

## **Travel's with Father Bob**

(aka Carlos's lament)

I (being Arwen Valenta, a druidic earth mage and troubadour) arrived at the Guild a week before the meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> of Thaw 799 from MMH and settled into completing some training. Come the Guild meeting I was surprised to note the attendance of Father Roberto Javier as a potential employer. After all, my previous party and I had dealings with Father Bob as we knew him in MMH. It would seem he needed to get to Saint Charles to meet up with his brother and attend to some business and hence was looking for an escort as he expected to possibly have some trouble. As I knew he was reasonably trustworthy for a Destinian and Michaline I decided to continue our association.

Arriving at the mission meeting room assigned to the adventurers interested in going with Father Bob I was pleasantly surprised to find two companions from the just previous MMH excursion had signed on too. These being Clementine (a female Hobbit, air mage, shapeshifter) and Glynn (a male Elven air mage). Both being reliable companions, whom I know I can trust in a tight situation. The other members of the party I have as yet (until now) not worked with before. As follows they are: Phaeton (Phil of the House of Tarma), a celestial mage/healer who is pacted to a healing god and Star Flower (an elven death aspected mind mage). As well as Lady Kathleen (a female human E & E) and her companion (servant? / consort?) Sir Christopher (a male human E & E Gabrielite) of Bowcourt? origins.

After a short discussion of who we were, our employer Father Bob arrived in the room to discuss our employment. Father Bob (actually Astoria Roberta de la Vega) then explained more fully what he wanted of us. He also explained that his brother Diego de la Vega (an experienced illusionist) had a price on his head in Destiny because of Don Carlos. Don Carlos found him guilty of the trumped up charge of treason (that good old catch all) mainly because of the fact he was the most wealthy individual in Destiny (and Carlos needed the money), this gave Don Carlos the excuse he needed. Diego de la Vega would find us rather than the other way round once we arrived in Saint Charles.

After he left we organised the party. It was quickly decided that Star Flower should be military leader of the party and that it was agreed that both Phaeton and myself be scribe. Then came the tricky part, with both Star Flower and Lady Kathleen wanting the position and Clementine being nominated by me. After much discussion it was decided that Lady Kathleen would be party 'spokeswoman' and Clementine would be party 'soothsayer?'. Yes, I am confused too. Next came the matter of our 'cover story' to explain why we were heading to Saint Charles. Both Lady Kathleen and I would appear to be on the same wavelength on this occasion, as we both thought of having the rest of the party being Lady Kathleen's entourage. Star Flower's suggestion of us being on a treasure map expedition is too close to what another party has used in the area before. Lady Kathleen has decided to go by the name of Katrina for the duration of this mission and likewise Star Flower is going by the name of Tarna. We then decided to leave in a week as Lady Kathleen and Sir Christopher had something to attend to, a wedding I believe.

Father Bob had obtained an astrology reading (from his brother?), though the method of divination is unknown. It is as follows :

URIEL:

Now vanish before the holy beams  
the gloomy, dismal shades of night;  
the first of days appears.  
Disorder yields to order fair the place.  
Affrighted fled hell's spirits  
black in throngs;  
down they sink in the deep of abyss,  
to endless night.

CHORUS:

Despairing, cursing rage  
attends their rapid fall.  
A new created world  
springs up at God's command.

Information on the de la Vaga was requested from Guild security. The following rather potted summary was the result :

#### On the family

The de la Vegas have always been a wealthy family; even owning some private vessels. Diego & Astoria's father, Don Diego Sr, was a famous explorer (or "adventurer") who died shortly before the "liberation" of San Carlos / St Charles. Their mother was a beautiful foreigner whom Diego Sr rescued from some unspecified danger. After the disappearance of Donna Astoria Roberta, following her betrothal to Don Carlos di Calatrava, the sole member of the family was Diego – but almost all the familial wealth was confiscated when Diego was convicted of treason and failure to register as a Magic User.

#### On Ex-Don Diego

Free thinker; high-ranked astrologer & philosopher; no useful skills; hereditary alcade of Squirrel Cove. His patronage had earned him a following amongst some of the Dons. Believed to be non-colleged or E&E by the other Dons; known to be an illusionist by the Guild. Active in the hobbit liberation of PlazToro and vicinity -- for full details see A.P.

Most realise that Don Diego's major crimes really were:

- \* being wealthy but not supporting the King Carlos & the Monarchists;
- \* being indiscreetly critical of Don Carlos;
- \* being a close friend and supporter of Don Jon Fenris, the Guildmember, and de jure heir to the Marquisate of Calatrava, the former ruler of Destiny and environs.

Possible enemies:

Baron of Ravenswood:

A former intimate of King Carlos who is desperate to regain Carlos's favour. Believed to be behind Diego's conviction.

Normanno:

Ravenswood's captain of the guard, he was the prime witness against Diego in his trial. Guild records show him to be an Orc Mind-mage assassin.

Il Barone di Scarpia:

Head of Destiny's Secret police in the South for the past 3 decades. An E&E with many resources on call.

Any ambitious Destinian.

End of Summary

Starflower obtained the two astrology readings and their answers with follow :

Question #1 : "What dangers await the party?"

Answer :

He grasps the cash with hooked claws  
Close to the courts of crooked laws  
Betraying those for whom he whores.

The raging seas about you squall.

The mountain lord who watches all.

The thunderbolts should Darkness fall.

Question #2 : "What is the name or nature of the family that is going to directly interfere with Don Diego attending?"

Answer :

Theirs not to reason who,  
Theirs but to die and do;  
Unto the Valet of Death  
Rode the six and blunder'd.

Last but not least Sir Christopher also obtained two astrology readings which are as follows :

Question : "Does Don Carlos know we are coming?"

Answer #1 :

Tho' threat'ning Dangers me surround,  
From Truth I have not swerv'd;  
With Snares the Wicked spread the Ground,  
Yet I thy Law observ'd.

Answer #2 :

397 God blesse the King , and so anoint his eies  
398 That he may see wherein his saftie lies,  
399 Vouchsafe him such a circumized eare  
400 That he may Truths with approbation hear,  
401 And him discerne who really intends  
402 His weal , from those [who] seek but their owne ends,  
403 Lest they so difficult his ways do make

(Wither, George : Vox Vulgi (1880))

8<sup>th</sup> of Thaw

We set sail on the Michaline vessel 'Death to the Infidel' for Saint Charles, with Glynn using magewind to help us get to Saint Charles a little quicker. One of the ship's officers has agreed to give us lessons on the Destinian language and the very good stability of ship is taken advantage of with people training. I cannot say that I am enjoying the voyage one bit however. The sooner we get to Saint Charles the better as far as I am concerned. Some pirates to liven things up would be a good thing to relieve to boredom of the voyage.

We have been given three rooms to share between us. I am sharing with Clementine. The order of watches has been decided upon as follows :

Katrina and myself on first watch  
Clementine and Sir Christopher on second watch  
Star Flower and Glynn on third watch  
And finally Phaeton and Father Bob on fourth watch

15<sup>th</sup> of Thaw

We are making reasonable progress and the voyage continues. On this night we hit a very heavy storm and I spent a miserable night being flung out of bed. Perhaps this was the squall mentioned in one of the astrology readings?

Father Bob requested being allowed to divinate the party, so he could check for signs of coercive magiks. After debate on the part of some party members this was agreed to. During this conversation Starflower mentioned that she could "break the hold of mind magiks over people". It was pointed out by Sir Christopher that not all coercive controls were due to mind magiks. In reply to Starflower's statement of "I cannot fix someone who has sold their soul", Father Bob stated "That's alright , I can" with all sincerity. Life with a follower of the powers of light is always interesting, indeed we have two...

17<sup>th</sup> of Thaw

A heavy sand storm hit the ship as we are now sailing close to shore and the land is very sandy.

19<sup>th</sup> of Thaw

We sight the island of St. Charles and pass the capital 'Liberation City' on our way to St. Charles the city. We arrived at St. Charles which is about 20 miles further down the coast about midday.

After some discussion the cover stories of the party were decided to be as follows :

Lady Kathleen	would be, well, our lady
Sir Christopher	be her confessor
Phaeton	her healer / court mage
Clementine	her accountant
Starflower	her bodyguard
Glynn	her other bodyguard
Father Bob	a Michaeline knight (like he could be anything else!?)
And myself	her companion , personal musician

We booked into an inn or should I say the inn on the tiny island (about 1/3 of a mile long on it's longest axis) attached to the 'mainland' of St. Charles by a seawall. This would appear to be the place for foreigners to stay. The inn is run by hobbits and appears to be a well run establishment (maybe too well, if you know what I mean).

As we first approached the inn, a verbal 'discussion' was underway. It would appear that a package left in trust in the inn's safe had disappeared and the owners were not happy! The owners (Bret churchmen from Avenal) were most unhappy that the item they were supposed to deliver from a Bishop to a third party due to arrive at any moment had gone missing.

Thadius Stienfiller (a hobbit) appears to be the owner, or at least the manager of the establishment. As he was busy dealing with the missing item his niece Viola showed us to our rooms. Four rooms were booked for our use on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the inn. Due to the fact we had to wait to be seen to due to 'discussions' going on we were offered 'free' lunch (personally I have never heard of free anything at a hobbit establishment before, or anywhere else come to think of it!) as recompense.

Lunch was very nice. The fruit juice served with it though turned out to be very alcoholic however. Phaeton requested water because of this. The servant was reluctant until he mentioned he was a healer. As Starflower had him on telepathy she was able to pass on the servants thoughts of "Well if he is a healer, maybe serving him water would be ok". Looking around at the human servants it would appear they are a bit shorter than Barony humans on average.

During lunch it became obvious very quickly that the place was full of spies, all of whom were spying on us and each other. Most of the conversations over heard were on the spice trade and the new elven courtesan 'Grace' operating in the city.

We discussed nothing of consequence within ear shot of the other patrons, who include a lot of people who came over from the city just for the food and entertainment in the cabaret in the room attached to the 'dining' room. After a pleasant evening we settled down for the night.

20<sup>th</sup> of Thaw

After breakfast we hired a guide to the city (as advised by the proprietors of the inn). We were advised the best choice of guide would be fairly obvious, indeed his name is Sebastiano and is a young hobbit of about 16 years and speaks excellent common (which is helpful as most of the party does not speak hobbitish).

Entering the city, which is triangular shaped, it is fairly easy to gauge the population as being about 3000, fairly closely packed together. Sebastiano steered us away from such places as 'Sad Mary's bar & Girl' and the Church of All Saints (I wonder why?), sight seeing as we go. The hobbit population of the city appears to be fairly high at roughly 8-10 percent.

Phaeton asked around about telescopes, healing potions and various herbs and we quickly realised that the Alchemist's Guild had a stranglehold on what would not normally be considered their areas of expertise.

When the worst of the heat of the day arrived around noon we hired a room to spend the siesta period resting until about 4 in the afternoon with nearly everyone disappearing off the streets (personally I think siestas are a brilliant idea). Indeed Sebastiano advised against Sir Christopher going for a short walk as only 'undesirables' would be out and about during the siesta period.

We discussed the underground canal with Sebastiano and were informed it was not open to the public, but rather was for the use of companies and 'nobles'. However he might be able to have us get a look at the canal for the appropriate bribe. On our way back to the inn we had to quickly get out of the way of a carriage being lead by four prancing ponies. Sebastiano informed us that the carriage contained Grace and her latest employer, a Raniterrean lord.

We continued to explore the city after the siesta for the remainder of the day before retiring to our quarters at the inn.

21<sup>st</sup> of Thaw

Today went much as the day before, with us wandering around the city seeing the sights. Finding shelter for the siesta and then returning to the inn.

Arriving back at the inn most of the party retired to their quarters, but not for long. The short duration of their retirement being due to the rest of the party noting the existence of a man sitting in the inn's common room who looked the spitting image of Don Carlos. Needless to say this got our attention! After a brief and discreet discussion with him it became apparent that he was Grace's current employer and an agent for Don Diego. The agent (who goes by the name of Charlie) was under one of Diego's permanent illusions and had hired Grace as part of his cover. We were told that there had been several attempts on Diego's life recently in Plastoro and that the Destinian fleet was in the Pearly Gates.

Charlie informs us that Don Diego would be here soon. After dinner most of us settle in for the night.

22<sup>nd</sup> of Thaw

It would appear that bad weather is coming in, of a magical nature. Some of the party sighted a cloud move swiftly to Liberation City and 'landing'. It would appear it was picking some people up before then taking off again. This morning we loaded our gear back on board ship again in preparation for leaving the area. Charlie in hobbit appearance was to be our new guide instead of Sebastiano. He is also 'apparently' Clementine's cousin (to explain why he is coming with us).

Arriving at the ship we were met by the captain, who was surprised to see Father Bob with us. As he thought he was already aboard. It turns out that Don Diego had boarded the ship, in the guise of Father Bob, earlier this morning. Charlie and Don Diego do a switch in identifies with Diego appearing as Clementine's cousin and Charlie taking the form of one of the sailors so as to leave the ship without raising suspicions. This was needed, especially with some rather suspicious people on the docks spying on our ship. Father Bob reports that he feels that we are being watched by someone or something (other than the obvious people on the docks).

Quote

"You know what my weapons do to people who are morally suspect", Starflower  
"So you obviously sheath them very carefully", Sir Christopher

We set sail north along the coast of St. Charles. The captain points out that the ship is low on water, due to our hasty sailing from St. Charles and outlines our choices for rectifying the situation. The Pearly Gates were not considered an option because of the presence of the Destinian fleet. While this was being discussed, a very fast ~30 mph ship was sighted, which quickly passed us heading north. This ship was of a design which we had never seen before. Eventually it was decided to keep heading north.

Don Diego filled us in on what had been happening to him. Namely that he had been attacked at a close friend's place on Avenal. He had barely escaped death or capture. Our way was quickly blocked by a sandstorm, with lightning, similar to the previous one except to size (with it being much bigger). The captain thought it best of us slow down and let the storm pass across our path and sail behind it. We could not wait too long however as we feared possible pursuit.

The air mages and Sir Christopher (our resident navigator) discuss the nature of the storm. Namely if it was natural or magical. The consensus was magical. Father Bob felt very uncomfortable again, just like he felt at the docks. Sir Christopher and I fly off under the illusions of Albatrosses to have a closer look at our situation, completing two circuits of the ship before hastily returning. The speed of our returning was due to the sudden reversal of the direction of the storm, it was now heading straight toward us! Father Bob stated that he detected something evil about the storm. No kidding! You don't have to DA to work that one out!

As the storm hit us, we were also hit by air mage spells. What a surprise! We quickly started taking damage and were constantly being knocked to the deck by one of them. Staying on the deck quickly became a bad choice so Glynn, Clementine and myself flew off the deck so we could use healing potions and also attack whatever the creature who was casting the magic was. Glynn quickly borrowed Starflower's sword monopole to attack the creature with. Sir Christopher flew off shortly after us, using Father Bob as a shield.

Father Bob and Sir Christopher attacked the creature (who turned out to be a Demon, surprise! not). With Father Bob damaging it with his katana before going down to the demon's onslaught. Note – the Demon said “Back off bitch, I'm not allowed to kill you except in self defence” to Father Bob. Sir Christopher then attacked the demon with Father Bob's katana, further wounding it as the others and I arrived on the scene. Sir Christopher fled with the gravely wounded Father Bob while Clementine, Glynn and I dispatched the demon whence it came. (the demon's common name we now believe to be Furfur, Earl of Storms and Lightning – makes sense really).

Quote

“I'm not a Demon”, says Starflower emphatically  
“No, I am”, replies Clementine

Glynn and Sir Christopher flew off the ship in an attempt to summon the storm away from the ship, but to no avail. With the tiller damaged, all we could do is go below and try to wait out the storm. While below several of us, myself included, were hit by lightning coming down the masts and arcing out. Indeed the situation was very grave with the ship starting to break apart. The survivors of the crew and the party made our way to the captain's cabin where we made rafts in preparation for abandoning ship. Fortunately for us the storm passed us by just as we were forced to abandon ship, so the situation could have been worse.

23<sup>rd</sup> of Thaw (morning of, sometime)

Our rafts were taken westward, away from the coast and towards the strange isles we were warned to avoid (naturally). We choose to not land on a very small isle with a hut on it, but instead continue on to a bigger island we could make out on the night sky's horizon. As dawn approached we arrived at the island and came ashore. It was noted that there were several sets of humanoid footprints in the sand and a stone staircase leading up through the bush to the top of the cliff.

Lady Kathleen sent a wizard's eye on a scouting mission and noted that there was a statue on a pillar at the top of the cliff, one of several placed along the cliff as far as she could see in either direction. The pillars are 50' high with 15' statues on top made of gold! A number of buildings could also be seen. Two women were sighted moving toward the cliff at a point a little further down the coast. One of them dived off the cliff, sighting us on her way down. She disappeared into the water and did not return. I suspect with what we found out later that her natural talent is water breathing. The other woman sighted us from the cliff top and fled to warn her people.

The response was a squad of mounted women archers. They rode the horses down the steep cliff path swiftly and without a pause, with bows at the ready. While this was going on Sir Christopher and Phaeton argued over who (of them) was at the back of the group. We were duly challenged as to why we were here. While this was going on I DAed them, with the result of long lived / short lived sentient! And that their ranks in horsemanship and warrior were respectively 10 and 9. Also at least some of them are pacted to Poseidon! (it later became apparent that others were pacted to other old gods, such as Ares and Artemis).

It became obvious fairly quickly that they were not happy to see us. This was especially true of either the elves or the men in our group. Don Diego changed his outward appearance to that of a woman before they got a good look at him because of this and has decided to go by the name of Astoria. He also changed the outward appearance of Sir Christopher and Phaeton to that of women as well. They are now going by the names of Sister Christine and Pip respectively.

They sent for their philosopher, to learn our language so they could communicate with us more easily. During discussions with her it was learnt that each person of the island (all of whom were women) had one natural talent of a magical or quasi-magical nature. Her name is Mnemosyne and her natural talent is that she could learn languages extremely quickly. Their language appears to be distantly related to Pasifikian.

We were, after a while, escorted to a building with a circle of white markers around it and told we were not to leave the circle on pain of death. We were supplied with water and fruit, but no meat, bread or salt. So making it plain that we had not as yet been accepted as guests.

Their philosopher informed us that they would discuss our fate. They could not decide if Poseidon had saved us so that is why we had reached their shores (and so we deserved to live) or if he was the one who had caused the wrecking of our vessel (and so we deserved to die).

Notes on the people of this island:

They call their island Themyskira or New Themyskira (the name of some destroyed city they once ruled in 'man's world').

They are long lived / short lived sentient humans.

They all follow the old gods, and most if not all are pacted to one of them. Mostly to Poseidon.

They are all good to extremely good horsewomen, bow women and warriors.

Most of them can understand their horses when they speak and lots of them can talk to their horses.

The horses can live a long time, as in decades.

They appear to have fled here from persecution (primarily from men).

They only give birth to female children except if the pregnancy is due to rape. These female children are considered to be 'gifts' from the Gods.

A small number of them are out in the wider world spying on what is happening out there.

They are xenophobic.

Each has a unique gift, such as being able to breath underwater etc.

While they understand the concept of lying, they don't do it except under extreme circumstances.

24<sup>th</sup> of Thaw

Today we wait. While waiting we find out that the population of the island is roughly two to three hundred amazons. We learnt from Mnemosyne that they refer to the Elves as the 'perfidious ones' and the reason why they do not trust Elves. It turned out that a group of Elves arrived at the island about a hundred years ago. The Amazons initially befriended them, that was until they attempted to kidnap the Queen (Hippolyte) and failed. They were immediately dealt with permanently on the spot.

Around midday Diego quietly approached each of us individually and mentioned that he is worried that our group is about to blunder into some sort of tragedy-cum-bloodbath and asks if there are any astrological questions we would like asked?

Mnemosyne asked us what our gifts are, as they all had a gift each and assumed that this was the case for everyone. The party replied variously as follows:

Glynn – Can talk to the air and the birds.

Diego – An entertainer

Clementine – I can see black things in the dark

Phaeton – Healing

Starflower – Hero

Father Bob – Namer

Sir Christopher – A very good swimmer

Myself – I can talk to the animals of the ground

During this Starflower got the following from Mnemosyne on telepathy. That she was worried how tomorrow would go, as this was when they would decide (by common discussion) what to do with us. Also she was worried what information we would spread around about them and their island should we be allowed to leave. She hinted to us that it would be better if we could cause some reasonable delay to their deciding our fate and better still if this delay resulted in us obtaining some outside vouching of our good standing.

We discussed our situation amongst ourselves and came to the conclusion that the president of St. Charles who helped lead the revolutionary armies there is the Princess Mnemosyne referred to as being one of the women they had keeping an eye on the outside world. As she would appear to have an interest in oppressed people Don Diego suggested we write to her as she would know of his involvement in the freeing of the hobbits in the Free County on Plastoro. It was decided to also write to the Duchess of Avenal as she could vouch for the good standing of several members of our group. It was during this discussion that the existence of a portal linking the Free County directly to Avenal was mentioned. Mnemosyne looked relieved at the result of this discussion and said that the letters could be sent the next day.

I'm passing the time by learning more Destinian and the minor language of Alman from the officers and sailors of the crew. Mnemosyne asked if some of us wished to go hunting for meat to supplement our diet (i.e so we could have a more balanced diet without them having to 'break bread' with us). Starflower and Clementine took her up on the offer and went hunting goats with some of the guards. Starflower had an interesting time killing a goat with arrows. Especially as they were so tame she could have lead one away and killed it swiftly and humanely with a single sword blow. Oh well, that's Elves for you isn't.

25<sup>th</sup> of Thaw

The questions and results of Diego's readings are given below:

Question #1 : "How have people in the past successfully dealt with the Amazons?"

Answer : Touchyng his conquest vpon Femynye,  
Geyn Amazones with Theseus he wente,  
The queen Ypolita thoruh his cheualrie,  
For his parti anon to hym he hente.  
And Ypolita off ful trewe entente  
Gaff onto hym in tokne off victorie  
Off gold a girdil to haue hir in memorie.  
Afftir to Affrik he wente a ful gret pas,  
Onli off purpos the gardeyn for to see,  
Which appertened to [the] kyng Athlas,  
That brothir was to kyng Promothe,  
In astrologie ful weel expert was he.  
And in this gardyen, off which I ha[ue] you told,

The riche braunchis and applis were off gold,  
Thoruh magik maad bi gret auisement,  
Ful streihtly kept and closid envirooun,  
And Iwachchid with a fell serpent,  
That no man entred that rich mansioun.

Question #2 : “Who / what is causing Roberta to be all twitchy as if magic is impacting”

Answer : ELEGY To the Memory of an UNFORTUNATE LADY.

what beck'ning ghost , along the moonlight shade  
Invites my step , and points to yonder glade?  
'tis she! --- but why that bleeding bosom gor'd,  
why dimly gleams the visionary sword?  
[ etc, etc]  
while angels with their silver wings o'ershade  
the ground, now sacred by thy reliques made.  
how lov'd , how honour'd once , avails thee not,  
to whom related , or by whom begot.  
so by thy Name , I see upon the Stone,  
thy goodly works and noble deeds were done.

Question #3 : “What can we do to persuade the Amazonas in our favour”

Answer : LITERARY SQUABBLES

... When one small touch of Charity  
Could lift them nearer God-like state  
Than if the crowded Ord should scry  
Like those who cried Diana great:  
And I too , talk and lose the touch  
I talk of. Surely, after all,  
The noblest answer unto such  
Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

Don Diego mentioned that it was unusually easy to take astrological readings here.

Glynn used windspeech with the following results. He made contact with a playful breeze (called Silphe) who knows all about the island. From conversation with this wind Glynn established that in fact the island is all this wind knows, since it somehow knows that to stray too far from the island would cause it's destruction due to the storm that rages there perpetually (which is both there and not there).

Question #1: “Is this the only town on the island?”

Answer: Yes, although there are a few statues, shrines, and grottos about the island that the locals visit.

Question #2: “Are there other islands occupied by the amazons or other humanoids?”

Answer: The only other island is the isle of Healing, which Glynn established was the small isle about 100 yards long we drifted passed but choose not to land on.

Question #3: “If there are other humanoids, what are they like?”

Answer: There are the Amazons and a group of strangers, that Glynn ascertained to be us.

Question #4: “Are there any men on this or the other island?”

Answer: The wind did not understand the concept of man, but Glynn after much discussion was able to establish that the male members of the party and the sailors were the only men on the Island.

Question #5: “Are there any large boats around and if so where are they?”

Answer: There is only one boat larger then the small boats that they use for fishing, and that it last saw by the isle of Healing.

Question #6: "Is there or has there recently been any conflict between the amazons and / or other parties?"

Answer: Not that it can ever remember seeing

Mnemosyne came about mid-morning for her daily discussions with us. During these discussions we learnt that their healer is called Epione and that she has amazing control over life and death (a Necromancer perhaps?) The two messages we wanted sent were dictated to Mnemosyne. She used some form of pictographic writing (that she had invented) to both encode and reduce the size of the letters so they could be easily sent by 'golden' dove to agents of theirs on the mainland.

We were informed by Mnemosyne that this would only delay things by a few days and should replies not be received in time this could be unfortunate. Also she informed us that ultimately our fate would reside in the consensus of the Amazons as a whole, not the opinion of outsiders and sisters not on the island, i.e. the letters would not, by themselves be enough. Phaeton informed me that he was dropping out of being party scribe and so it was left to me to continue the work.

On our word the party was allowed some latitude in our confinement. That is, we were allowed to move about a bit outside of the circle under guard. Indeed several of us (myself included) went riding around the island with Mnemosyne. It was a pleasant days ride, though all we saw was the statues and shrines the breeze mentioned to Glynn. While we went riding Sir Christopher and Phaeton went to the local smithy and showed the smith there how to make stirrups. Later, when I got back I completed the leather work to go with the stirrups. This was done as a gift to the amazons (and to help our case).

Walking through the town (later that day) we saw many temples to the old gods, i.e. Apollo, Ares Artemis, Zeus, Athena, Hera, Hades and of course Poseidon. The biggest seemed to be those for Poseidon and Hades. The main temple for Hades was called the Hall of Remembrances and was full of statues of Amazons who had passed on.

As a group we were taken to meet their oracle, Menalepa. A rather attractive young woman those form Diego seemed incapable of taking his eyes off (worrying given his 'female' form). She informed us that we had a purpose upon us (but it was not quite as strong as a doom). When asked what this purpose entailed, we were given the following (naturally) cryptic replies. First "To success know yourself, know your family, know the families of your enemies". The Second was "the purpose has something to do with bats, indeed the root or trigger is a bat". On the dangers ahead we were told "There will be a threat to the group from someone known intimately by a member of the party OR by someone who knows something very intimate about a member of our party".

Later this day Star Flower and Clementine went hunting again. Also while windspeaking Glynn was told by Silphe that an amazon (EuBoia – the amazon who can talk to winds) was suspicious of our party and it's intentions. Father Bob gave her bracelet to Diego to better cloak him.

26<sup>th</sup> of Thaw

I put on a display using the stirrups along with Lady Kathleen and Star Flower followed up with showing how one could use them with a lance. They seemed suitably impressed. The horses distinctly disliked the smell of Elves.

27<sup>th</sup> of Thaw

I continue to train while we wait for replies to our letters. To keep himself amused Sir Christopher swam out to the storm so as to find it's boundary around the island. He found it to be four miles out and that you could not see it until the point of entering it.

28<sup>th</sup> of Thaw

Star Flower mentioned the existence of a Seeing Stone (cf '2<sup>nd</sup> Stomping upon the Raniterre – scribe notes). This Seeing stone could amongst other things could see be used to observe and communicate with anyone those true name hath been spoken. This Seeing stone was now believed to be in the possession of Don Carlos. She also mentioned that Carlos's father married the Marquis (for whom this was a second marriage) and it was the wife from which Carlos's claim comes. A very tenuous one as he is from his father's first marriage.

Today the 'golden' dove returned with good tidings. Both a glowing report from the Princess and a positive report from the Duchess. The ensuing meeting the amazons held resulted in us being expected by the amazons as full fledged guests rather than as quasi prisoners.

29<sup>th</sup> of Thaw

Firstly, from the good Captain Saefara we learnt that Diego had been involved with some trickster Demon (by the name of Loki) some long time ago. Secondly, we were informed that we would be having an audience with the Queen (Nysa) this day.

Arriving at the great hall Star Flower became completely pale and very ill. Indeed she collapsed as she was entering the building. As our audience was set to occur immediately there was not we could do but enter and deal with her later (other then insuring she was stable and not in danger of life or limb).

The audience started with introductions followed by women playing some music using a form of four stringed instrument, trumpets, drums and cymbals. It was awful, I being nearly a master troubadour should know! Thinking about it makes me shudder. The lyrics for the music was of battle, but battle in which only the heroes die. All told the audience lasted about forty five minutes, after which we were informed that baths had been drawn for us. As we went to the baths Numensie congratulated us on leaving one of the perfidious ones (Star Flower) behind. She thought this very diplomatic, after all we could not leave both behind as that would be too obvious but leaving one made it easier for the Queen.

The baths (which were public) were very pleasant. Glynn (naturally) and Pip (Phaeton) stayed outside, with Pip coming up with an excuse. Diego proved to nearly be a problem with his fairly obvious admiration for Menalepa's (the Oracle) form. It was during talks with the amazons here that we learnt that the storm was magical (fairly obvious given the amount of mana given off) and that it could transport a ship to a point within a couple of hundred miles of any major port in the world. However , as it is part of Posiedon's domain it would transport you ultimately to a point most advantageous to his cause if he wished.

One thing we have noticed in town was that a lot of the buildings are empty. This was due to casualties caused by the perfidious ones. These elves were not Drow as one might expect but of Star Flower and Glynn's ilk.

30<sup>th</sup> of Thaw and 1<sup>st</sup> of Seedtime

The amazons made ready their longboat to take us where we wanted to go. I continued my training.

2<sup>nd</sup> of Seedtime

The past eve Diego made a astrology reading as follows:

Question “What dangers lay ahead?”

Answer :           The Baron’s Lament

I’ve done a lot (the King, He knows!)  
to find the truth and fell His foes;  
but all I sense, from head to toes, is bleeding,  
as superheroes come to feast  
and taste the flesh not yet deceased,  
and all I know is still the Beast is feeding:  
the Queen, beneath her power base,  
transmogrifies the human race -  
fair armour into carapace demeaning;  
and if her powerful vessel breaks,  
I only hope the other makes  
Him slip his cable, [for] Carlo’s sake, God-speeding.

Our complement on the next stage of our voyage is as follows :

The party

Three amazons – Nysa (their Queen)

Antiochis

Pasiphae

Ships crew – Captain Saefara – ex-noble of Alma

Helmsman Harasteorra

Mate (and cook) Merscmearealla – kinsman of Harasteorra (and a orc)

Sailors

Aelfhamer

Aerendgast “angel” (ship’s messenger)

Banweorc, carpenter, orc “bones” (a rank 2 healer)

Barda

Denn, orc

Harald Hascete “ash”

Harald Lytel, orc (very big ‘human’)

Snytre, sailmaker

Smich, orc “smokey” (ship’s smith)

Swanridda

And Don Diego

Father Bob was staying behind, as he thought that his reason for being twitchy was due to the Seeing Stone. So he was going to stay here where it would not work until the ‘scent’ was lost. He did however lend his magical katana to Sir Christopher. Diego has convinced (without actually lying) that his and Astoria’s (Father Bob) mother was an amazon. We would go on with Diego. Our intent is to head for Destiny.

We left in the evening in the longboat. We were swiftly taken on our way by a magical wave into the storm. Passing out of the storm we found ourselves a couple of hundred miles off shore. Lady Kathleen sent a wizard’s eye straight up to have a look around. She noted that land was about one hundred and sixty miles away and that there was a ship heading in our direction. Indeed shortly after sighting the ship it changing direction to head directly towards us. At this time Diego noticed that the storm had stripped his and the other party members illusions off them, so he quickly put them back on before the amazons who were in the prow of the boat noticed.

Two hours later we were now one hundred and fifty miles off shore and the ship came into sight travelling at about twenty five knots. The ship’s colours were those of Ebola (just what we needed!) and had a golden ‘winged victory’ on it’s bowsprit. We quickly discussed how we were to deal with it. As part of our plans Glynn cast fly on Clementine, Star Flower, himself and myself. As the ship approached a wind walking person scouted us out. So while Star Flower backfired mindspeech (and getting arthritis for her effects) Glynn cast the air mage special counterspell. A number of us (myself included) were also made invisible. Astoria has changed Sir Christopher’s appearance to that of a cat and I will be taking him onto the ship should the need arise.

“Prepare to heave to”, is the call from the ship, “Make no sudden offensive moves, and that includes you invisible people”(blast!). Mind you does that mean that non sudden offensive moves are ok? They then demanded to know who we were, where we were headed (we said to the island, nearest land in sight) etc (you know the usual – sigh). The ship had a crew of four officers, fifteen crew and the following: “The ship is the Nemesis, under the control of Il Barone di Scarpia”. As may be recalled Scarpia is (or should I say was) Head of the Destinian Secret Police in the South and an E&E. Quick DAing of the ships officers meant we learnt that the ship’s Captain was an air mage, 2<sup>nd</sup> Officer was a water mage and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Officer was an earth mage. The situation went quickly down hill from here and we attacked the ship.

As we pulled near we charged onto the ship. As we did this we heard the Officers telling their archers to fire at places on our longboat where there did not appear to be anyone, because obviously that was where our mages were. This was true up to a point. All of us who were invisible were the ones with flying cast on us, so by the time they fired at places where we sat we were already on board the ship. Thankfully wasting their fire (especially as we found out later that their arrows were poisoned). As I landed I was immediately attacked by one of their officers who had witchsight on and was stunned by the resulting blow.

Due to a miscommunication with Sir Christopher I did not carry him onto the ship because he was still using some magic item of his. This magic caused a huge cloud of darkness to descend about the ship, so thick that except for those he allowed (who could see as if it was day) one could only see five feet. This effectively took their air mage out of action as he could not see what was happening upon the ship from his wind walked position about one hundred feet above.

Of the battle itself I will be but brief. We won and Scarpia was brought low. The only one of the opposition to escape our wrath was the air mage. The rest were either captured or killed. The cost however was high. Clementine was killed and turned into a dead squirrel. Both Glynn and I were knocked unconscious through injury and all the amazons were killed. Also most of our ship’s crew were also killed.

Sir Christopher and Glynn flew off to retrieve the bodies of our side lost in the water, while Phaeton resurrected Clementine who remained in squirrel form. This is some form of death curse Clementine suffers from. Lady Kathleen tracked the air mage via locate and found he had gone to the island we had sighted. Diego changed the illusion he was under to that of Scarpia’s appearance and assumed that role with the Nemesis’s crew. Star Flower received a death curse from killing Scarpia and killed herself as a means of removing it (the Engalton method apparently?!), if she had been willing to wait Phaeton could have had a go at removing it but she said don’t bother. She has some item she can only recharge by willingly killing herself (elves are sick!)

We proceeded to commandeer their ship and attempt to flee the area. The alert went out too quickly however and hostile ships were soon approaching from several different directions. As we had already decided to see if the island was a possible place of refuge we continued to head toward it. Sir Christopher’s examination of the ship’s charts and discussions with the captured crew of the Nemesis quickly made it clear that the island was a new phenomenon, indeed it had been there but two days! This did not make us happy, but we had little choice.

The island (which lays broader in the north / south directions), has a half moon very broad bay on it’s western shore. There is a huge mountain at each of the north and south ends of the island and is otherwise heavily forested. These mountains are very unusual in shape. They quite frankly ascend too steeply, indeed it would seem impossibly steeply, especially at the upper regions. As we approached we could see a town of some sort through the foliage. This town (we could see the glint of gold) was situated roughly in the middle of the island very near the western shore. A dock could be seen in the bay with a path leading off it that appeared to head directly towards this town. At this dock a group of humanoids could be seen.

## Quotes

“So what do we do now?”, Lady Kathleen

“Steal their gold city and run off with it”, Clementine (in squirrel form because she wouldn't let Phaeton remove the curse)

“I don't think we have deep enough pockets”, Lady Kathleen (darn ☹)

As we approached the party on the dock became clearer to sight. It looked to be a group of goblinized lizardmen (for want of a better description) and weedy humans attending to the needs of two ladies of elven and human ancestry respectively. As we docked lizardkin as they are called came for to help with the tying off. One of the lizardkin was heard to say “Awfully cold up here”, this comment fits with the types of trees I could see in the forest. These trees belonged in a warmer climate than this latitude provides, suggesting they arrived from more southern climates.

Introductions were made as to who we were (I must note that most of us had illusions on). The illusions were to hide our true appearance (which turned out to be rather important). The two ladies were introduced as Alcina (also known as Enchantress of the Wood) and Morgana, with Alcina being the elf. They are both Queens (though only Alcina is actively referred to that way) and are also sisters. A rapid succession of DAing by both Phaeton and I began, with the following results. Alcina is an E&E and long lived sentient of elven variety and Morgana is non colleged and long lived human. Morgana dresses in a warrior fashion and has long black hair and green eyes. DAing the humans and lizardkin gave interesting results indeed. The GTN of the lizardkin and humans varied, with the Lizardkin it was generally lizardman or half-orc. But if one asked for GTN at birth one got human.

They all are under a curse which has an MA of 37 (we later found that this dropped to 30 if one managed to leave the confines of the island). This curse takes the form of changing who you are quite substantially. Removal of the curse is by death, curse removal and one other way (we later came to believe this to be by destruction of a vessel that contains the Queen's (Alcina's) power. Several of the party (including Clementine who was up the mast) have hidden out of sight of these people so that we will have a backup team if things go wrong. The guards left on the dock think Clementine is a big rat.

Their greets were very welcoming (a sure sign of trouble) and we were invited to stay as their guests. The Nemesis's officers (including Diego in his guise of Scarpia) were locked up in a cell they provided. We then moved to their town. The town is surrounded by fifty foot high wall which are at least gilded in gold (but given Alcina's power, may be solid gold!). Also the walls were thick enough to accommodate passages in them quite comfortably and had some sort of ward placed upon them. The town itself is one huge building (imbedded with power) with beautiful gardens between it and the wall. One of these gardens we were told was off limits. The Queen's apartments were through the Golden Gates.

Orontes is our guide to our quarters in the 'city'. Talking to him we learn that Alcina was human but became elven through studying magic, and that she has been head of the island for a number of years now. Star Flower via telepathy learnt that the servants were wondering who would be the Queen's 'favourite' (a male human) as she has been bored of late. They also thought it surprising that she had allowed wizards (Star Flower and Glynn) on the island. They did think this would probably be good as they tended to keep her entertained longer than most things. As Alcina is the only spelluser on the island they presume that only elves are spell users.

## Quote

“Now what is that wizard these days? I think it is a fountain now if I remember rightly”, a servant

Arriving at our quarters we settle down. Lady Kathleen notes that we're being spied on by a wizard's eye (surprise!). Glynn uses the ritual of 'speak with the wind' back at the ship. From talks with servants and Orontes we learn that there was a third Queen but she is no more, and that the Alcina's power does not (usually anyway) change a target's gender. Given Alcina's interest in favourites, the fact that Lady Kathleen and I are under illusions that would have us appear as men could prove difficult.

Via various means we learn that her power is centred in a crypt directly beneath her quarters which a stairway leading down to it. Also learnt is that she has had problems with shape changers she has cursed and that Morgana has a special spear (called 'Spear of the Titans'). Alcina is also a disciple of Circe (surprise – not).

Glynn's talks with the wind prove very informative. The wind was once an adventurer who had the misfortune to cross paths with Alcina and this was his new form. The wind describes a rite to evoke the favour of Poseidon as he was once a follower. At times Alcina's power can change people to such an extent as this. The wind mentioned that Alcina had changed another 'favourite' into a wave when she was done with him. Both the wind and the wave are at Alcina's beck and call (something to bear in mind). Glynn learnt that Alcina changed two thousand and four hundred Drow who were attacking their island into trees in one go! This is not quite as bad as it sounds as she had to make preparations first. So the Queen who is no more had to keep them busy with a human army while she made those preparations. It was during this she betrayed her sister (the third Queen).

The island is split into three parts. One for each Queen. The third part is called The Undying Land of Reason, and is on the eastern shore of the island. There is a castle of the same name there in the shape of a skull and another harbour by the name of Reason. We think she was a Necromancer. Alcina and Morgana did not like the third sister because she did not agree with their decadent lifestyle.

It was after this Sir Christopher, Clementine and Glynn came to rescue us. While they were rescuing us via freeing Diego and the two Destinian officers Lady Kathleen spied on Alcina with a wizard eye. This led to her noting that the tunnel leading down to Alcina's crypt is covered in wards. The Queen is spying (by using a crystal ball) two ships that are approaching the island, one of which is distinctly Destinian.

Quote

"We have got a Secret Squirrel", Sir Christopher

Just as the rescue party arrives, the guards they dealt with while freeing Diego and co, are discovered. We are informed of this by Glynn's friend the wind. Appearances are quickly changed so that I now appear as a guard and Star Flower, Phaeton and Lady Kathleen appear as Lizardkin. Glynn and Sir Christopher already appear as to be guards. It had been Clementine's intention that we go on the offensive to find and destroy Alcina's object of power. It did not happen that way however. Too many of the others were too busy working out how to flee instead. It was at this point Morgana and her troops arrived.

The Destinian earth mage blocked the entrance way to our chambers with a wall of iron as Sir Christopher created a staircase by some means so we could get to the roof. Wings were cast on half of us while flying was cast on the rest. It was quickly noted that the wind could be a problem so Glynn asked it to go to the opposite end of the island from direction we were headed. So even if Alcina tried to use the wind against us, we would be able to leave her realm before it arrived. From the wind we had learnt that her control reached out to about twelve miles from the island. While this was going on Lady Kathleen saw (by wizard's eye) Alcina talking into a mirror. Those with wings fly off immediately, while those without have to wait a little for their 'wind' to arrive. Soon only Lady Kathleen and Glynn (who are both invisible) are left on the roof as the guards attempt to storm it. Lady Kathleen repels the attack by sleeping them. Star Flower is flying out in drake form. This has been a busy day!

Glynn begins to have magic impact upon him and suddenly turns into a hobbit. This doesn't last very long before he then turns into the cockroach (a long story – cf our previous adventure together in MMH). He immediately ran off in cockroach fashion slaying guards left, right and centre. Alcina quickly changed him back to normal but not before a fair number of her guards were massacred. At this point they are able to flee the roof.

It was now our turn. The Destinian earth mage was changed into a form of lizardkin, while Star Flower was cursed into being an elf. This is a problem as she was using her drake form to be able fly at the time. Lucky she survived the crash landing in the sea. Next I'm cursed into a form of lesser human followed by Clementine. Clementine was turned into a rock before then changing into her bear form and is then dropped by the person carrying her. Lucky she just had a wings spell put on her in time (the up side was that it removed her squirrel problem). The Destinian air mage was the next one to have problems. We think it is only when she gets lucky that she can do things like turning people into rocks, winds etc. Also her magic does not effect shape changers properly.

Reaching the boundary we need to force ourselves through as something causes us to want to turn back. It is at this point that we learn from Diego that we do not need to retrieve Scarpia's body because Star Flower had disposed of it permanently.

Quote

"I seem to be cursed with not being able to shape-change", Star Flower

"Well that solves that problem then!", Phaeton in reply

We then flew on, to the Destinian ships. A Don Rodrigo di Posa (who is a solar celestial) and close initiate of Don Carlos was in charge of the two vessels. He immediately recognised us as a Guild party, having hired such before. Indeed one Guild member he had hired previously was Star Flower. They were travelling through the area when they were ordered to investigate the island. Through careful discussion we kept on favourable terms with them. They intended to contact the island the next day and probably 'deal with it' in the usual Destinian fashion (grin). Rodrigo offered to hire us on the spot, payment being in loot. The party discussed the situation though no decision was made before we went to sleep. Clementine, Glynn and myself were for taking out the Queen, with the others generally against it, especially Sir Christopher (so much for the powers of light being against evil).

Quote

"We are not going to have theological discussions, they are a waste of time", Clementine

3<sup>rd</sup> of Seedtime

We learn this morning that Sir Christopher and Lady Kathleen returned to the Nemesis during the night (without telling anyone!). At great risk they retrieved the ship (the longboat had been swamped and was unsalvageable). During this they fought and destroyed several vampiric undead creatures and received some form of vampiric infection. Perhaps most importantly they retrieved the bodies of the amazons. While this was brave, it was also foolhardy! Personally I think this was done to force the party's hand, making the party to go in the direction they wished to go. Without this we would quite possibly have helped in dealing with the Queen. Instead this meant we had to leave the area immediately. So much for all the loot! Not to mention that we abandoned most of our sailors!

As Phaeton raised the two amazons that were easily resurrectable we set sail. We headed for the next nearest land, an island called Alba Longa. This island (claimed by the Destinians) is largely inhabited by orcs. There is however a monastery and a Destinian gold mine (but this is a state secret – ssshh, don't tell anyone I told you). The island is patrolled by Destinians on flying clouds so approach can be difficult. Next we looted the Nemesis of the following: a fireproof wood/ceramic plate, two gems (the eyes of the figurehead), some top quality navigational equipment, some unbreakable glass and a bag of small items. We then flew to the island and buried the loot on shore. The rest was lost when we set the ship adrift. The shore was reached (just!) without being sighted.

Star Flower has been here before. She informs us that the monastery is of the Cult of Zigmar (aka Sigismund) and was established by the last of the [old] kings of the West. Diego also has a contact on the island who lives in a cave (Loki). These are our two options.

After Lady Kathleen's and Sir Christopher's actions it was decided that the position of party leader should be made clear. A vote was held with the following results:

For Clementine	For Kathleen	For Star Flower
Clementine	Kathleen	Star Flower
Glynn	Christopher	
Arwen	Phaeton	

This resulted in a tie between Clementine and Kathleen. At this point Star Flower changed her vote to that of Kathleen, who became our new party leader. So much for profit on this voyage.

After some discussion it is agreed to head towards the monastery where Star Flower and I can have our curses removed. This island is weird in feel, and I feel like we are under observation occasionally. The way to the monastery involves reaching the foot of the mountain the monastery is on and climbing one thousand steps, each two and a half to three feet high (tiring work). Flying is not an option because of the air patrols. As we travel Lady Kathleen locates de Possa and the Destinian earth mage. They are both in Destiny! This cannot be good news for us.

Reaching the top, we find a large stone building (the monastery) with an artificial lake and orchards nearby. The monks have truesight, this was given away by the fact that they saw through our illusions without difficulty (including that of the dead amazon – who looked like a very large bunch of bananas). We were greeted in a friendly manner, indeed they resurrected the amazon for us by placing her in a pool they have.

They asked us who we were and where we had come from and we mentioned Alcina and her sister Morgana. They knew of these two, and from them we learnt much about the sisters. The third sister is called Logistilla and preferred the title of Emperor (though of a rather small empire). Logistilla is a human vampire, that is she has all the abilities of a vampire but is human ie she did not have the penalties. She also has a bodyguard of six vampire warrior mages. They were interested to learn of the situation on the island. And informed us that it was unlikely that Logistilla was actually destroyed by the other two sisters, but rather incapacitated. The sisters are totally bound by their word, indeed the monks thought this was probably used by Alcina to in some way hurt Logistilla. As for the Queen's vessel of power, the monks only knew that it was something architectural in nature.

We also learnt that a Destinian group was staying at the monastery as they were travelling to a major wedding to be held at Destiny. Apparently the Princess of Ebola was marrying someone else but as to who I did not find out. The monks informed us that they were also travelling to a state funeral though no one was sure exactly who's it was. The Marquis di Calatravo (Carlos's father) was almost certain but up to two more were possible. The monks also gave us a general warning about Diego's friend, along the lines of being careful.

4<sup>th</sup> of Seedtime

Star Flower and I stay to have our curses removed while the others left in the early hours to the cave where Diego's contact dwells. Just after dawn Star Flower's and my curses fell off. I guess the Destinians 'dealt with' the sisters. As for permanently, I do not know. Star Flower and I immediately set out to catch up with the others. The amazons are staying to talk to the monks.

The following I will relate from discussions with the party members who were there. Indeed both Star Flower and I were both very disappointed in not being able to take part in this historic action.

Just after setting out, Diego placed illusions on them all so that they would appear to be nobles of Bowcourt. As they approached the area they had to land before they got to the cave. This is because of the lightning that will strike anyone who tries to fly in the area. They were sighted by a black bird who withdrew with unnatural haste. As they came into land a couple of humans were sighted on the edge of witchsight range. Because of this they landed a little further away.

Using wizard's eye, Lady Kathleen scouted out the small group of humans. The group appeared to be a small Destinian patrol of three people. Namely three humans, one with a beard and one with a light source and basket. Lady Kathleen sent her wizard's eye into the basket where she saw a paralysed pregnant mouse. This naturally meant big trouble, because it clearly meant they were expecting the party (particularly Star Flower).

They attempted to sneak around the group to get to the cave. However, the sword the bearded one was carrying kept pointing directly at the party, whichever direction they took. During this it also became apparent that the opposing group was faster moving than the party. Because of this it was deemed not possible to withdraw. So the offensive option was taken. The opening gambit was Lady Kathleen sleeping the one with the basket and light source. This guard was later established to be a namer. Immediately after this Lady Kathleen was herself slept. So while Diego stayed behind to guard Lady Kathleen during her slumber the rest of the party (Clementine, Glynn, Sir Christopher and Phaeton) moved forward to engage the opposition.

As they approached the group the katana Father Bob lent Sir Christopher glowed, a sure sign of there being a demon in the area. Clementine had changed into her bear form for the coming engagement. As they closed with the enemy Diego was killed by a rank twenty phantasm (generally a quick way to go). Clementine attempted to close with the opposition while the remainder utilised spells, but still continuing to close with the enemy. Don Carlos (bearded man) stepped forward to meet Clementine's charge, while the other man stayed a step behind to rain magical doom upon the party. Carlos was quickened and after a time Clementine also became quickened. Apparently this is an effect of Carlos's rapier, it quickens him but also his melee opponent (after a delay).

After some time Clementine was down and bleeding, so Glynn moved forward to melee with Carlos. The bloody fight continued until Glynn too was down and bleeding. Though by this stage Carlos was without fatigue and was taking endurance damage. At this point Sir Christopher stepped forward.

After several more rounds, Carlos fell bleeding. Sir Christopher then engaged the remaining man who was in fact a demon (by the name of Bathin – he can transport anyone any, almost instantly). This was not a good situation for Sir Christopher (even with the Katana). So he dealt with the demon by the simple method of killing Carlos (it's summoner) and hence causing it to return to whence it came. And so ends the career of Don Carlos of Destiny.

#### Quote

"Hey Kathleen, I just killed the world's best swordsman", Sir Christopher, "and I wasn't even ranked in the weapon!"

Final notes, the mouse was to neutralise death buzzes of Death aspected people, but as Star Flower wasn't there it wasn't of any use to them. Carlos was rank ten in assassin and warrior and rank eleven in rapier. He was doomed never to die until he became the world's greatest swordsman, apparently someone else died inconveniently recently and so made him the world's greatest. (Either that or it was really Carlos – it probably was but the jury is still out).

They quickly looted the bodies. The resulting loot was a partial plate, a rapier, a main gauche, two non-magical rings (I estimate worth at about one thousand and twelve thousand silver pennies respectively) and the namer's equipment (about one thousand silver pennies total).

The party returned to the monastery, meeting up with us on the way. Here we discussed our situation. A situation that could prove dangerous to our health.

#### Quote

"I look forty seven", Star Flower, on discussing Don John Fenris the titular head of Destiny who has a permanent mental age of fourteen.

"That's right, you don't have the mindset of a fourteen year old, most of the time", Sir Christopher

The Abbess asked us to leave the monastery as blood was not permitted to be shed on monastery grounds. The amazons agreed to leave with us as they felt responsible for our safety. Most of the sisters appear to be from around Aquila. Sister Sylvia (an air mage with rank 15 fly) who agreed to cast this on us all appears to be from further south. Her spells do have side effects though. That is, if she triples unfortunate minor physical alterations to the recipient occur. I forgot to mention that the monastery is a high mana area (oops).

We descended from the monastery and then flew to the beach. We needed to do this to renew the fly spells on some of us (who did not receive the flying spell from Sylvia). As we were discussing our next move a Demon flanked by four shades of people who were obviously former princes or kings approached. Don Carlos was one of those shades (oh boy was I surprised!) I quickly DAed the Demon, finding him to be an E&E. He issued a challenge, "Surrender now to justice and I will only kill one of you."

Star Flower's reply was to quicken six of us while Phaeton sent a blast of sun-ray (a unique spell of his) at the Demon. The Demon responded by immediately teleporting behind Phaeton and killing him outright with one blow. As he was doing this I cast trollskin on Glynn as he and Star Flower engaged the Demon. Star Flower appeared to inflict a grievous blow on the Demon but this did not stop him from teleporting away out of range of our attacks while still being in sight of us. We began summoning the wind in preparation for fleeing. When again he issued his challenge "Surrender now to justice and I will only kill one of you."

The situation was impossible. Star Flower actually wanted to fight the thing even though that was clearly a suicidal choice. Others wanted to flee though again that would not do us good for long, so negotiations were finally decided to be the only real choice. The Demon agreed to leave for a period of three minutes while we discussed our predicament. When he returned we discussed the limits of his contract and how he would possibly be willing to bend it. The result of this was that he was willing to let us do a few 'side' trips before he delivered us to 'justice'.

The first of these was that he take Star Flower and Phaeton's body to the Amazon's island to Father Bob. This was to 'prove' the situation to our employer and to then have the Demon deliver Father Bob to a place in Destiny. There to try and obtain help for us (not that we told the Demon this obviously). The Demon was clearly not happy with Star Flower, so Sir Christopher made him promise that she be alive at every point in the journey. He obviously kept his word by killing her and immediately resurrecting her at the same point (in space) once during the journey (you've got to love those Demons, they make great lawyers). Phaeton was resurrected on the Isle of Healing by the amazons and was transported to Destiny with Father Bob (appearing to be her maid).

Next, Diego and Clementine went with the Demon and deliver letters to various people of note around Destiny (again to gather support and get the word out that Don Carlos was dead). One of these messages was to Don John Fenris (via his ward – Count Kreep, the p is silent apparently). The third thing is that we returned to the monastery and had Sister Sylvia cast gaseous form on Glynn and Lady Kathleen (at Glynn's suggestion) before we went through to wherever the Demon was going to take us.

The Gaseous forms proved to be crucial to our situation. This was because (not surprisingly) we materialised inside a long cold iron cage, with metal on all four sides. As it was only a little over three and a half feet high, it was impossible either to not be in a prone position or not be in contact with cold iron. The room the cage rested in was roughly forty by forty feet in area and thirty feet high. The Demon informed the torturer and his younger assistant that he had delivered us to justice as required and left.

As a distraction I immediately started to try and pick the lock of the cage while Lady Kathleen and Glynn left the confines of the cage. Meanwhile the torturer sent the assistant out (to get the guards probably) while he went to get a hot poker. Lady Kathleen took out the torturer with a sleep spell while Glynn took down the assistant. Lady Kathleen then proceeded to open the door of the cage to let the rest of us out.

Beyond the doors to the room there was a thirty foot long corridor leading to another door and a guard room. Through wizard's eye Lady Kathleen noted the presence of three guards, but that the room was more like a small barracks, and that there was space for more. I note by DAing the corridor that there was a Hellfire ward of rank 20 in power. Further DAing indicated that the ward would not be triggered if someone was in the presence of the bearer. A key found on the assistant proved to be the necessary object. While deciding what to do next Lady Kathleen cast mage lock on the door from the guard room to the outside.

The plan was as follows: Star Flower would mental attack one guard via telepathy while Lady Kathleen would sleep another via wizard's eye. Meanwhile I would be at the door with Diego (who would maze the third). Things did not quite go according to plan but Diego covered up the resulting noise successfully. The mazed guard was sapped into unconsciousness as he came out.

We then discussed what to do next with the next shift of guards due soon. My suggestion of joining (or should I say creating) a work gang to join the work gangs working on the neighbouring construction site within the Destinian naval base, and then leaving with them at quitting time, was taken up. And we successfully escaped this way. Note, given how this party was made up I could not suggest it directly as they would not have listened to it, but rather turned it down as too obvious. So I suggested it indirectly. Oh well...so much for receiving one's due. (I forgot to note that the new guards did not know anything was amiss because three of us (myself included) stayed behind under illusions giving us the appearance of guards, and were 'duly relieved of our duties' by the fresh unit).

Once having left the naval base, Lady Kathleen used locate to obtain the location of Father Bob. He was, not surprisingly, to be found at a Michaeline Chapterhouse. (note – the key from the jail was put into one of Diego's pouches so it could not be located). Here we proceeded to hide out.

5<sup>th</sup> of Seedtime

We continue to hide out at the Michaeline Chapterhouse.

6<sup>th</sup> of Seedtime

Crowds began to gather in the streets this afternoon. They are in a very agitated mood. It would appear that news of Don Carlos's death has reach the population at large, the palace having delayed release of this information by saying that Carlos was indisposed.

7<sup>th</sup> of Seedtime

Crowds in the streets become more vocal and aggressive.

8<sup>th</sup> of Seedtime

The troops are called out and there is a 'police action' on the palace steps. The result is the establishment of martial law. The Michaelines begin going out onto the streets in small groups and inform the crowds to 'be cautious' (they seem to respond – least ways within sight of the Michaelines). Father Bob run to our quarters and put mind special counters in place as there were squads roaming the streets accompanied by mind mages (even though they do not officially exist in Destiny). At Star Flower's suggestion Sir Christopher leads us all in a series of hymns.

9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> of Seedtime

We continue to lay low at the Michaeline Chapterhouse. Factions begin to appear within the cities leaders. Various nobles troops begin to wear sashes to more easily identify who they support.

### 11<sup>th</sup> of Seedtime

Fighting breaks out on the harbour between a number of ships. Some trying to stop several others from leaving port. Apparently there was disagreement over whether Baron Ravenswood could leave port. Eventually he was allowed to leave. We also learnt that Don Carlos's father died the same day Carlos did, but after him. He apparently died laughing over the fact that the son who had deposed him had in the end died before him. There is still civil disorder in the streets but it is slowly being quelled.

The next three days are to be the funeral of Don Carlos, his father and Baron Scarpia. So a truce has been issued.

### 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> of Seedtime

Diego and Father Bob (Astoria – I did indirectly indicate this earlier) attend the funerals. We also attend as Diego's bodyguards. So we ended up being one short of front row seats. A rumour going round is that Don Carlos was killed during an assassination attempt, it is also rumoured that the assassins were a Guild party. There were quite spectacular fire works during the proceedings.

### 15<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> of Seedtime

We continued to stay out of sight and as in previous days I spent my time receiving training on weapon use. We were informed by our employer that she was very happy with our services and paid us off. Pay being in the form of two thousand silver pennies and a finely crafted silvered rapier each. We were also informed that Destiny would become a Republic and the rule of the Council of Ten would be reinstated with Astoria having a prominent seat on the council.

Diego was able to reclaim some of his former property, namely his ship which he used to sail us back to Seagate on, stopping off to pick up our loot.

We arrived back at the Guild on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Seedtime. Richer to the tune of about twenty four thousand silver pennies after tax. As to what Sir Christopher's doom (from killing Don Carlos) is I do not know...

Final Note – Diego is to be the new Graf? of MMH...this is a late addition, (player note – this would have been added after the event has already occurred)