbs in to the relief of all.

I return to the group area and the new box and ask Faith if I can divinate her, to which she acquiesces and so I start a Divination ritual off to the side of the party. I become entranced in my ritual, watching Faith and Thoric watching over us both.

After another 5 minutes Mortimer starts to divinate the box with Dawn in it while the others keep lurching. Kayseri is looking around and she thinks she glimpses Dawn over by the crypt. The notion gets pooh poohed for a few moments but then someone opens the box and Dawn is no longer there^{II}. A panic ensues but I stay ritually and Faith stays in front of me with Kayseri and James watching over us while the others speed towards the crypt. Mortimer starts surreptitiously divinating Kayseri.

Thoric and Clarissa head down into the actual crypt and Thaeuss stays up top of the chamber to 'watch'. Clarissa asks, "Thoric please watch me and make sure I don't act odd". T&C quickly get down into the crypt where Dawn is again touching a brooch (again!!) and fearing for her mental state they act quickly. Standing over Dawn, Clarissa pulls out a small weighted sack, raises it over her head and strikes Dawn a knockout blow. Thoric pulls back, prepares his mattock and is about to exclaim, "what do you think you're doing?" when Clarissa explains, "I'm just sapping her to break the trance".

They carry Dawn over to the ladder, attach a rope and haul her upstairs away from the temptations down in the crypt. Dawn is then taken outside and revived through traditional means of having cool water applied to her face and some gentle ministrations to help her out of the unconscious state. Mortimer comforts her as

^I Thanks to Kayseri

^{II} It appears she most likely changed to gaseous form and went down into the crypt unseen that way

much as he can while explaining what's happened and our suspicions as to why she's acting so strangely^I.

She states she has more information this time on where she went when she touched the brooch. She relates the following "It was winter at night, snow was on the ground, and the bonfire was the focus of the group. The group included some women. The people were of similar bloodstock, but didn't look similar enough to be siblings. They were wearing dark blood red cloak. The leader was wearing the ring - marked as the leader by more impressive outfit. There were stars, but since I don't much about stars, I couldn't recognise where they were. Maybe Mortimer would ... or he could ask the dead people directly."

Mortimer can see Dawn is still a bit unsure on her feet and since I will still be completing my ritual for another 30minutes or so, he decides to have a quick flying jaunt with her in her element of Air. They both go off after taking the eminently sensible precaution of becoming invisible.

2nd Snow 803 (Alusia)
2003 (Earth)

215pm 19th August

My divination of Faith ends with me establishing she has a curse, which will last a few more hours. She's afraid of age, aging or old things. Mortimer's divinate shows that Kayseri is under a curse of "puppet phobia^{II}" of unknown duration, probably the result of a recent backfire.

It's pointed out that the box downstairs is still unopened and un-investigated so we all, once the flyers have returned descend again down to the crypt to finish what we are here to do. Thaeuss interrogates a brooch and a ring using his golems. I start a divination of the opposite end^{III} of the room to the one have already done to see if they are different

^I He does also make note of the new amulet Dawn is wearing around her neck that is an amulet of the wolf. It's supposed to make you more brave and able to face your fears and it's making her do things almost as a result of a 'dare' by all appearances.

^{II} This is possibly the reason for Kayseri's recent outburst and harangue with Thaeuss. He does have his golems who are after all his puppets so this is all related. Ummm!!

^{III} The south end that is the one to the left on the area diagram.

Thaeuss then talks with the box and gets little from it. An investigation into the alcove in which it resides fails to find any magical traps, wards or other assorted nasty surprises. We then decide to use some brute force and wrest the box from its hole since there's no magical defences on it. Our brute force consists of Faith and Thoric using their physical prowess to slide it out, but unfortunately the box seems wedged into the alcove itself. Faith quickly assesses that there aren't or doesn't seem to be any pressure plates under the box and so they undertake Plan B^I

The result of my divination of the South end wall is as follows:

The Wall Similar to the North end in that it's purpose is one of summoning but it seems that this end is more attuned to the 'movement of objects' rather than 'souls' which was the North ends main purpose. This end is more of a channel rather than a true portal. It appears to be one way and this is the exit. If one end of the 'portals' is activated then the other will be activated.

Once the box is pulled out we delicately unwrap the cloth to reveal 8 brooches, which would make up the 36 possible ones from the number of spaces down here.

The other find is a small piece of manuscript under the box, which reads as follows:

Manuscript #3

***So dear friends your love is gone
Only tears to dwell upon
I dare not say as the wind must blow
So a love is lost, a dream is won
Go to sleep and dream again
Soon your hopes will rise again
From all this gloom life will start anew
And there'll be no crying soon.***

We TK the brooches into a bag, (to avoid physically touching them) and leave it there in the

^I (18/11/03 Real Time - post NZ losing to Aust) To be noted that we had or could quickly make a Plan B, as compared to other real life 'teams' which couldn't seem to find one if their life depended on it.

crypt. We are still in the crypt area deciding what to do!

Actions undertaken, decided or being cogitated over:

- 1. We have completed our physical investigation of the Vault and have now watched the TV videotapes with no new information discovered.*
- 2. We have come to the place the book was discovered and undertaken some investigations. This is a WIP as we are still currently investigating the manor & vaults, including the surrounding area.*
- 3. We still plan to visit the Aran Islands after the abbey (providing we find no other logical destination once our abbey investigations are complete.*
- 4. As per previous research undertaken thus far we shall concentrate our efforts in the Aran Islands off Galway rather than Arranmore the island off Donegal in Ireland. (However we don't dismiss this as a possibility either). The sites of ancient Celts at Dun Aengus and other related sites such as the 7 pairs of stones or mounds will be investigated¹. There's a small, old church on Inishmeer, which I would like to see.*
- 5. We have flown to York in Yorkshire and this is close to Rievaulx Abbey.*
- 6. We'll need to keep closer watch upon James and Roger so as to not lose them again.*

Chapter 7

¹ This directly corresponds to Dawn's astrology reading with her feathers, a most unusual occurrence.

2nd Snow 803 (Alusia)
2003 (Earth)

230pm 19th August

Mortimer does some checks on past items already DA'd or divinated including the ring, a brooch and also the wall. The results are as follows:

Ring It has had a hair moulded / forged into it when first created.

Its purpose is to reinforce the 'compact'. There was blood sacrifice involved in the making of the ring.

It appears to be have been made around or over 1000yrs ago.

Brooch. Made in a similar fashion to the ring. It operates as a magical 'binding' which binds the wearer to the wearer of the ring. Its function is to enhance the natural traits of the wearer.

Activated by the spilling of blood. Some of the brooch wearer and some of the ring wearers were intermingled when 'consecrated' to the purpose of the 'compact'

There is a magical fealty intrinsic to wearing the brooch; this signifies you as part of the 'order' or 'unit'.

It also allows communication with other wearers of the brooches.

Death doesn't sever the linkage.

If we were to take a brooch or the ring that has been 'activated' by others such as the bodies/corpses/skeletons here in the crypt then the following would occur: The item will have the effect upon the new wearer of consuming¹ them. It would also seek to be returned here to the crypt

The Wall The North end was investigated again and the following discovered.

To operate it you have to be of fey blood, possibly Elven would do.

¹ Either by consuming their being, using their life energy etc!

It requires a ritual involving some blood, perhaps a cut across the palms, perhaps more.

It summons the guardians or members of the compact.

We discuss the option of summoning the fairies using the book and decide it would be good to do once we have divined the best location to do so - as per the spell contained in the fairie book we have. Kayseri, Faith and Thoric volunteer to leave the crypt area and scout out locations for the spell.

Mortimer tries his 'speaks with the dead' so as to find more information on the situation. But due to the confluence of interplanetary alignments, cosmic influences and other issues he fails to do so. He'll try again once it's dark!

After the last of our investigations in the crypt itself the rest of us decide to go and join the others and see what they have found.

We find the others in the herb garden area near some small shrubs and benches. Faith appears to be asleep and Thoric has a blank look on his face as we enter the area. Kayseri is nowhere to be found. We ask Faith where she is and she groggily replies "who, what".

It seems she has gone to Jane and asked her to undertake some more research on our behalf, namely the specific manuscript pieces and interpretations of these.

The afternoon passes for us in relaxed states while we wait for the sun to go down and darkness to fall.

We encounter Jane late in the day around 5pm and she has some exciting news for us.

Manuscript # 2 This is more lyrics from a song by 'Queen'. 'Queen' is a group of singers and musicians known as 'Queen'.

Manuscript # 3 This is lyrics from a song by 'Queen'. 'Queen' is a group of singers and musicians known as 'Queen'.

We discuss the manuscript pieces in a more informal way.

Mortimer proffers the following opinion:

Just a little extra note about our pieces of manuscript that seem to hold lyrics from some hundreds of years before their writing, and the reason for my momentary mental discomfiture... For the members of the group who were fortunate enough not to know to what Scaramouche" pertained -- it refers to an astrology reading, made by Dawn, whilst on another plane, as we attempted to ascertain who had ordered an attempt to arrest the party, and revealed one Scaramouche, captain of the palace guards. The reading Dawn gained appears to be another set of lyrics from the same bards. Now, for reasons that are not worth getting into at this point, the mere fact that Dawn's reading -- made in that time and place -- happens to be a song, is quite unsurprising, and even that it is an extra-planar song is no more surprising than reflections and echoes of aether vessels and "wombles". But, what we appear to have here are two manuscripts, and one astrology reading, all of which are attributable to a single group of bards. One of these is dedicated to the theme of "My Fairy King", and the bardic group named themselves "Queen"... and... the lead bard bore the name "Mercury", which is the local name for the analogous planet to that named "Ariel" in common, "Hermodir" in Dwarven and "O'mios" in the Elven tongue, and which is associated in both worlds with the mythological figure of the winged Messenger of the Gods. Co-incidence seems improbable.

- Mortimer

Faith's response to this was:

Assuming it's not co-incidence, what does it mean? If Mr Mercury was indeed a lost fairy or immortal (which his background seems to support), but he's dead, then his songs are likely to be true. Does this mean we get all of his lyrics and look for further meaning, or that we go to Aran?

- Faith

And Dawn's response amounted to:

First we need to ascertain/confirm who actually wrote the songs. I thought minstrels often sing songs written by other people. If it is indeed the Mercury guy, then Mortimer's reading of the situation seems good. Although Mercury is dead, his burial place

wasn't known by Jane, which may just be a failing on Jane's part, but may indicate that there is none.

Perhaps he has taken on a new role in delivering peace to the world, and a new guise - OJ Simpson, or those other guys we had info about. In short, perhaps Mercury is the peacemaker. And if his body did have a disease, he may be in need of healing, to prevent him from going beyond the veil. His spirit may be waiting along the way to the fairyland Triagnoathan (?), and need summoning back. Perhaps the Peacemaker from the vault is also Mercury.

In terms of what to do next, I think summoning a book fairy in the study would be good, to find out about the book - since James et al are keen to know about it. Now its dark, Mortimer could ask the old Earl about the history of the house and the book, ask the ring/brooch skeleton and/or we could put touch experiment with brooches. Like does touching different brooches mean one appears at different parts/positions of the circle, and if the ritual circle is made at different times & places, according to when the compact for the wearer was made. Also, whether we merely observe the ritual, or if we can talk to the guys involved. I wasn't there for long enough to tell. Touching the unlinked brooch may get us a one-to-one interview with the leader, and assuming my assumptions are correct, we might have a nice chat to the Peacemaker, to find out what he wants, and how we can best help/heal him. I don't feel any compulsion to do any of this, before somebody asks.

- Dawn

Other opinions we offered, discussed and ruminated over but were of little substance when compared to the passages above. The afternoon passed quickly with all these discussions until the 6th hour had arrived and we started our summoning activities in earnest. Dinner is served to us and some use the opportunity to get changed into attire¹ perhaps more suitable for strange and foreign realms.

We all assemble again in the herb garden and start our work. Dawn offers to read the spell and see what happens and so she sits in the spot indicated and reads the spell aloud. After a few moments there is no apparent effect and we all wonder if it has worked at all. Dawn reads it aloud again with also no apparent effect.

¹ Full weapons and Armour now replace the suit I have been wearing all day. The suit may need cleaning and so I'll pack it away till I can cantrip it clean later, and repair the tears in it.

I go to try and cast the spell from the book and Thaeuss suggests I use some blood to help it along. Knowing as much about fairies and having had as much contact as I have in the past this seems a good idea to me so I empty one of my vials of blood out in front of me and read the spell aloud. After a short time I get bitten on the ear and a little sprite is seen to be dripping blood from his teeth and then hiding behind my head. The others can see the nasty fairy but I can't cos he's hiding from me.

At this point Mortimer hears a little fairie in his hair having a quiet laugh. He speaks to her a short few moments and then excuses himself as he needs something from the kitchen and he disappears down to the kitchen with Thoric escorting him. Meanwhile the sprite has come and bit me again causing more pain for me and I'm getting a little irate at this.

Faith and I try to talk with the Sprite and the conversation turns to the summoning book of Lady Coddingtons Squashed fairies. The sprite who by now is hiding in Kayseri's hair hisses at the mention of the evil book, I in my irate state grab the book to show the sprite if this is the 'bad book' and he shrieks and disappears.

Unfortunately at the same time Thoric along with Mortimer and fairie friend return to the room (along with a bowl of milk). The fairie with Mortimer starts to go as well but is soothed by Mortimer's good counsel. Mortimer asks us to put the book away and we do so by putting it under a far bench and cloak to cover it up. The fairie seems less nervous once we have done so. I apologise and explain what had happened and she tell us some things of note.

"The book is bad, she caught many of us in there and it's a nasty place. My name is Alice and I'm a garden fairy. The other one was a nasty fairie and he came cos of the blood. You shouldn't use blood in summoning as it draws the bad fairies. You're lucky the unseeley court isn't close by you know." She has some of the milk and looks at us. "You're not from here are you? I can see you aren't". Mortimer handles the introduction and she continues.

"The fairie court moves each solstice and fairie circles are the best place to try and contact the court but there isn't one very near to here."

We ask her about various things such as the peacemaker, the compact etc.

⇒ The peace man or peacemaker made the compact with the fairie court.

At the end of our chat with her when we have some of the information we need but have decided we need a library fairie to be more exacting on the book we let her go and wish her a good evening. Before she goes Mortimer asks if there's anything we can do for her, she asks for a blessing from Mortimer, one of his special blessings on the countryside nearby. He does this and as a result the area of 7 acres is blessed for the next 7 years. She is most happy at this and bounds off in delight.

Actions undertaken, decided or being cogitated over:

- 1. We have completed physical investigation and have watched the videotapes of Vault.*
- 2. We have come to the place the book was discovered and undertaken some investigations.*
- 3. We still plan to visit the Aran Islands after the abbey (providing we find no other logical destination once our abbey investigations are complete.*
- 4. As per previous research undertaken thus far we shall concentrate our efforts in the Aran Islands off Galway rather than Arranmore the island off Donegal in Ireland. (However we don't dismiss this as a possibility either). The sites of ancient Celts at Dun Aengus and other related sites such as the 7 pairs of stones or mounds will be investigated¹. There's a small, old church on Inishmeer, which I would like to see.*
- 5. We have flown to York in Yorkshire and this is close to Rievaulx Abbey.*
- 6. We'll need to keep closer watch upon James and Roger so as to not lose them again.*
- 7. We have summoned and talked with a fairie*

¹ This directly corresponds to Dawn's astrology reading with her feathers, a most unusual occurrence.

Chapter 8

2nd Snow 803 (Alusia)
August 2003 (Earth)

9pm 19th

We head down to the library and Dawn summons some fairies¹. Quite a few turn up quickly and we start to discuss books, libraries and fairy events. They live in the books themselves but reveal that they cannot read per se. They remember the book of prophecies; it was a fairy book and had been here a long time, although recently it has been taken away.

They also remember the Bad book (aka Lady Coddingtons squashed fairie book) and they are all unanimous in their dislike of it and what it represents.

Thoric enquires, "Are they all little girl fairies or are there boy fairies as well?"

We end up speaking mainly to a lovely little book fairy named 'Rustle'; who is quite helpful. She advises us to contact the old wise woman in the dream world in order to progress our enquiries into how to contact the fairie court, she gives Faith a spell to help her. She also tells us some rules for how to behave in the fairie realms.

Rules of behaviour in fairie lands (advised by a fairie)

- ⇒ Don't eat or drink anything there.
- ⇒ Be nice to everyone as they often aren't what they appear to be at all. They can be much more powerful than they appear and much more dangerous.
- ⇒ If it's night when you arrive then leave before the dawn and if it's day when you arrive leave before the fall of night.

Faith to Rustle "I'm a little small for a big, but I'm big for a small"

¹ These appear different to the outdoor fairies, as they are sallow/pale of complexion, have papery looking wings and have dim/ bland colourings on their wings.

It's decided that not all of us should go to the fairie realm to try and find the old, wise woman so we leave Kayseri, Thoric and Dawn behind to look more in the library and perhaps talk with more fairies.

We^I all read the spell that Rustle has provided us to contact the wise old woman and we appear to fall asleep, to those not reading the spell. Each of us appear in a snow covered landscape which seems real enough and none of us have any problem being here, until Thaeuss arrives. Once Thaeuss appears he sees the snow and lets out a small shriek of pain^{II} and he immediately casts a spell, which enables him to leap into the air and take flight away from the snow-covered ground.

Once we get to look around for a few minutes we are in a snow covered woodland dale with a small hill in the distance which is where we decide to head for first so as to better get a view of the lands and where to go.

While Clarissa, Faith and I walk towards the hill, Mortimer flies up to join Thaeuss and discuss his reaction to the snow as well as get to the hill before the 'walkers' to scout out the lay of the land and what may be on top of the hill. Before we get to the hill Mortimer recommends we do widdershins^{III} around the base of the hill^{IV}. We three 'walkers' do so and after completing the revolutions a small doorway appears half way up in the hillside from which emanates a shaft of light.

We all make for the doorway and pass within the portal to find ourselves in a warm, comfortable cave cluttered with shelves, containers of herbs, many books and tomes, quite a few cats and an old woman who introduces herself as 'Verity' and we return the courtesy. We talk a short while and get to the crux of why we are here which is to find out how to contact the fairie court or where they may be at present.

^I Clarissa, Mortimer, Thaeuss, Faith and I

^{II} It would appear he has a phobia or fear of the snow.

^{III} Which is 9 times anti-clockwise

^{IV} The hill itself is only some 60ft high but about 200ft in circumference

She says "they are travelling at present and in order to meet the court you need to travel the fairie road which can be accessed via stone circles. You should start at Dawn in a stone circle at which time a path should appear which will enable you to travel the fairie path. But beware you must all choose your paths and may see different ones from each other"

We thank her for her advice and ask how we may return to the other world and she glances to her left, we all follow her glance, where there was a plain stonewall when we came in now appears a doorway. "Pass through the doorway and you shall return whence you came", we thank her and leave the cave. We all wake and find ourselves back in the library.

Once back we find that Jane is asleep in the library where we were and it appears she went through to the dream world after us. Fearing for her safety Faith, Mortimer and myself again read the spell to take us back to the dream world and fall asleep again. Apparently this time Faith starts snoring 'like a drunken sailor' someone states and the sound apparently resonates quite widely throughout the house, perhaps enough to wake the dead?

Rustle pipes up and says "they're just asleep you know as they can't go back to the dream world twice in one day" and then the sleepers are woken by normal means, which in the case of Faith is a short sharp slap to wake her from the state of somnolence she currently occupies. We are all thus woken but find Jane still happily away in the dream world, we can do little but wait - and have some tea/coffee while we do so.

Jane returns a few minutes later seemingly refreshed, " did you see the wonderful glade and the city?" We relate our experiences in the dream world, which are very different to hers. She had appeared in a spring woodland glade full of flowers, had travelled to the city of 'Mabon' and spent some time with fairie folk there before being sent back here by a strange portal that had magically appeared when a fairie pointed at it.

2nd Snow 803 (Alusia)
August 2003 (Earth)

10pm 19th

We all feel that the day is coming to an end and so some of us leave the library and move back to the crypt to finish our line of investigations there by way of Mortimer's Speak to the Dead. Faith and Kayseri sit with Jane to search the 'internet' to locate nearby stone circles and other bits of information we are seeking.

A number of questions are asked to the ring-bearer finding out the following information:

⇒ Are they an ally of the Fairies?

YES

⇒ Was the peace-make one of them?

YES

⇒ Did they have a full membership?

YES

⇒ Did the Peacemaker relinquish his membership?

YES

⇒ Was Aran one of their sacred sites?

YES

⇒ Was the Peacemaker a Man?

YES

⇒ Was the Peacemaker a Bard?

YES

⇒ Was the Peacemaker one of the long lived?

YES

⇒ Did the Peacemaker write books?

NO

⇒ Did the compact fight to remove the fairies?

YES

⇒ Is the 'Veil' Death?

YES

⇒ Is the 'Veil' between the Fairie and mortal realms?

YES

⇒ Did they start the war?

NO

⇒ Did they end the war?

YES

⇒ Is there a copy of the treaty ending the war?

YES

We all troop down to the kitchen where we find the cook is already making breakfast after having been disturbed by an eager someone already this morning. We hastily wolf bacon, eggs, sausages and baked beans down and I remember to take an extra amount of coffee in an oversized cup for drinking later on.

We all then proceed outside, bid farewell to James and Roger who will stay here to await our return and quickly teach the basic's of flying via our spells to Jane before leaping into the air headed for Rievaulx Abbey. We decide to follow the well lit roads which have the bright lights along them to reach our destination as Jane says one of these bright roads goes quite close to the ruins we seek. This plan works well and by 430am we have found the abbey ruins, landed on the nearby hill safely and are waiting for the dawn to rise in the ESE sky.

The stone circle itself has 9 stones of which only 1 is really standing upright as it should be, the others have fallen down or over and are semi clad in the grass growing verdantly on the hill. We all take a direction to look in between the stones so as to maximise our chances of seeing more than one path. The stones have magical auras of 'transformation' and especially so in the 'King-stone' or the large still standing stone. Thaeuss further detects that the stones were last used to access the fairie realm some 65 years ago and that the exact spell imbued in the stones is 'transformation to and from mortal realms'

3rd Snow 803 (Alusia)
August 2003 (Earth)

4.55am 20th

Dawn breaks and we see the rays of the first light break across the landscape, we all watch our respective stones and adjoining spaces, seeing nothing until Faith pipes up and asks us to look Dawn's way. We do so and we see behind her is a shadow which is stretched so that it touches a good part of the 'King-stone' at which point the rock seems to be gone and a multitude of stars abound. Thoric goes through the stone and then returns saying its safe to come through. We all then walk through the stone, I take Jane's hand and we walk through together with Dawn entering last.

*3rd Snow 803 (Alusia) 5am20th August 2003 (Earth)
Unknown? (Fairie)*

The Fairie road

The road appears to be of a stone, gravely construction or interconnected stones some 5 ft wide, while the landscape around us is subfusc and seemingly lifeless. Where there is vegetation the grass is grey/green and moss abounds. The sky appears to be of purple, black hues. We quickly assess the area as being a very low mana area^I. As an experiment we create a paste made of 'holy water' and shamrock and put the paste on Faith's eyes. Jane explains that it was supposed to be an aid in seeing past fairie illusions^{II} but it seemingly has no affect on Faith.

A number of DA's go off which determine the plane to be the Fairie Vestibule. We start walking along the path in our initial direction of entry.

Actions undertaken, decided or being cogitated over:

- 1. We have completed physical investigation and have watched the videotapes of Vault.*
- 2. We have come to the place the book was discovered and completed investigations.*
- 3. We still plan to visit the Aran Islands after the abbey (providing we find no other logical destination once our abbey investigations are complete.*
- 4. As per previous research undertaken thus far we shall concentrate our efforts in the Aran Islands off Galway rather than Arranmore the island off Donegal in Ireland. (However we don't dismiss*

^I Approximately 2.5 times the normal mana cost for spell casting.

^{II} Probably primitive forms of witch sight no doubt.

this as a possibility either). The sites of ancient Celts at Dun Aengus and other related sites such as the 7 pairs of stones or mounds will be investigated¹. There's a small, old church on Inishmeer, which I would like to see.

5. *We have flown to York in Yorkshire*
6. *We have flown to Rievaulx Abbey.*
7. *We'll need to keep closer watch upon James and Roger so as to not lose them again.*
8. *We have summoned and talked with multiple fairies*
9. *We have started our journey along the fairie road.*

Chapter 9

*3rd Snow 803 (Alusia) 5am20th August 2003 (Earth)
Unknown? (Fairie)*

We proceed along the path, taking into account it's width and our desire to stay within its parameters we are in the following marching order.

Faith Clarissa
Thoric Broc
Mortimer Thaeuss
Jane
Kayseri Dawn

This will enable Faith to be using her skills to scout ahead, Thoric to peer over her head to the road ahead and a goodly amount of our Melee power to be facing forward along the likely axis of attack or disturbance.

¹ This directly corresponds to Dawn's astrology reading with her feathers, a most unusual occurrence.

We wander along discussing many things to pass the time; the nature of magnetism comes to the fore, a past rain of strawberries (or was that cream after the previous fall of strawberries?), we discuss directions here in the fairie realm along with fairie lore and a number of other topics.

Faith sees up ahead a doorway comprised of 3 rocks and we continue along the road getting closer as we go until we arrive at the structure. It is a structure seemingly representing the primitive trinity but more shaped perhaps with a portal/doorway in the centre, which is of a dark colour and effervescent appearance. A series of DA/DE's go off to investigate it briefly but they only tell us this is a transportation portal of some sort.

Jane, I notice at this point has anointed her eyes with the Holy green paste made from holy water and ground shamrock and they show as a green tint around her eyes.

Faith goes through and then returns back to us safely, although babbling about loosing her litter bearers who were apparently just down the road around the corner. Puzzled Clarissa goes through next and then returns saying Faith must be mad as it's a portal to close to where she was born in fact! I then go through to see a woodland scene, which is different to the scene described, by Faith and Clarissa, I return and advise all of them to go through then we can carry on. After we have all gone through once we all return to the road.

Since we each see different scenes¹ while there I surmise that it is merely a place of reflection of where we came from or a 'rest stop' or perhaps an illustration of the different paths in our lives and where we go / how we act is dependant on our viewpoints. Oh well we decide to continue on along our path and see where it leads.

¹ But all have in common a path leading off and around a corner, just the landscape varies

Dawn is getting tired of this walking lark and wishes to fly off but due to prescriptions we have previously received involving advised actions while in the fairie realms Clarissa has advised against it. A number of us are wondering where the road is leading and hope to for some guidance but we are advised to not pray to any 'Powers of Light'¹ while here in the fairie realm as it's not a 'POL'friendly' place.

We continue walking along the path in front of us. Faith being vertically challenged asks Thoric if she can climb onto his shoulders to save her legs as well as afford her a greater field of vision. Thoric being the gentleman and sturdy Dwarf that he is readily acquiesces and soon she is elevated almost to 6ft in height and quite happily sitting perched on Thoric's shoulders and backpack.

At this time a glowing light is seen coming towards us, then stops in front of us. It appears to be a magical glowing ball of light and people stop to do DA/DE's on the curiosity. It seems to want us to follow it and after a brief discussion we do so.

Jane at this time comes up to me and takes me aside and just back from the now occupied party as she says she has something to tell me. "Father, when we were back at the other portal we were discussing not knowing where to go and wishing we could get some guidance on where we are supposed to go. We then went onto being advised not to invoke the names of gods for help in the matter". "Yes Jane I remember". "Well before I heard the prescription against it I said a small prayer to Gabriel asking for guidance I'm sorry. And then soon thereafter this glowy light comes along, do you think it's a coincidence or did I do something wrong?" "You've done nothing wrong Jane and we shall see what the ball would have us do".

We stop for a minute along the path and during this time I anoint my eyes with the green paste and say a quick prayer to Gabriel and then look around. The vista in front of my eyes is now different compared to

¹ Gabriel, Michael, Uriel, Raphael etc

the one prior to the anointing and praying. I mention this to Mortimer as well as a rundown of what Jane told me, he's quite astonished, as Faith has had the green paste on for some time but to no affect. Mortimer tries the paste and then opens himself to connecting with the powers of light and finds he can do so as well as his vision has been changed. Perhaps the ball is a guide sent by Gabriel indeed.

The ball leads us to a house covering the path and then inside the door, which opens upon our approach. Inside are 2 rooms, one on either side of the hall. Inside each of the rooms are 2 'pictures' or 'frames' inside which are landscapes depicting a seasonal representation. In this case of the left room Winter & Spring and the right one displays summer and autumn. The ball doesn't wish us to linger here so we pass on through with cursory investigation. The picture / frame is a magical one of - permanent entrapment (seasonal).

We exit the house and continue along the path now through a forest.

About 20minutes after the house we are walking along and we feel / sense the approach of some beings - we feel on horseback. The glowing ball seems to stop, and then seems to quiver a bit followed by its dive into a nearby patch of brush which hides it quite well.

We are Incredulous at this behaviour by the ball whilst being intrigued so we move to one side of the path in now single file to clear space and await the arrivals. We get another feeling, one of miasma come over us when we estimate the new arrivals to be some 50yards away, on the path around the corner and it's not a good feeling. Faith quickly cast quickness and both Thoric and I break our 'sticks', which represent our primary weapons.

Next a troop of horsemen and small dog / insect like creatures come upon us and we look up to see one the horses the most frighteningly beautiful creatures which we surmise to be the UnSeelie court on a Hunt.

They pervade an aura of fear for all of us as well as a nasty disgusting odour bringing us all close to nausea¹ which we all valiantly hold off due to other nasty experiences up to this point. The little skittering 'dog' creatures have lots of teeth and an offensive smell as well.

Unfortunately the fear has an affect on Dawn and she goes berserk, quickly firing a lightning bolt at the UnSeelie Prince, which he deflects, harmlessly into the undergrowth. Dawn then draws her Rapier and starts to physically attack the prince but Faith at our instruction steps in her way, briskly apologises and then runs her through to avoid further combat. Luckily Faith's blow missed all the vital organs and I quickly kneel down to stabilise her wounds.

Meantime the party has taken a subservient posture in the face of such obvious power displayed by the Prince and his court. We rightly acknowledge his power and his grace in not taking offence at Dawn's actions, which seem only to amuse him and those around him. After a brief spate of pleasantries he and his court leave and pass by us along the road, quickly disappearing from view into the woods and undergrowth.

The Glowing ball at this point reappears acting agitated; it appears it wishes us to leave the path and head into the undergrowth away from the path. I pick Dawn up and carry her for a while until she revives at which point I give her my healing potion to bring her back to some semblance of normal. She doesn't remember the encounter at all well and we feel the amulet around her neck, which helps her be brave, may also affect her actions in encounters involving great danger and fear.

Kayseri summons an illusionary white horse and adds wings to it. Dawn is placed upon the horse and encourages it to fly as it looks like a Pegasus however it doesn't respond, instead just following us into the area off the path. We feel a little festive and I feel music would be good so I borrow a trumpet off Mortimer

¹ Like the Seagate tavern after an Orcish spiced chilly rabbit and ogre offal stew eating competition, washed down with Saydars Skeleton rotting special brew. – They usually close up for a day afterwards to air the place and scrape whatever has started growing there away.

and start playing a few bars, we all discover this is rather loud however, I'm encouraged to stop playing and then return the trumpet. We carry on our off path trek with less noise and music.

The path has receded well away and we are dependant on the balls guidance, although the ball seems to be constant in its direction of travel so we have some confidence. There is a growing scent on the wind of a musky, heavy fragrance, which is reminiscent of the heady days of first falling in love vaguely concupiscence like. The sound of bells is distantly heard and the ball is glowing more so than previously to our observant minds. A light heartedness comes over the party and we start joking and discussing ribald topics most parties tend to avoid. Our breath has changed to be shortened and heavier as if after strenuous exertions and fun!

A sexual rating system for Dwarves is discussed with a keg rating being the yardstick of comeliness. A 3 keg rating indicative of someone you'd need to drink a lot to sleep with, while a no keg rating indicates someone you'd love to sleep with. Beer goggles are also discussed in relation to the keg rating¹.

Up ahead we espy a small clearing and we soon see around 100 beings centred on a pair of fairie folk atop a small central mound, all area sitting or playing in a nicely grassed area surrounded by low mounds with beautiful well-tended trees. There were all sorts of races represented here with the majority being fairie folk both big and small.

As well enter the boundary of the circular clearing in our rag tag scrub/brush travelling formation one of the two central figures come over to our group leaving his lady sitting on a central mound still 'holding court' it would seem. He appears as a young man with striking blue eyes and once he is next to us introduces himself as 'Wayland'. At once Dawn swoons and would have fallen to the ground but for Wayland's quick action in catching her and sweeping her into his arms.

¹ Obviously the keg rating is quite arbitrary after all who could resist anything after 1 keg of Saydars old troll special brew, come to think of it who could stay standing after it never mind see anything!!!

Thoric is heard to say; "That's not something you see everyday!" to which someone replies "what, Dawn being picked up by a strange man?" A number of smiles hide the fact that it may not be such a rare occurrence!

Wayland bids us welcome, indicates we should follow him and we proceed to the centre of the circle, where we see a unique woman surrounded by fairie folk who move aside to allow us access to the centre area. Thoric having now seen close up the lady on the cushions adjusts his sporran, remarks quietly "she's a no keg woman!" and looks at her with bright eyes as if basking in the vista of something most beautiful. We all formally introduce ourselves to Wayland and his 'queen' with varying degrees of courtly success.

Wayland deposits Dawn on some of the pillows and briefly fusses over her. Dawn thanks him for his care and after his asking what would make her feel better replies "A kiss from you would work". Wayland looks to his 'wife', asking, "Are these guests?" to which she replies after briefly looking us all over "Yes my dear". Wayland then apologises to Dawn that he cannot kiss her but would instead get her some water. During this time we notice that both Clarissa and Kayseri are looking at Dawn with very real murderous intent in their eyes at the amount of attention she is receiving from Wayland.

I'm praying quietly in my head to Gabriel for divine patience and will power to help me resist the temptation of staring at the beautiful queen upon her softly cushioned mound, which would be so easy to luxuriate in!

The 'queen' seeing our unease and being well aware of her affect upon us poor males as well as Wayland's obvious affect upon the woman, states that she has sent for Tom to speak with us and he will be here momentarily. At this moment a middle aged human male arrives and introduces himself as Tom asking that we accompany him away from the circle and the crowds there so that we have some discussions. We move away and to the side of the clearing near a large tree, we sit down

resting and gaining back our breath as well as taking in the scenery.

Tom asks why we are here and after our explanation sits and talks with us.

⇒ *"Many years ago there was a fairie war between the courts and the war spilled over into mortal lands. After sometime the war was settled by way of a peace treaty bought about by the work of the Peacemaker and his brotherhood of followers in the 'compact' as well as a society of merchants^I".*

⇒ *The UnSeelie court has long sought to break this treaty.*

⇒ *The peacemaker cannot be located by the fairie of any court and indeed he is hidden from their sight as being anyone other than a seemingly 'normal' mortal male.*

⇒ *There are a number of physical elements to the treaty as well as the peacemaker himself; these include a book, chest of gold, staff and a crown.*

⇒ *The society of merchant has a number of strange symbols and sigils signifying the society members and locations.*

⇒ *In regards to the manuscript pieces that we are following*

- *Tom wrote the first a long time ago during a period he spent in the mortal realm*
- *The second one while in Tom's handwriting and disturbingly familiar is in fact a forgery probably done by Ariel of the UnSeelie court during his trickster phase*
- *The third one is also a forgery probably also by Ariel for the same purpose.*
- *We can surmise from this information that the UnSeelie are still actively pursuing their plan of disrupting the treaty by having us inadvertently find the peacemaker so they can then dispose of him. They are using the manuscript pieces to give us a trail which could possibly lead us to the peacemaker as we can 'see' him being non fairie folk^{II}*

^I The 'Freemasons'

^{II} Well not fairie folk from this plane of 'Earth' anyway

o This does explain why the UnSeelie court were so understanding when Dawn attacked them earlier as they want us to keep on our 'quest' so they overlooked the bad manners and physical attack. Nasty little fairies!!

⇒ We are informed by Tom that the peacemaker won't be found unless he'd like to be found and indeed only Tom has seen him once in the last 100 years or so when he met him during 'a world war' at which time the peacemaker was a doctor on the front lines.

⇒ Tom knows a way to send a message to the peacemaker but doesn't know how long it will take to get to him or where the peacemaker is at this time.

We don't wish to endanger the life of the peacemaker either especially now that it appears the UnSeelie has duped us into finding him for nefarious purposes. We discuss the issues and a plan is formed. We will get Tom to send a message to the peacemaker but rather than getting him to contact us in person we will leave him the 'mobile number' of the 'phone' that Jane has so that when he does contact her it will be from a distance and 'untraceable' by anyone. This seems a sensible precaution given the circumstances.

Tom will need to return with us to the mortal realm after discussing what we had planned to do, agreeing to come to Aran as a way of maintaining our previous strategy and hopefully not alerting the UnSeelie court that we are onto them.

Now that we have decided this we return to the centre of the court and bid our sad farewells to the Queen and Wayland. She will bless us each with a kiss, she lingers trifle long over kissing Thoric although she is quite 'normal' in kissing Mortimer & Thaeuss and very chaste with me unfortunately lingering just long enough to plant a kiss upon my forehead. She then gives each 'lady' a peck on the cheek. Wayland tries to be equally judicious in his parting kiss for the ladies with short pecks on their cheeks but Dawn's face suddenly moves and he finds himself giving her a kiss square upon the lips to Dawns great delight!

We head to where Tom indicates a portal to Aran can be found and we bid farewell to the court, walking away

with heads down at the sorrow of parting. I thank Gabriel for the strength to resist such temptations as I have just had.

Actions undertaken, decided or being cogitated over:

- 1. We have completed physical investigation and have watched the videotapes of Vault.*
- 2. We have come to the place the book was discovered and completed investigations.*
- 3. We still plan to visit the Aran Islands after the abbey (providing we find no other logical destination once our abbey investigations are complete.*
- 4. As per previous research undertaken thus far we shall concentrate our efforts in the Aran Islands off Galway rather than Arranmore the island off Donegal in Ireland. (However we don't dismiss this as a possibility either). The sites of ancient Celts at Dun Aengus and other related sites such as the 7 pairs of stones or mounds will be investigated¹. There's a small, old church on Inishmeer, which I would like to see.*
- 5. We have flown to York in Yorkshire*
- 6. We have flown to Rievaulx Abbey.*
- 7. We'll need to keep closer watch upon James and Roger so as to not lose them again.*
- 8. We have summoned and talked with multiple fairies*
- 9. We have started our journey along the fairie road, passed by with one incident the UnSeelie court and finally reached the Seelie court.*
- 10. We have found more about the manuscript pieces and our purpose here as supposed pawns of the trickster led UnSeelie court.*

Chapter 10

7th Seedtime 803 (Alusia)

10am, Saturday, 22nd November 2003 (Earth)

We are at the portal, which is a large rock in a field near the Seelie court field, it represents a 'join' or doorway between the fairie / mortal realms,

¹ This directly corresponds to Dawn's astrology reading with her feathers, a most unusual occurrence.

it is here that Tom bids us farewell and good luck on our journey. He is to go, attempting to make contact with the Peacemaker and leaves us a way of contacting him should we have need¹. We are to investigate Aran as a possible location for the Peacemaker based on historical information provided by the fey. I decide to step through to see what sort of location we will appear at and so I disappear into the rock-face followed shortly by all.

We exit to a seaside location, which is a fort like structure atop a cliff by the sea. We see a number of standing stones as well as very large stone blocks some 5m high by 15 to 25m in length all lying perpendicular to the sea, they are huge and would have taken a lot of effort to get them here placed just how they are. After a few minutes orientation we deduce that this is Dun Aengus or Dun Aonghasa, a set of ruined fortifications on the southern coast of the isles named Aran (Inishmore).

We check and the mana is normal for our casting purposes. Since we had planned to come here we wander around the site until we come upon a tollbooth where a bored looking lass asks us for a 'Euro' each for admittance to the site. She comments how interesting that we have come here dressed for the period "Are you part of a medieval re-enactment group then? Thoric replies "something like that" and then starts using his considerable charm on the poor lass after she makes a gaff of saying "you must be a dwarf, oops I'm sorry I should have said 'A Vertically challenged individual"

Kayseri looks around the site while invisible and finds signs of the 'Secret Society'¹¹ we have encountered in the past, she entices Thaeuss to help uncover the areas secret and soon the wall is made transparent which reveals a sign on the wall matching the symbols for the 'compact'. Mortimer is encouraged to Divinate the symbol, which reveals it, is:

⇒ A communication device

¹ We are given a small acorn and told to break it should we need to talk with Tom. A number of chuckles are heard from party members with comments such as "great, when we are in need, just plant and water it for the next 50 years and then Tom and the Elven/fey court will be able to speak with us!"

¹¹ The 'Freemasons'

- ⇒ Activated by touch
- ⇒ You need fey blood to activate it
- ⇒ It has the range to communicate across planes
- ⇒ It is a permanent 'device'

We spend more time wandering the site and getting local flavour from Thoric's skilful

Interrogation of the local lass whose name is 'Alice'. Kayseri thinks she has seen a pictorial representation of the Peacemaker on wall hangings / tapestries and we may return later to liberate them if needed.

7th Seedtime 803 (Alusia)

1pm, Saturday, 22nd November 2003 (Earth)

Dawn has found and befriended a local bird named Karrick and is speaking with him at great length about a range of topics with no issue in terms of communication difficulties. He can see invisible creatures and can tell 'enchanters or Magic users'.

Upon Alice's recommendation Faith uses her 'mobile phone' to arrange lunch at a nearby restaurant which just a mile away, after she had seen a 'flyer' in the tollbooth /kiosk.

Once we have finished the preliminary investigation of the site we decide to go have lunch^I and trek the mile to the restaurant. We are shown to an outside balcony table where we dine on freshly caught island Salmon and Potatoes, both of which are succulent and delicious. Dawn is also able to continue conversing with Karrick while outside and we explain her away as an expert 'ornithologist' who has a way with birds.

I ask for a paper while we are here and seeing it I let out an exclamation of surprise^{II} over an aspect of the broadsheet, namely the date which is now 3 ½ months after we left the manor. We then telephone James and illuminates us to what we are doing. He's in a state since we left the manor house and they've been looking for us a lot but with no luck, Jane has been reported to her employers as having taken a leave of absence. He'll be on the first plane to get us so we are to expect him this afternoon.

^I The fact that this coincides with the 'closing' of the site for tourists is pure coincidence.

^{II} Probably "Holy Gabriel, Wow!"

We continue nibbling at food as we converse amongst ourselves and it's at this time that I notice some unusual changes^I to our party. Firstly the shorter^{II} individuals in our group seem to be taller than they have been over the past few days (real ones) some to the measure of half a foot, which is astonishing. Also those of our party, who could have been called less than stunning beauty-wise^{III}, seem to have a healthier appearance with a small 'glow' about them.

Jane as an example was previously described as being:

"The other is a short apparently middle-aged human female some 5'5" in height who appears to be quite 'plump' or 'heavy'. Her clothing consisting of knitted top, ugly skirt, scuffed plain black bag and 'sensible' flat black shoes mark her as another anti-fashion victim as none are matched or even try to act in concert to enhance her appearance in any way. She too has spectacles and her mousy brown hair is pulled back away from her face in a 'bun' revealing sharp blue eyes behind the lenses and a pale and pasty appearance"

She appears to be slightly taller, younger and no longer appears to need her spectacles, her hair has become more lustrous and 'vibrant' and her general appearance has improved with a better complexion overall.

We decide to stay here on the island while we look around at various sites as well as wait for James to arrive and the restaurateur recommends the 'Hotel' next door. We exit the restaurant and head next door where we book rooms for the night and drop some of our heavier equipment as well as backpacks.

7th Seedtime 803 (Alusia)

3pm, Saturday, 22nd November 2003 (Earth)

We leave the hotel to wander the 'village' and somehow Dawn mentions the Peacemaker to Karrick who says he knows where the Peacemaker lives! He defines the house, which is just down the road and we hurry following his directions. After a few minutes we come to several houses and the one we are directed to is in the middle of the street. We come to the front door

^I I surmise these are as a result of our parting gift from the fairie court.

^{II} Or "vertically challenged" people

^{III} Jane as an example

and are about to knock when we see a face peering out of the window at us, surprised we hesitate just long enough for the person to move and open the door saying "do come in and out of plain sight".

We all enter and are presently standing in a comfortable 'lounge'. We ask, "are you the peacemaker?" to which he replies, "Yes I am, please sit down, explain why you are here and want to see me!"

After introductions we discuss what we have been doing, why we are doing it and the results of our investigations. He responds, divulging the following information:

- ⇒ The book is now back in its rightful place and he knows where that is, once it was removed from its previous 'safe' location it 'fled' back to where it should be.
- ⇒ He doesn't need any help from us in terms of protection as he has his own 'guardians' nearby.
- ⇒ He talks of 'paradoxes' involving past, present and future lives but doesn't illuminate us any further on this as he doesn't consider it germane to our investigations and we don't have a 'need to know'.

We notice few things of him but that there seem to be tattoo's on his body which we see briefly with the shifting of clothes as we converse. Few other details are gleamed by us.

At the end of our discussions he after thanking us for our concern and good work, asks us to leave by way of the back door. "Please feel free to pop in and see the neighbours around here so as to not obvious you came and visited with me". We do so and visit a few neighbours such as Mrs Curry, Mr Jones and Captain (retired) Jeremy Smythe, passing the time of day with each of them as well as enjoying several helpings of scones, pikelets and cups of tea / coffee.

Once we all have finished our visiting neighbours in the street we walk down towards the shopping area

where we make use of Mortimer's 'credit card'^I and buy various items such as clothing, kelp, maps, books and some kelp flavoured 'rock'^{II}. They don't have any sort of barter system here so when Faith tries to pay for her purchases with some solid silver trinkets the offer is refused and the shopkeeper asks "Whom does the child belong to?" and "she appears to have some of your good jewellery!" We discuss the neighbours and all harbour suspicions that they weren't all old and doddering, as they seemed, perhaps they were in fact the 'guardians' that the Peacemaker spoke of.

7th Seedtime 803 (Alusia)

5pm, Saturday, 22nd November 2003 (Earth)

We remember James will be flying in to join s soon, so we head down to the local 'airfield' where the 'aircraft' come in to land. We go to the building marked 'Arrivals / Departures' and we wait for the plane to arrive which should be in 10 minutes according to the schedule. Faith has some fun with the food & drink-dispensing machine, which she raids for goodies through her thief skills, however she leaves a number of solid silver trinkets to cover the costs of the items. We have a picnic outside to pass the minutes and enjoy a good selection of meat, wine, fruit and sandwiches!

The plane finally arrives with James and Roger who appear glad to see us after all this time (its only been 1 day to us)! We discuss our findings / results and then decide we should return to London for a 'debriefing'. Mortimer, Dawn and Thaeuss decide to return to the 'hotel' to recover our equipment and then fly back to London on their own spell power while the rest of us including Jane will go on an aircraft for the flight to Galway, then onto London.

7th Seedtime 803 (Alusia)

10pm, Saturday, 22nd November 2003 (Earth)

After much travel on aircraft (I'd had Feather fall on me when I was in plane in case it fell out of the sky) and passage through crowded 'airports' full of people, as well as 'traffic' along the congested London

^I Apparently a means of purchasing items without passing over currency, it was a silver one, which isn't as good as a gold one that has higher prestige attached. <Perhaps they don't know how much Mortimer earns in a year? >

^{II} This is a type of confectionary / sweet. A long tubular stick of sweet with red and white stripes.

roads some of us (Clarissa, Faith, Thoric, Kayseri, Jane and myself along with Roger & James) arrive back at Kree's London apartment for some well deserved sleep and relaxation from travelling stresses. Jane takes her leave from us and bids us farewell when some men^I come to take her for a debrief and then home.

We all go to sleep for the evening while Dawn, Mortimer and Thaeuss wing their way towards us.

8th Seedtime 803 (Alusia)

10am, Sunday, 22nd November 2003 (Earth)

A new day dawns with most of us happily ensconced in comfortable beds being well looked after by James, Roger and some more big men wearing dark suits with bulges under their jackets. To pass the time we decide to go shopping in London and we purchase a number of items, which peak our interest! We are informed that 'M' and Lorraine will be joining us later this evening around the time the others are expected to arrive. The daylight hours pass...

8th Seedtime 803 (Alusia)

9pm, Sunday, 22nd November 2003 (Earth)

Finally our flying friends arrive along with Karrick (who has expressed an interest in travelling back to Alusia with us), they barely have time before the door opens and in enters M, Lorraine and several other men in dark suits. Introductions are made along with a pot of tea and some coffee.

They are all quite excited at seeing us alive and well, they ask us to relate what has happened verbally so that a record can be made on the 'Dictaphone^{II}' which Jane has placed upon the table in between us.

We relate all that we know and surmise but leave out the identity and exact location of the Peacemaker!

The story enthralls them all for some time and there is a brief stunned silence when we finally finish our tale. We deduce from 'M's' expression that he is sceptical as to the truth of our story while Lorraine seems less sceptical, more inclined to take our tale at face value. We pass the acorn onto 'M' with advice on

^I Who arrive at James's behest

^{II} A device, which records spoken words for later 'playback' and translation into written reports.

its purpose/ usefulness as well as recommending Jane be the envoy to the fairie realm due to her experiences with us.

After all this 'M' and company thank us for our efforts and takes their leave after saying to Mortimer that his debt has been discharged.

We bid goodbye to all and pass back to Alusia through the portal.

Appendix 1 - Watches

(As set out by Thaeuss the Master Watch Scheduler)

1. Standard Watch Order - covering a 12-hour period 9 hours sleep each. This schedule covers us in most situations except for imminent danger, which is covered in the Vigilant Watch order as set out below.

7pm Mortimer => 10pm	Thaeuss => 1am	Broc => 4am	Thoric => 7am
7pm Dawn => 8:30	Clarissa => 11:30	Faith => 2:30am	Kayseri => 5:30am
Dawn => 7am			

Plus 2 or 3 golems on watch all night.

2. Vigilant Watch Order - covering a 12-hour period 8 hours sleep each. This is when we are aware of imminent danger to ourselves and can plan accordingly.

7pm Mortimer => 11pm Thaeuss => 3am Broc => 7am
 7pm Faith => 9pm Thoric => 1am Clarissa => 5am Faith => 7am
 10pm Kayseri => 2am Dawn => 6am
 Plus 2 or 3 golems on watch all night.

Appendix 2 - Usual Applications of Magic's

Earth Magic's - None *Air Magic's* - TBA *Rune Magic's* - TBA
Wicca Magic's - TBA *Binder Magic's* - TBA *Illusion Magic's* - TBA
E&E Magic's - TBA

Appendix 3 - Our suppositions in Deciphering of the Manuscript's. Guesses and Thoughts of meanings contained therein.

- ⇒ Samson the mythical strongman is a possible equivalent to Diarmid the Irish Strongman
- ⇒ The magic Hand Nuadhu / Nuada had his hand cut off and replaced with a magically crafted one.

Endnotes Section - Detailing Physical Description's of the PC's and their usual attire.

* **Thoric**, is a short dwarf some 4ft in height but carrying weaponry to his height and more, he is one of the older Guild-members although he doesn't get out a lot. He has a full rusty red coloured beard, a green tartan coloured kilt and at least one maddock with him at all times.

† **Faith** is a short female elf - 2'7" (in boots), appearing to be a girl of only 17 years of age (in human terms). She takes delight in getting into everything she can. Solid, rounded build (almost 40 lbs). She has Copper/tanned skin and an open smile. Heavily scaled dark brown & blue leather armour. Large cape (hood usually up) and a slung bundle hide's the knee-length plait of dark hair and all but the hilts of her daggers, which peep over her shoulders. She wears Over-sized furry boots. No armour/gloves on her hands. She is AKA Coya Vaithu Yacuna

‡ **Clarissa.** "Although Clarissa d'Ornay is quite short for an Elf at 5'8" and while her athletic physique indicates a degree of martial training, she moves with the grace and confidence of dancer.

Her fair, well-defined features hint at a mixture of highborn blood in the high cheekbones, almond-shaped eyes and delicate, sweeping brow and a more robust lineage that shows itself in her strong jaw line and chin. Two remarkable things obscure this incongruity. Despite her training, Clarissa has clearly not seen her second century and retains some the almost human fullness of form of that age, which softens the lines of her face and figure. Even more striking is the band of tattoo that covers her face from top of her cheeks to her brow, a woven depiction of briar thorns and scattered inverted teardrop shapes. These marks disappear into the hairline on each side of face and give her features a dark and brooding cast when they might otherwise be in repose.

Even more elaborate tattoos can be seen at the beribboned cuffs of the blouse and trews she wears, which are often closely tied in deference to her activities as a fighter and air mage. What can be seen of them appear to be exquisitely detailed cameos of moonlit vistas bordered by vines and creatures. A rumour often has it that the tattoos cover her body entirely or that they are living scenes somehow imprinted into ink and flesh. She favours practical clothes of pales blues and greys and habitually ties ribbons into her shoulder-length mousy blond hair. On adventure Clarissa is encased in a battered and patched set of Guild leathers and wields a wickedly serrated, black hand-and-a-half she has christened 'Petal'."

§ **Thaeuss** is a familiar companion, and again like Clarissa I have adventured with him many times, an elf of surprising resources and oft times very handy 'unique' abilities. Physically Thaeuss is a 6'1" Elf, probably of medium (elvish) build normally but underweight. Dark hair and eyes, average looks for an elf. He dresses in the finest of clothes with lots of jewellery normally but when adventuring he wears a plain black cloak and loose fitting black and gold tabard and trews to conceal his mithril breastplate and unusual red leather armour. He does not carry any weapons. An assortment of rings are concealed by his armoured gloves and he frequently handles a large blue sapphire and a small glowing sphere that he carries in pouches at his waist.

** **Dawn**, an enigma to me but the gossip around the guild is that she was previously known as Thistlefoot or Mary Jane. Young human female, 5'9", average build, long blonde-brown hair, looks to be not quite twenty years old. Wearing a dress made of layers of cerise (cherry/red) chiffon, which never fly up into her face, is very flattering to her if she is standing in at least a breeze. Being winter, she'll also have a cloak made from gryphon feathers inexpertly sewn onto a black backing. Also has standard guild black leather armour. Weapons carried include crossbow, black (with silver tipped ends) quarterstaff and an ornately turned silver rapier as well as a silver dagger.

†† **Kayseri** is apparently very poor lass, used to work in the guild kitchens handing out gruel to the poorer adventurers. Our 1st impression is of an unmemorable townswoman. 5'2", skinny, sallow skin, mousy hair, acne scars (PB 9) normally dresses in good town clothes, travels in leather armour

‡‡ **Mortimer** is a guild-member of very high and of good repute. He is a power in the guild in terms of knowledge contacts and experience as well as repute. He's a very youthful looking male halfling, both tall and slender for his race, (if scaled to human he'd be 6' 6" and a bit of a scarecrow). Straight, shoulder length, centre parted hair in light brown (the undiplomatic might say "mousy"), framing thin and undistinguished features, hazel eyes* and a long nose. All up, features that if more finely cast might look good on an elf, but do little to improve a halfling's comeliness. Clad, unless circumstance argues hard against it, in knee length soft boots, trews, shirt, doublet and often gloves of high quality materials in pearl and dove greys. Also newly acquired and worn over the top is a full circle cloak of rich, milky white silk interwoven with gold (samite).

* To powers (gods, demons, angels) and their agents Mortimer's eyes appear as gleaming, burnished gold.