

Conflict in Gaia

Cover Sheet

Adventure by Alan Grant

Duration 19 days (1st Meadow 805 – 19th Meadow)

Player Characters

Bainbridge	Necromancer	Dwarf	Female	
Talon	Illusionist	Human	Male	
Neroli	Air	Dwarf	Male	
Human	Illusionist	Human	Male	
Vanderhand	Non-mage	Human	Male	Military Scientist
Flamis	Fire	Human	Female	Leader
Basalic	Earth	Human	Male	Scribe
Lizette	Namer	Human	Female	

Plane

Gaia

Places Visited

City of Gaia

Standing Stone of DarKoor

Employer

Diplomat to the Emperor

Important NPCs

Emperor Nu-Wan

Captain Arsa

Lieutenant Arki

Citizen Lera

Sier

“Lord of the Flies”

Chaos and Mayhem

Gaia

Mission

To take out an enemy leader beyond enemy lines.

Conflict in Gaia

Basalic

I got myself talked into accompanying Flamis on her outing to the Plane of Gaea. Looked like the party was going to need military experience anyway as they had to take something out behind enemy lines. Besides, Aqualina had to dash off, something about a crisis in the whanau .. or something like that.

In the meeting room were: Bainbridge, Talon, Neroli, Human, Vanderhan, Flamis, and myself. Flamis became party leader, Vanderhan the military scientist and I became the scribe. This meant Flamis ended up with the Scroll. Our instructions were to travel east to a particular spot then put the scroll on the ground to form the portal.

We had to wait a couple of days before we left as Flamis had some investment orders to fill. On the morning of the third day, we headed off. On the way, we stopped at an inn to get ham, cheese and breads.

3rd Meadow

The trip out was uneventful .. well mostly uneventful. For some unusual reason, Bainbridge cast a spell which created a very bad smell. Many of the horses panicked. It took a while to calm them down and get the party moving again.

Once we reached the spot, at the end of the path, Flamis put the scroll down ... and everything got very very bright.. The horses didn't like the look of it at all and rapidly retreated from the area, with us on them. After the explosion there was a flowing door, with lightning flowing all around it. The portal was up, and correct but it was going to collapse in a minute. So we rushed through.

We woke up on a grassy plain. The horses were calm and munching. We were changed somewhat too. Plus Human was revealed in his true form and his monkey was actually an imp. Plus we could all see the Mark of Sier on him. I looked even more troll like, Flamis looked like she was covered in flames, Neroli had his hair and beard tossing about as if in a windstorm, both Talon and Human looked sort of indistinct whereas Bainbridge looked more real. Lizette was covered in names and words.

Just then the ten foot cloak drifted across the field. After greeting us in the name of the Emperor Nu-Wan, the cloak dropped off revealing the occupant, a were-platypus. Even though I was forewarned I still thought it was highly amusing. We also discovered that it was five thousand years since the other party had been called and the current Emperor was the son of the previous one who had fallen in battle a thousand years ago. The same war was still going on even after all this time. Talon was going on about something called 'Blue' which Vanderhan described as being stronger than military coffee. The diplomat called it Dar-Yeh. Just then the imp zipped past us. Human explained it was probably heading off to torment a concentration of intelligent beings. I ordered him to recall it and make sure it stays put.

A few hours later we reached the palace and were met by a platoon of werewolf soldiers. We were escorted in and met the Commander of the Armies, a werewolf, two grand viziers and the werebear healer. They were still in the progress of gathering intelligence on our target. They were going to provide a diversion for us. Our target was someone rather high up in the enemy's forces.

After the meeting we were conducted to our rooms. There seemed to be a lot of celebrations that the Heros from Seagate, led by Commander Flamis were back. Talon was swept away by a group of female wereotters for some, more private celebrations. However there seemed to be some mourning that General Aqualina was missing as they seemed to think she had fallen in battle. I'll have to collect up their songs and legends before we leave, as I was sure she'd be pleased. Mind you, do I really want to give her a swelled head? She'd be insufferable for a month.

A room had been prepared for the two of us. The others were in room each nearby. Off our one was our conference room, complete with planning table. There we settled down for the night. Vanderhan joined us a

little later for a meeting where we carefully sampled the 'blue' and the highly alcoholic 'green'. Mixing the two is very very BAD. Together we worked out our plans.

.2.

4th Meadow

Next morning, we were having a strategy meeting when there was a faint rumble from the south. About the same time, a weretiger in partial plate came in to tell us the divination chamber was ready. So we went there, a room with a dais surrounding a pit. White flames rose out of it. In the flames we saw visions of the standing stone of DarKoor, located two days from the city. There is a portal there that leads to a temple, a long way off to the west. From there is a town still loyal to the Emperor which is being fought over. North from there, in desolate lands is a temple where the target resides. We also saw a vision of children in bone cages. We were told that those were their souls. We then saw the enemy who looked right back at us, presumably through his own scry as the glow faded.

Flamis was then handed a piece of a shattered crystal, a diamond embedded in platinum, which provided dreaming visions. Three of them are also coming with us, Captain Arsa and Lt Arki, male and female werepanthers and Polari, weretiger.

Back at the briefing room, we obtained wooden weapons, maps, two barrels of Blue, 1 flask of Green, as well as six vials of Waters of Gaea. Some of us were having adverse reaction to being near them especially those that were pacted. Even I was feeling a little twitchy.

We rode off and Neroli's horse dropped dead. Flamis had passed him her shockbolt rings and somehow they had gone off. So Citizen Lera, another werepanther, became Neroli's mount. That night we saw a huge fall moon.

Watch order: Lizette/Human, Flamis/Bainbridge, Neroli/Basalic, Vanderhan/Talon

I was woken up during the night as a figure was spotted heading towards us to the south. For some reason Human would not wake up. The last spell to affect him was Detect Aura. Lizette's cloak was also trying to flee. What I could see appeared to be a woman in armour with an aura of Avatar. We then recognised the being as Sier. Both Vanderhan and I opened fire with our laser rifles as the were creatures also attacked. Talon had also snuck up and scored a very good hit with his weapon which shattered. Sier then vanished.. Behind him was a collection of 1000 silver pieces. Flamis was able to destroy 999 of them, the remaining one left had the symbol of a dragon and was life aspected. The damage Sier had done to the land by his passage was healed with a vial of Waters of Gaia. Talon was also given the title of Corporal for his bravery. I was already a lieutenant to Flamis's captain while Vanderhan was a sergeant.

Basalic to the party necromancer – "How good is your Bless Crops?"

It turned out that Human's imp was gone as Human had told it to 'Go Home'. Unfortunately it had gone back to Sier who had wanted to know why Human had sent his 'gift' back. Hopefully now Human will be free of Sier's influence. I suspect Jhiselle won't be speaking to me at all after this once she finds out I was taking potshots at her patron.

.3.

There seemed to be some indication that the coin is alive. Then something invisible thwapped Lizette. No idea what that was.

5th Meadow

We carried on into savannah and the grass got taller. Finally reached an oasis early that evening. Lizette started suffering from a mana overload so we gave her some cold iron to hold. Just then some were eagles and a were raven turned up. The horses were rather unhappy about that so I was busy calming them down. The werebirds had brought a new sword for Talon, a scimitar made of adamantium that was more effective against demons. Fishing was done despite the discovery that the codfish were semi-sentient.

6th Meadow

Next morning it was discovered that Talon was wet .. something to do with the wereotters. I cast Armours of Earths all around and a Strength of Stone on Bainbridge – after a few failures. Flamis looked like she was having a bad hair day with it all sticking up into a cone, so was her elemental. Also Lizette had rendered herself unconscious. When she came to, she was blind for the next six hours.

Later on, we reached a hilly area. The portal was on a rise and was obviously active. Just then something came through the portal and it shut down. It was wearing smooth black chitinous armour and went invisible, however, Vanderhan was able to track it with the laser rifle. So I put an explosive head on a crossbow bolt and fired it where Vanderhan wanted it. The explosion outlined the now charred figure so Flamis sent her elemental after it. The entity soon fell over.

I retrieved my still intact bolt then went to examine and secure the area around the now dead portal. The others went to examine the fallen enemy. They found a moaning sword with the GTN of Soulsteel. The sword is alive with the aura strength of Formally Living. The armour is the same as the sword. Meanwhile I had discovered that the portal would reactivate the following sunrise. The entity also had a rod, which had been part of the armour, which allowed communication with the commander. The range was inter-dimensional. The person had been in the armour for ten years. He was eleven years old but looked fully grown.

7th Meadow.

While waiting for the portal to reactivate, Flamis received a series of visions, which she shared with me. We then went through the portal and came out in what appeared to be a large cavern. There was a thirty foot large statue surrounded by floating moaning figures. GTN – Reflection of Spirit. There were also several torches that were burning souls. We removed the torches and I used healing magics to put the torches out and free the souls.

.4.

When we emerged from the temple we were on a plateau with paths leading off it. We took the road going north. From the tracks, it appeared that the scout that went through the portal came from the east.

A bit later on we reached an oasis with a non magical statue there. Just then, offensive magic hit Human and Neroli. Human also attacked Lizette. I went on alert with the laser rifle. Then I heard the sounds of marching feet. It turned out to be a squad of six individuals in black armour. One of them had spikes. So I summoned an earth elemental.

Three of the squad charged towards us as I sent the earth elemental up behind the leader. Him and the other two turned to attack the elemental, and they were doing quite a bit of damage to it. I was trying to shoot the leader but the laser rifle was ineffective. As I was switching to the crossbow, the elemental went down. Flamis had also hit them with dragonflames and Talon was rushing in to hit him. The other three were taken down but the leader and those two enveloped themselves with black energy and vanished. Also, for some reason, Bainbridge was wrestling with a cobra that bit and poisoned her.

Basically it had not gone well. The were-patheress, Lera, that had come with us through the portal was missing, presumably captured. We were able to determine that this squad had been ordered to get the information from the scout but if they met resistance they were to teleport back to the tower. Their armour was also discovered to have weaknesses to light, radiance, and Gaea. Vanderhan used his hammer, Shatterer, to break the armour sending shards flying all over the place. When they hit people, they caused pain.

Once everything was sorted out we set off again. We encountered a man chained up and hanging upside down from a post. Next to him was seated another man in a fur cloak. He claimed that the main hanging is part of a strike force that attacked their village, four days west of here and is being punished. The fur is wolfskin and we determined that the hanging man is a werewolf while the other one is a werelion. It looked like a territorial dispute that had been going on for a very long time. We headed onwards.

8th Meadow

Next morning, after the usual round of spells, I attempted to summon another earth elemental. I got thumped by the first one but the second attempt worked. Also, for some reason Bainbridge caused Neroli to die for a minute. I was nearly ready to thump her but the earth elemental wouldn't let me. When Neroli came back though, he had regained missing parts.

Talon – “This world gives Neroli balls”

Talon – “Feeling a little stiff?”

Neroli – “I know where you sleep”

We rode along and found a large patch of grass growing in the middle of the road. It Daed as a wild magic zone so I had the earth elemental make a new path around it. For some reason Bainbridge threw a small doll in the area. It grew to 15ft, sprouted horns, and started digging.

The next obstacle was what appeared to be a vein of gold across the path. I was suspicious, thinking this could be one of those Helios zones I had heard about. However, Neroli went straight for it, followed by Talon. I had intended for my elemental to eat around the gold so we could get it out but it dived in and ate the lot, except for the two pounds Talon had already got. So much for telling it to have a ‘little’ snack. However, underneath was a lump of black diamond that we were able to excavate. Maybe I'll send the elemental after a lump of mithral later to compensate so the others aren't too mad at me.

The rest of the day went without incident and we reached the village by evening. Unfortunately we discovered that the village is now a burnt out ruin and completely trashed. We could also see the front line, which was between us and the village. On the other side, the mana level is normal – for Alusia. Also there was a figure in the distance, right on the horizon. As we watched, he vanished in a burst of flame in such a manner to make us suspect he was a firemage.

.5.

9th Meadow

A scrying told us that the werepantheress was being tortured. We also learnt there was no bound earth under the temple but there was a ‘antimagic’ zone around the tower. Also the plane attempting to overlay this one was called Abidon. A 10,000 strong army had come from the north and half had been wiped out here. Some weapons were left behind and all the villagers were dead. The rest of the army kept going. There was a strong possibility that the tower was unguarded. Also the ground had been salted to prevent anything being raised as undead. The tower itself was against a very large mountain.

A collection of weapons were brought back such as a cold iron meteoric claymore and a bound stone glaive. After Armours and Strength spells all around, Flamis used a crystal ball and saw the children in cages. One was grabbed and dragged inside. Lizette said something, presumably the name of the ruler of the invading plane, and the line moved four metres into Gaea, kinking toward Lizette. Gaea reacted really badly to this.

Walking Unseens all around and we firearced towards the tower, stopping 25 miles west of it. There, waiting for us was an entity Flamis recognised as the ‘Lord of the Flies’. Flamis retreated and I went with her. However, it turned out that he wanted to help us, with two conditions. The first was to destroy all the abominations within the tower and the second was to allow him to sort it out with Sier regarding Human. When we agreed, he had two warriors join us and then removed Sier's mark from Human. He then vanished in golden flames. We then noticed blue and white lines were dancing over Flamis, presumably to do with the crystal she wears.

Human – ‘Stop trying to poke his wife’.

We got a bit closer to the tower and I had the earth elemental dig us a bunker. Once inside meals were produced, and we found a map of the tower inside the Irish stew. On it was marked a point where the ‘antimagic’ area could be breached. Night approached.

.6.

Bainbridge – “Gold is not important. It’s only gold”
Neroli – Are you sure you’re a dwarf?”

That evening, Neroli saw what appeared to be smoke ascending from the top of the tower. It was glowing and could be seen ascending much further than would be expected. A blood red moon was rising and we estimated it would be right over the tower at dawn. So we used the earth elemental to tunnel a path towards the tower. During that time, the UnSeens wore off.

10th Meadow

This was the first chance we got a look at our two ‘companions’, who Talon later nicknamed Mayhem and Chaos. They looked like the opposition except their armour is white with no spikes and marked with a platinum circle on one shoulder and a gold circle on the other. They were armed with pearl handled katanas.

We breached the ‘antimagic’ shield through the marked hole. I then had the earth elemental create a spiral ramp in the cliff going upwards. The tower is 100ft high so we breached the cliff face at the 115ft mark with a peephole. The silver ribbon was the essence of something and rose from a pentacle in the basement. It seemed like there was a ritual in progress. The roof was unguarded.

While I was refreshing all the Strength of Stones and Armours of Earth, there was a rumble and a ribbon of rippling crimson rose out of the hole. So, basically we had a rising cylinder of crimson surrounding a double helix of silver. Once we had all slid over on ropes to the roof, we decided to try and disrupt the ritual. Bainbridge dropped in an ice grenade. A few seconds later, ten shards of ice spiralled out and up. Meanwhile Flamis threw in a Gaea grenade. That caused holes in the crimson curtain. Vanderhan tossed in alchemical fire and the tower shook, causing Human to go over the edge. Flamis sent the fire elemental after him while Vanderhan threw a rope. They were able to catch him at the last projection of the building before he impacted on the ground. Black flames were also billowing up from inside.

Human was hauled up and, on the way up, he saw a chilling sight. Our primary target was in a room, on the third floor, sacrificing a child. So we absailed down the wall and through the window to deal to this, leaving the fire elemental Mayhem and Chaos to work their way down destroying all the enemy in their path. By the time we got there, the primary target was gone and the child had been assimilated with the armour. So Talon attacked the resulting soldier. Between him and Flamis it was soon dealt to. Flamis was covered in the fallout when Talon cleaved from top to toe. Once that was cleaned up Talon used his sword to scrape away the bits of soulsteel that had embedded in Flamis’s skin. It hissed and spat as he did so.

We headed out and went down the central spiral staircase that went down the inside of the central shaft and outside of the crimson cylinder. Inside the cylinder, just below that level, a chaos flame elemental was battling a Daughter of Gaea water elemental on an ice platform. The water elemental was loosing so Flamis decided to help out with a Wall of Radiance. That hurt the chaos flame but the water elemental vanished. So Flamis threw in more Waters of Gaea. That damaged the crimson wall and took out the elemental.

While this was happening, Bainbridge and Lizette had gone ahead of us. Just then we heard a voice say ‘Kill them’. So the rest of us charged down to find them in real trouble from a sergeant and five footmen. While Talon and Neroli charged in, Flamis fired dragonflames at them while I tried to shoot the sergeant and lost the bolt. While the fight proceeded, Bainbridge sustained damage to the hip and was dragged off.

.7.

It wasn’t long after, that we defeated them. We were currently on the second level and Freda the fire elemental, we well as Chaos and Mayhem had caught up with us, after clearing out the levels above. We figured Bainbridge was in one of the basements so we continued down to the first level.

Down there we found a room with an eldritch sigel in the centre, four black marble statues of spiked armoured warriors, and four decomposing bodies of children in a cage. Once we were reassured that the statues would not animate Flamis had Frieda cremate the bodies. However, that did imply four elite warriors were based here.

On the ground floor, we encountered large wooded double doors with platinum and gold inlays, heading off the landing. Chaos and Mayhem pushed them open and we saw a mural on the far wall in the room beyond. The mural showed a desert with a fiery sky. According to Flamis it was identical to the mural in the palace waiting room on the north wall. The last magic to impact the mural was scrying. We believed the mural showed the current state of the northern plains. Human spotted eyes in the mural so I tried to cover the mural with a stone wall. Unfortunately, all I succeeded in doing was framing it. Talon tried an image and revealed a dragon of radiant flame behind it. Talon attempted to apologise but Human decided to 'moon' it then give it a 'coochie coochie coo' gesture.

The next room had a mural of water with ripples. It was there, I stonewalled the main entrance. The next mural showed a mountain range of light, but the dragon behind it was ravaged. The dragons behind the other three murals, representing the other three elements of water, air, and fire, were hale and hardy.

The room going back to the landing had two doors in that wall. One we had gone through, the other we were trying to open but it ate Vanderhan's lockpicks. We finally concluded it was a false door and gave up.

Headed down the stairs to the first basement level, forty foot down. There were two bronze wingless dragon statues in front of the doors. As we got there, five black spikes shot down from above. It looked like the ritual had taken on a new phase.

Through this door we found cells of starving children. At first I wanted to stop to help them but quickly realized that would not be practical. What would we do with them and besides, we were on a time limit.

Through the door at the end we found a priest at a black stone altar. Strapped to the altar was Bainbridge. Corpses of five children hung from the ceiling and there was a squad of five footmen and a sergeant in the room as well. So we charged in for the rescue led by Chaos and Mayhem.

One of them took out the priest in two vicious blows while Frieda smacked down a footman. I just missed the sergeant with the crossbow so dropped the weapon and went in with the glaive. A footman critically wounded Bainbridge then, as Mayhem took out the sergeant, Chaos was killed by decapitation by a footman who promptly upgraded to a sergeant. Ernie whalloped another footman and took it out while Frieda hugged and immolated the new sergeant.

Once the battle was over Lizette just managed to stabilise Bainbridge. However Bainbridge had shattered ribs and a broken pelvis. It would take weeks to heal properly and we didn't have time for that. At one point we considered killing her for later resurrection so we could store her body in the portable hole. However, I was able to bring her around with a trolls skin.

While this happened the armour around Chaos crumbled into dust revealing the body of a beautiful young elven woman. There was a mark on her forehead of a small arch with eight golden lines radiating from it. As we gave reverence for a warrior that had fallen in honour. Frieda immolated the body.

However, that had taken valuable time. Instead of working our way down, we may have to make an immediate strike down to the source of the ritual if we had any hope of stopping it in time.

.8.

So we went all the way down to sub basement three. This level was all open plan and it was here the stairs stopped. In the middle of the room was a hole where the silver spiral and red curtain came out of. Four grand staircases radiated down and out. Also scattered around the room were cages containing several malnourished creatures. But we could not delay to help them.

Only the north stairwell provided access down, the rest had been barricaded. It smelt trap but we had little choice. When we got down there, we discovered an iridescent opaque wall in front of us. As Flamis triggered off her invested quickness, the wall dropped revealing a group of four elite captains, a chaos fire elemental and five footmen were grouped to meet us. Beyond them was the lieutenant in the centre of the circle along with the broken and bloody body of Lera. Ten dead children were also spaced around the circle. An iridescent curtain was also around the circle but then it dropped. The ritual was complete.

Mayhem charged in and took out a footman in one swipe. I fired another of my explosive head bolts at the lieutenant but it missed and impacted on the back wall. So I switched to the glaive. Meanwhile a wall of fire appeared in front of the spellcasters. One of the elites decapitated Mayhem while I charged into the footman that Flamis was using for target practise. That footman soon fell. Flamis let loose with a dragonflames while Vanderhan finished off a captain. Frieda and Ernie were also attacking. Meanwhile Talon was sneaking around the edge, invisible, with a prepared Waters of Gaea. He then charged in right under the lieutenant and two captains and applied it to Lera's body. The captains converged on him and he met his death, but not before achieving his objective. Meanwhile, I had succeeded in snuffing out the fire elemental. Freda also went poof soon afterwards.

Vanderhan was hit badly but gave a good hit back. I also took a major chest wound but we still valiantly battled our way towards the lieutenant. Human had also managed to get through and with one really good hit, succeeded in taking him down. During this time, the Waters of Gaea had revived Lera and filled her full of Gaea's essence, transferring her into a very powerful warrior. She quickly took out the two captains. Ernie had been taken out as well but, between the rest of us, we finished the remainder off.

Just then Human dropped to one knee and said 'Welcome Mother Gaea'. A female figure clad in green had appeared. Because we had done so well, and managed to reverse the ritual, she offered to grant each of us a wish. Talon was also resurrected and proclaimed to be a 'Child of Gaea'. Bainbridge had picked up a taint .. and would need a quest to get rid of it.

We headed out. Now Gaea had influence here again, the land was recovering. The children and other creatures were freed. At that time a flight of were birds etc had arrived to reclaim the area. Lizette, the body of Bainbridge, and Neroli headed straight back with some of them to the city so Bainbridge could be healed. Currently he was in a petit mort state. The rest of us were going back on foot and would pick up the horses on the way.

.9.

Our journey back was uneventful. Once through the portal we collected the horses and reported our success to the werewolves that had stayed there. They were most impressed. When we camped by the lake Talon was shanghaied. Again, we found him in the morning, soaking wet and grinning.

16th Meadow

Finally arrived back at the city to a hero's welcome. Human, who had dealt the killing blow, was hoisted on top of a were-elephant. Just then, I noticed the glyphs on my glaive were glowing so I pointed that out to the captain. That was when we saw a massive dragon in the sky above us and we were all awestruck. We were told that was the Camarash – the southern dragon of the Earth, now hale and hearty, and the glaive I was carrying was part of its tooth. I was doubly awed and swore to use the glaive in honour.

We were taken inside. Lera was there, with two generals flanking her and we could tell she was now a person of some importance. Neroli was also escorted in by two werewolves. There was no sign of Lizette or Bainbridge.

The Emperor arrived and we were all thanked. Talon was given the additional honour of being considered to be born here. However, when we asked about Lizette and Bainbridge, we discovered that they were in the city jail for 'offending their sensibilities' or something like that. It transpired Neroli had left them outside.

“Somehow Neroli made Bainbridge look sensible”
“Never underestimate the stupidity of Guild members”.

There was not much we could do about it now as they had to wait on the Emperor’s decree. That night Flamis and I relaxed in our quarters while Talon was dragged off by were-ferrets and Vanderhan found himself accompanied by were-lionesses.

17th Meadow

Vanderhan went to see Lizette and Bainbridge who were in separate cells. Meanwhile Flamis and I were in debriefing, telling the generals the entire story.

18th Meadow

Bainbridge and Lizette were brought in. We each ended up with a tattoo, declaring us as citizens of the Empire. Except Lizette .. she was just a civilian. What party treasure we had was mostly used up in healing Bainbridge. After that was done, we left for the Guild.

19th Meadow

Finally arrived back home.