

Never say Neverre

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The Party

Isil Eth – Elven princess, mind mage, healer (5), courtier
Wordsmith – dwarvish namer, military scientist (not pacted)
Loxi – cutish Elfen male thief and earth mage, healer (4), fighter
Motley – male of unknown species (possibly a 16’ giant) fighter
Amelia – tall female hobbit, non-mage, ranger, courtier, healer (7)
Christopher – knight, male human illusionist, small fighter.

Leader – Amelia
Scribe – Isil Eth
Military Scientist – Amelia
Cook – Motley
Healer – Amelia
Combat Cat – Christopher

The mission

To assist the return / uncovering of the [Orb of Ran](#) (true form *Rei-Ân-Nōh* in a dialect of dragon) for Ninishtar, [Duchess of Armede](#).

Background

Several ages ago, the drow who governed southern ‘africa’ created a set of extremely powerful artefacts to aid in their rule. The [Azurian Empire](#) has recently discovered an item of ‘order’, and it is surmised to be part of this set.

The location of each item is secret. The Orb of Ran is described in a poem, copies of which are held by each of the duchies of [Raniterre](#). Sometime in the last 5 weeks, the poem held by [Armede](#) changed from cryptic to clear common – which caused quite a sensation as the same transformation probably occurred to all other scrolls as well.

The Duchess immediately travelled to Carzala to hire a guild party.

The Duchess has a talent that predicts the best form of illusion to use, and this time it provided “sand dweller costume for man and hobbit”. This suggests the item will be to the north west of Raniterre where there is a lot of sand (though few hobbits).

It is also apparent that the [Duke of Neverre](#) has dispatched a raid, probably to the south, and possibly to recover the Orb, and so is the main opponent.

The probable location of the Orb is in a pyramidal complex some 1000 leagues to the south in jungle. We are likely to be second there, but then may have a chance to track and overtake the defilers.

Narrative

1st Meadow: We left on the day of the Guild Meeting – oh the sacrifices we make, just as well I met with Snoogles last night.

5th Meadow: Clouds are so boring, so just as well we got off after only 5 days, at midnight on 5th Meadow at [Drowkönigreich](#), there to collect our payment in advance. Developments recommend haste to the [Pyramids](#), there to either collect the [Orb](#), or to follow the party that has it. The best speed will be by a long-range, though inaccurate, teleport spell of some description (we will arrive close together as long as we walk through in reasonable time). The return journey is likely to be long and slow.

6th Meadow: The scroll containing the location poem shows each of us a different version.

Christopher: “We can carry one ‘comfort item’ each.”

Isil Eth: “Put me down Motley.”

Taking an airmage with us we depart via temporary portal to places south. Amelia warned us that most plants are likely to be toxic, so we should stay together.



The trees are reasonably close, with at least one canopy at 120 feet, and little undergrowth. The lowest canopy is intermeshed to provide an almost continuous layer.

Flying up to open air shows the following profile, and that we are about 100 miles from the pyramids, so we fly closer. Apparently we want the eastern one.

Powerful storms hit the area fairly regularly, tearing down trees and sending a wash of mud and detritus out to sea. Short, young trees with nasty brambles mark the early regeneration of a storm patch, together with the track of a very large ground animal.

Flying north-ish, we appeared to be drawn continuously towards the western pyramid, and only Amelia was less affected. She was almost rude in her single-minded dedication to the mission.



Circling at 10 miles, we noticed bluish figures (ogres) throwing bodies off the top of the western pyramid, and the eastern one is mostly unoccupied. There is a large community of settlements (about 500 yards apart) suggesting at least a quarter million orcs or similar. The trees have been thinned – no tall trees – possibly for building timbers or fire wood. There is no evidence of storm strike, and the land seems flatter with some irrigation, but all done very crudely.

Landing on top of the pyramids, we see there has been a battle, 14 days ago, with slaughtered orcs and ogres: females with four arms and 8 feet tall. The ground around the pyramid is ruined, with at least one building destroyed by Falling Star (?) although enough stakes remain to suggest animalistic magics were performed here – to placate ?? An opening in the roof leads down a single-turn spiral staircase to an oblate-spheroidal room, in the centre of which is a silver, humanoid statue with a large open (empty) hand (space for an orb?). [<further description>](#)

Wizards Eye shows a similar chamber in the other pyramid, but this statue appears to be holding a [shield](#) (that glows in a way that shields don't). The statue is of a elvish/drow female that has been skewed, much like a candle that gets too warm.

Assault on Western Pyramid

Having decided to take the shield, or what ever it truly is, we fly to a staging tree some 7 miles from the pyramid and erect a flet. From there we can observe a ritual sacrifice – must be noon. Rest and sleep.

The plan is to windwalk in, with flight queued. Wordsmith will cast spell of silence, Isil Eth an enhance enchant, and Loxi a tunnelling to intersect the spiral staircase.

All goes as planned, until Wordsmith finally succeeds with his spell, and sets off an alarm. The tunnelling works, so Loxi, Wordsmith and air-mage enter the tunnel (a priestess casts a wall of stone across the tunnel sealing them in). Battle is joined as two priestesses approach from the top of the pyramid – Motley leapt upwards and on-wards to protect the tunnel entrance, Amelia throws kitchen implements and Christopher moves to the top of the pyramid to attack the other. There is something weird about our magics – they work funny.

The third priestess then cast diamond tipped javelins at Christopher, so Isil Eth flew to the top hoping to distract her. A priestess dies giving her Death Aspect sisters the advantage – but we manage to subdue them – leaving them alive to recover.

We entered the secret chamber beneath the summit, and liberated the Shield of Chaos. Flying away, we awaited the doom. We initially flew to the south and then west to the mountains. Divinations suggested the dawn would be bad, and that the bridge in Bretlond is a possible refuge from the death curse, and so we headed north. On the way we discussed an alternative approach to attacking the western pyramid (killing high priestesses, ransacking temples, defiling consecrated ground etc) such as asking for help in apprehending those that defiled the eastern pyramid. But we all assumed that ogres that practice blood sacrifice would gut first and questions later – possibly our mistake.

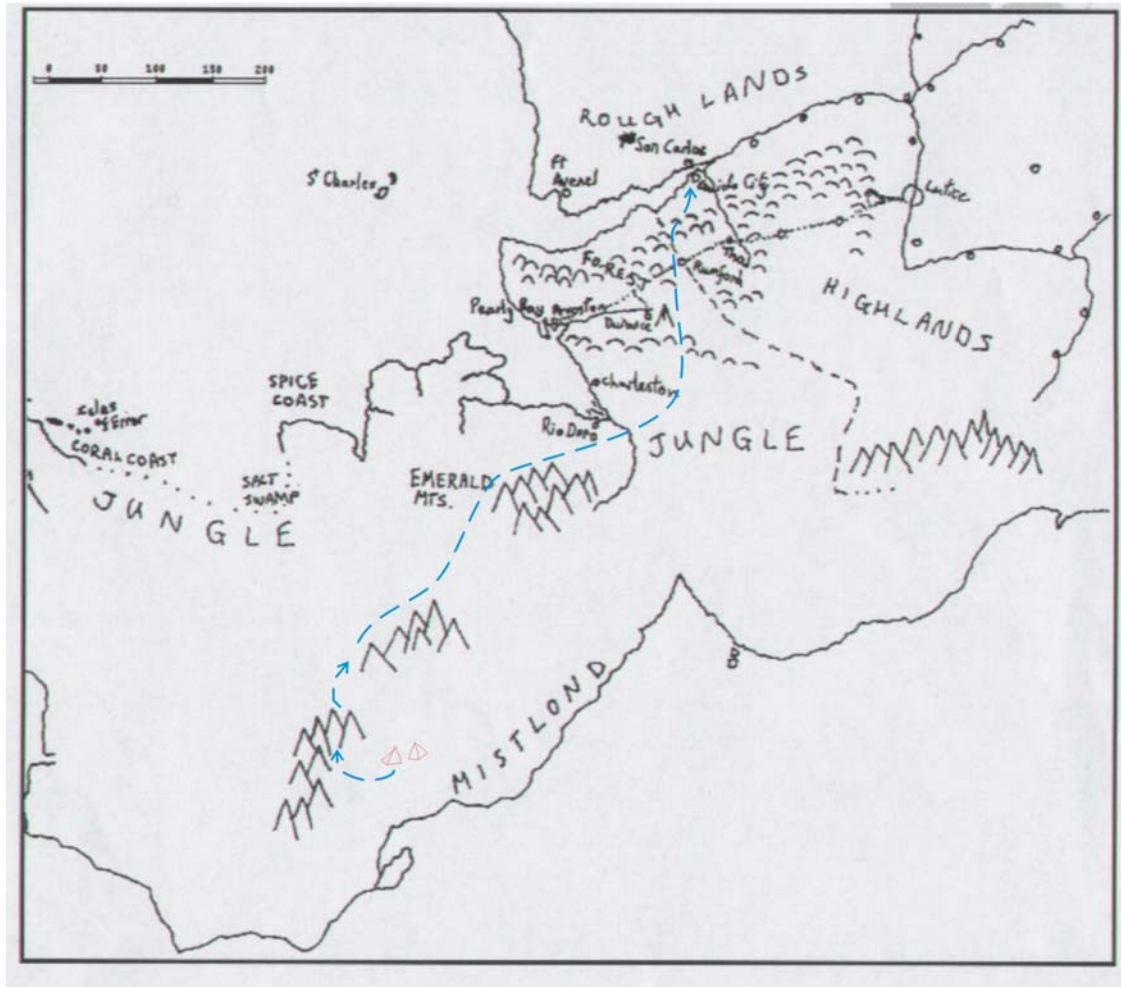
7th Meadow

A divination revealed quite a bit about the shield – it is linked to the Orb, which isn't on this plane on this day. Astrology readings:

Where is safe? Walking hand in hand, *there is a bridge-like portal*
across the bridge at midnight *in Bretlond, about 500 miles*
the lights flashing out, *north.*

When When will you realise I'm sick of your alibis
Running cold; the water running cold,
I think it is time you were told
I think you're getting old.

What something about getting weak and loosing willpower.



By dawn we had flown almost all the way north to [Bretlond](#), with the beginnings of a doom showing up on a divination: we will lose one point of Physical Strength, 1 point of Willpower and age a year in the first 24 hours, and then a major life-draining greedly turns up at the start of the following day (although it may not kill us but rather may turn us into servants). Wordsmith got the impression he might be able to Banish the life-draining greedly (or maybe it has minions), in which case, it would be good if it shows up (something we hope to delay) for others to DA for 'Counterspell required to Banish' while he casts Banish on himself (he can then Banish using appropriate Counterspell for next 30 seconds.) Christopher's and Isil Eth's reading of the [location poem](#) changed again.

So we headed for [Guido](#) city, where we met with various Urielites who control the portal to [Ares](#). There we found that a gabrielite hit squad of three thugs went through last moonday, having arrived in great haste.

That night we walked through the portal to [Quorn](#) on the plane of [Ares](#).

8th Meadow

We arrived in Quorn in midmorning of the 8th, although it seemed to only take a few minutes to portal across – some sort of time mis-match? Either way, we carried some 2 weeks food and some water or wine, depending on preference or tolerance.

A welcome committee was formed of local tall-hobbits. The mayoress is Veronica Speedwell, who is dressed as a wealthy, respectable hobbit matron. A typical man wears a tunic with concealed weapon and has a weak tan. Speedwell has a natural rapport with Amelia, appears to believe Christopher is the leader and treats Isil Eth as a Princess, so all is well.

Quorn, and probably all of Ares, is red-tinged, with a weak, readish sun. The buildings are built of sandstone and rammed-earth, with some glass-like window panes. The water looks like a soapy / weak milk solution – urgh! But it gets one clean.

We stayed at the usual Michaeline hostel. The gabrielite hit-squad, of three people, came through the previous moon-time, although there was some confusion over whether they were part of another group – we think they left with that group (who went to the new M. compound), though it is unclear as to whether they stayed with them.

Motley summoned Foras to the plane, which is a bit of a no-no as he didn't clear that with Amelia first. Foras is aware of the shield as an item of chaos. He said the orb is 100s to 1000 miles away in the north-west / south quadrant.

Wordsmith divinated his doom which has crystalised slightly – we are teetering on the edge of chaos. The doom is so aligned with the overall universal creation that it will eventually catch up with us no matter where we hide – so we have better resolve it.

9th Meadow

We spent the day practicing combat, which is quite fun given the lightness everyone feels and skidding around due to the soil being like a light loam. Amelia finds out stuff about the capital etc – apparently you can eat the local fish. As it is late spring, the army is likely to be out assisting prospectors. The regular ship arrived that evening from the capital.

Wordsmith did a 3 hour divination on himself – the lad should just buy a decent mirror, for though I can understand his fear, we have to put up with it. The initial doom is quite concrete, but the second phase cannot target him sufficiently to trigger.

Amelia thinks Bretlond (the church) has been channelling a vast amount of money into this plane. The Governor is getting quite rich from it, so Outworlders, such as ourselves, can expect few disruptions. Where has the church got all this money from, and to what purpose? Are they hiding the treasury of Don Carlos?

We can hire [Fidelia Comfrey](#) as a scout for 1 gold per day, which is about 220 sp per week. She can take us to the capital to buy clothes, get travel documents and so forth. The documents are likely to cost about 12 gold.

10th Meadow

We travelled by boat to the provincial capital: it is rally quite an exciting way to travel, but some did quibble about the slow start, but I like a Captain who starts off slow. Apparently I encouraged quite a splash as we got to the Capital in record time of only 3 hours. Captain Sextus Aloesus Deurio knew Loxi was there as a body guard so all was well. Sextus is of course a prenomyn used only by confidants such as myself.

Approaching the capital we could see pines growing in a corkscrew shape which must make carpentry quite an art form. Plantations of black iris dot the landscape, throwing the red into high relief. There is a mandatory dew-farm in a large bowl-like depression. And Vinyards surround the capital.

Well, all was well until we got to the [Capital](#), and then things got better. A group of guards hurried up and escorted us, well the [Legate](#) only spoke with me really: apparently I am a noble mistress to a Vestral, but that sounds a bit odd even for me. We passed a Priest or “Flamen” who has precedence but wears nothing born of an animal – which is quite easy given the silk worm is an insect – but his footwear was just horrid.

The [Ambassador](#)'s residence, looks like a demure castle. I really don't understanding this use of sweet sherry as a late morning drink but it acts like an antidote to any known aphrodisiac. We resolved any misunderstandings with dear [Publius](#) (I am a noble, and no ones' mistress, nor even a Vestal Virgin (though don't laugh for I am eligible as both my children were conceived to Gods: there seems to be a cult of 'Son of God, born of a Virgin', which is just as well as Vestals that loose their virginity are killed unless they conceive to a god)) and a small gesture seemed to smooth everything over. We arranged to visit with the Governor.

There is some concern brewing in official circles over the Flamen issuing a divination:

9 or 10 days ago, the Flamens apparently spoke to the governor of unfavourable signs -- normally an indication that a swarm is expected to attack, so precautions have been doubled, leave cancelled for those troops assigned to civil protection. Governor issued a "Swarm Warning" but no further details. There are some rumblings amongst the populace, but nothing of concern (yet).

11th Meadow

Did some shopping: excellent quality silks and exquisite dyes. See [Trade of Aries](#). AND we went to the Governor's palace to get permits and look at the maps. They have an amazing ability to almost immediately produce and update maps of the movements of ships and storms. Something to do with wizards eyes in the upper airs. Our cover is that we are to see some knights that went with the last group of Michaelines to their new compound.

We also spent the day preparing the [Ambassador's yacht](#) for sailing around the planelet.

Motley and Sir Kit, separately, found out information on the location of the Orb. It was apparently to the west of us and about 500 miles away. They also learnt to say the individual true name of the shield which would enable the user to tune into the Orb so as to gain insights into its location and movements and so forth.

Amelia “you have converted me to this course of action”
Motley “ Oh don’t use that word around Christopher”.

12th Meadow

We set out east towards the believed location of the Orb. We take the Ambassador’s yacht, Rori the Air mage and Fidelia the hobbit guide. We are able to cover some 400 miles before the first evening, and it is obvious we are approaching the ‘ruins’, being a circle of standing stones, so we divert to the north to approach from the northeast – this also apparently keeps our speed up.

Amelia’s astrology reading changes.

Loxi had a dream of lying and flying the night. We think it is vicarious sensations of what the orb bearer is feeling. The next day we realise it was because the orb was near the monolithic place of power and Loxi got these strong emanations from the orb. It is quite possible that orb bearer will get intimations of Loxi.

13th Meadow

As dawn approached we saw the [monoliths](#) or ‘ruins’ from afar.

We found tracks that are a few days old. It appears the Orb bearer and 2 companions landed in the vegetation, walked in to sleep and one did a ritual. They then flew on towards the mining town by the volcanoes visible in the distance. Looks like they are flying on a magic carpet, made of skin rather than wove, that could comfortably carry 8.

Isil Eth bespoke Manwe, who does’t like the feel of this planelet as it is corrupted from its original intent. The Orb and Shield are now out of balance and hence unstable and very dangerous to use. We should be very careful to not use it – as it is easy to do an immense amount of wrong with either of them, even with the best of intentions. Both of these are very powerful items, so don’t assume that the shield I manageable just because it is the lesser of the two items.

Apparently the Orb is no longer moving. I had been moving very smoothly, probably by binder or Wican magics.

Motley accused Wordsmith of having a good idea – something Wordsmith denied vehemently.

Diverse divinations of the shield by its self, in an area of consecration and near the monolith (but not too near) shows it sparkles more in a high mana area. The Shield is a

tuning itself to the planelet. There is a suggestion that the orb was powered up last night by being brought to the monolith, so we carefully do not bring the shield to the monolith.

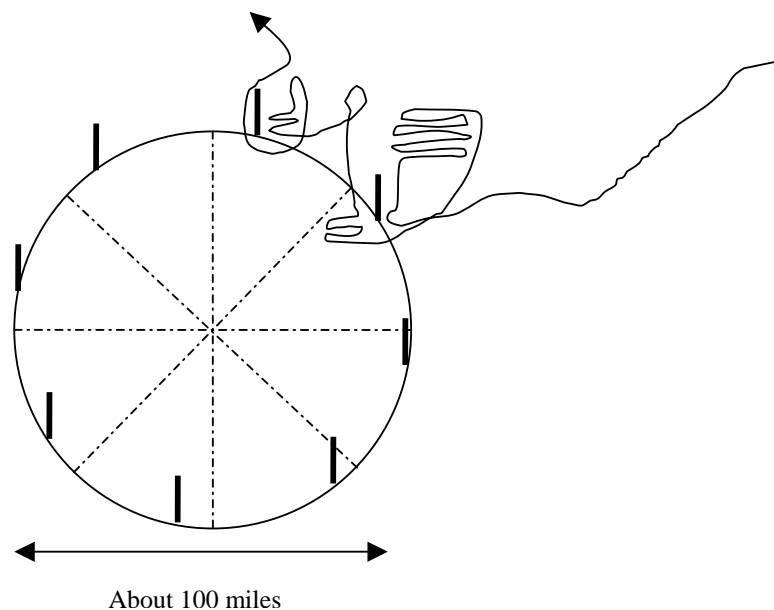
It is probably very dangerous to those nearby to bring the shield near the orb. So we buried it somewhere with a Loxi tunnel.

Isil Eth inadvertently revealed the Ancient Elvish word form for Dwarf is “that” as an abbreviation for “That being over there”.

Loxi is snubbed by the local lichen who don't want to play with her.

An invisible wormy thing turned up at some stage (described under [Ares](#)). The best way to deal with these is to not move and engage with offensive magics. Any movement is associated with fear. It DAs as mind worm. Mind magics seem to affect it mightily. They can reincarnate.

We flew onto the next monolith to the north, where some spells were cast and Rori got a pool of mana.



We then flew through the evening and night towards the Mining Town near the volcano, that is visible on the horizon.

14th Meadow.

Motley advised us that there is a minor elder god of chaos after us, as our combined doom. The Location Poem went clear when the Azurians used their Item of Order.

We arrived outside the mining town at early morning. A meeting was in progress so we approached cautiously through a stand of large trees, which are probably feed water from

the mines. There are four (off world) people in black nearby. Apparently this is a holiday for them. About two dozen fey are expected tonight, with a big celebration, but not everyone here is happy about this, as normally only a few fey turn up. Probably normal as rumours say the miners trade with the fey.

A townshobbit, Alexandra Rufus, gave us significant help and information, for which we offered to take him out of the town when we leave.

We went to see the town boss and the 4 in black at the big house against the hills, only to be threatened. So we withdrew to the side of the town (Isil Eth's idea), and waited for them to make a move. Once all the town toughs were on their way we wind walked past them to the house and took the black clad people down (Sir Kit's elaboration to original idea):

Lady Lydia: Rune mage, died and then teleported or had a portal contingency on her.

Hyssop Mind mage, standing but wounded, Azurian Elf. Azurian Elves find it difficult to lie, and he gives his word not to escape.

Brutus Tough fighter / Namer, dead, down and leaking. He had the orb. Has three Telepathic Shout grenades designed to impair those with telepathy up. Used weapons cursed against light-aligned people. Died very confused by Motley.

Their (hobbit) guide was not to be seen.

Wordsmith stood his ground, disarmed Rufus and was seriously wounded. Motley and Sir Kit did the damage. A cursory check was made to ensure no dangerous or sacrilegious items were left behind (See [Loot from Scrap](#)).

We quickly left the area to the Woodland, much of which was so recently destroyed by Scouring Terrain, and then to our ship, taking the Elf, Brutus and our hobbit friend Rufus. Heading about north-east we saw several fast military ships heading for the mining town, possibly in response to the destruction of the woodland (easily detected from high orbit).

We then discussed the end-game for the orb and shield. We need to ensure that Lady Lydia doesn't return and steal the orb, and given the portal opens in about 12 hours from now we have to defend for the next little bit, and then again in about 6 days.

A three hour [divination of the Orb](#), together with some serious thinking, suggests the original settlement on this plane led to a dispute between the fey and the humans. The Orb was used to commute the geas of one person on this plane, who is probably now dead anyway, but that caused the plane to skew from the true elements. If reasonable restitution is made then the geas can be considered fulfilled and the plane will be fixed. That however will make the Orb free to commute another geas, and so twist another plane, such as Alusia.

We have reached the simple conclusion that we do not trust anyone enough to entrust the Orb with them, and so we must find a way to remove it from play. We need to find a way to absolve ourselves from the Shield-doom, and giving it back doesn't appear to be enough.

Isil Eth has the following Geas:

No discussing our long term plans
"I don't wish to kill Hyssop"

Loxy:

"Oh, Oh, let me [knock out Hyssop]"

Amelia:

"I am trying not to talk about unnecessary things"
"We'll be fine"

Sir Kit healed Wordsmith who had the beginnings of the infection peculiar to this plane that has a combination of physical and magical abomination.

Items

Orb of Ran. The object of our quest. More properly named the Orb of *Rei-Ān-Nōh* or even *Er-yannich* by misreading ancient glyphs in a dialect of dragon. This ancient and powerful item is part of a set devised to assist in the smooth running of an ancient Drow kingdom. But can it be used wisely? Its location is the subject of a cryptic poem. The Orb is related to, or one of, the artefacts that caused the corruption of the planelet of Ares. It is probably part of the drow treasures that date from that time, and include the [portal bridge](#) of Guido. These items were almost certainly hidden or transformed.

Divination of Orb

“They call it instant justice when it’s past the legal limit”

This is believed to an oath-stone of ancient gods — severe gods of order. Whilst not as powerful as it once was when Gods freely trod the known planes of existence (e.g. Maximum rank is now 20), the orb is a dangerous item & an object lesson to guild members about proper &/or wise behaviour.

NORMAL USE

1. **All** statements made within 30’ of the orb about oneself or one’s retainers behave as if they are voluntarily accepted & acknowledged *Geases* ... although [it is suggested guideline to the GM] probably only future statements, promises, commitments & the like are actionable — including statements of intent and position for/against a certain event, cause, or action. This is regardless of whether or not the statement was made with sincerity, irony, or whatever; or whether the statement is heard by anyone else. Statements only have to be “spoken” [aloud, silent tongue, mind-speech, etc] or written.
2. The **rank** is writer’s or speaker’s MA-10 (*up to a maximum of 20*), unless specifically addressed to the holder of the orb, in which case the rank is writer’s/speaker’s MA-5 (*up to a maximum of 20*). However, if this would mean that the rank of the Geas is 0 or less, then that writer/speaker is too insignificant to be affected.
3. If a being dies while under any Orb geas(es), even as a result of breaking the geas, they may be resurrected: but they will still be under the effect of all their Orb geases; and will behave as if slowed; and lose two [more] points of WP; and the rank of the geas increases by 2 ranks (*up to a maximum of 20*) — Unless this would lower the being’s WP to 0 or less, in which case the being is merely irresurrectably dead.

EXTRAORDINARY USE — only applicable if one knows the Orb’s ITN

4. Should the possessor of the orb wish, they may *commute* the geas of any person within 30 feet. The geas is lifted as if fulfilled: instead the plane, or a significant portion of it (upto perhaps 20% of Alusia in size), centred at that point, is magically destabilised. For example, as with Ares, Elemental magic ceases to function and the alchemical nature of the plane is rendered much more inert. This

is clearly the major power of the Orb, a weapon of social destruction “levered” on a technicality.

5. Only one geas may be commuted at any one time.

6. The possessor may lift the commutation, provided sufficient *restitution* is made to the possessor. Possessor must feel that they are getting true “value” in the restitution. Once lifted, no further commutation may be placed on any part of that same area for a year and a day (the second commutation goes ahead, however any area which is under “double jeopardy” remains unaffected)

Technical detail: Should the orb be in a portable hole [or pocket dimension, etc] accessible to whoever possess that hole [or pocket dimension, etc], or similar, it behaves in all respects as if it on the plane at the point where its possessor is.

- Shield The shield is older than the plane of Alusia. There is a tenuous link to the orb, but it is a lesser thing than the orb. The shield’s magic is erratic due to its inherently chaotic nature – possibly all ‘orderliness’ has been transferred to the orb. Non-combat spells receive a 40% boost to range. Non-druidic combat spells can fail at higher ranks, or if associated with a power or pact etc. It is designed as a titan shield, and is very noticeable – all who can notice such things would. There is a very big doom associated to it. Anyone can hold it. The doom is to lose 1 point each from PS and WP in the first day following the desecration, and major loss in following days, possibly ending up subservient to a power of chaos.
It seems to like being the shape of an orb, as it is difficult to change its shape away from that.
The result of a divination is given [here](#).
- Portal to [Ares](#) This connects Guido city in Bretlond, Alusia, with the village of Quorn on Ares, a sub-plane of ‘Home’. The portal is in the middle of the very long bridge between Guido City and San Carlos. The portal is under the control of the Michaeline order, though Permission to portal is given by the Urielite Brother Leofrik.
The bridge made out of stones used to make a magical highway from the coast to the old drow capital, which was in itself the reincarnation of a major portal artefact that was transformed into the road to hide it after it, with other diverse artefacts, caused the corruption of the planelet of Ares.
- Aeir-ships The preferred form of local transport on the plane of [Ares](#). These ships float in the sky and are propelled by strange and arcane magic, possibly similar to those of Aelfheim. The ships apparently float by command and are either attracted to, or repulsed from, the sun or moon. Once the ship has enough speed it can tack, or run, at acute, or

obtuse, angles. Cliffs may offer rapid method of attaining that speed – and luckily there are many high cliffs on Ares. The maximum speed is apparently the amount of windage the crew can withstand, so about 100 miles per hour. Some of the long-distance ships are fitted with strong boxes that stores a lot of wind, it is probably called a Cabinet for obvious reasons, enabling people to breath when travelling though the aether.

The military ships look like a shoe, with a bulbous front-end and a tallish rear. There are glass windows for the bridge as an integral part of the hull, so we can look all round – spectacular! There are adjustable vanes that affect speed and lift – and there are sails to help it steer away from the sun. The military vessels are very strong and could possibly destroy a city wall if flown through one. (Military vessels are built to safely sustain a top cruising speed of about 75 Alusian mph). Hobbits have small versions called scooters.

The Bretlond Ambassador has a yacht, *The Princess Blade*, that has recently been remodelled to have a figurine based on Isil Eth's features embodied in the front end. It is 50 feet long and has outriggers. It takes two and a half hours to travel the first fifty miles and then goes at fifty Alusian miles per hour. It is very flat on top so that people can lounge on deck, but it doesn't have the windows to protect the crew and personages from the wind. The yacht effectively loses 3 hours per day at noon if travelling east-west. It will continue to travel at about 10 miles per hour over the night time.

An aiership may be available from the military depending on the cover story. Could even hire one of the private vessels owned by a local VIP -- although it might be cheaper to bribe an officer to "field test" a military vessel, which occasionally need their performance extensive tested when newly commissioned, or when masts have been changes, overhauled because of rare ramming damage, Cavorite shields needing re-alignment, suspected "underperformance" of hull-integrity, etc ... (military speak for "there's a hole in my frigate")

Location poem The Orb of Ran was hidden from everyday use as the Drow Kingdom was over thrown. The location was given in a cryptic poem, that is known to all duchies – we assume that each scroll is actually a local manifestation of a single scroll, so that all are aware of what the others can see.

The Azurians used their Item of Order some time in the five weeks before the Guild Meeting, which caused the location poem to change to **clear common** which suggests all dukes know the location. When looked at by the party, each saw a different poem – so it may be reader specific.

Ninishtar's Original Reading

Blood Moon pyramid

In deep southern jungle
Best slaughtered at noon.

Ninishtar's Second Reading – after we arrived

Blood-moon pyramid,
in the wild southern jungle,
best slaughter'd at noon.

Isil Eth's Reading (first version)

Please, please, tell me now!
Is there something I should know?
... See how much I'd die.

Isil Eth's Reading (first version) – after doom

So don't say a prayer for me now;
Save it til the morning after
Feel the breeze, deep on the inside.
Look down into the well
If you can, you'll see the world in all his fire
... You don't have to dream it all, just live a day.

Wordsmith's Reading

There's more to this kind;
Of camouflage more than Just,
Just colour and shape.

Motley's Reading

I said it again, but could I please re-phrase it?
Maybe I can catch a ride.
I couldn't really put it much plainer,
but I'll wait till you decide. (New moon on Moonday)

Amelia's Reading

Where men are giants
and the halflings are doubt~~ed~~,
there is it hidden.

Amelia's Second Reading

First Voice:

I never found out
what made you leave,
and now the day is over.

Unseen Chorus:

SO SOON JUST AFTER YOU HAVE GONE
MY SENSES SHARPEN
BUT IT ALWAYS TAKES SO DAMN LONG
BEFORE I FEEL HOW MUCH MY EYES HAVE DARKENED

FEAR HANGS IN THE PLANE
ON THE TABLE, SIGNS OF LEAVE
LIE SCATTERED AND THE WALLS BREAK.
WITH A CRASHING WITHIN.
IT'S NOT AS THOUGH YOU REALLY MATTERED TO ME.

First Voice:

i walk out into the sun;
try to find a new day,
but the whole place just screams in my eyes.
where are you now?
'cause i don't want to meet you ...

(Anyone out there Careless)

Second or Third Voice:

I made a run, I run out yesterday
Tried to find my mountain hideaway
Maybe next year, maybe no go
I know you're watching me every minute of the day;
I've seen the signs and the looks and pictures
That give your game away;
And I cut so far before I had to say.
"Please, please tell me now
Is there something I should know?
Is there something I should say?"

Unseen Chorus:

PEOPLE STARE AND CROSS THE ROAD FROM ME
AND JUNGLE DRUMS THEY ALL CLEAR THE WAY FOR ME
CAN YOU READ MY MIND?
CAN YOU SEE IN THE SNOW?
AND FIERY DEMONS ALL DANCE.

Second or Third Voice:

When you walk through that door,
Don't say you're easy on me.
You're about as easy as unclear war

(Is there something I should know?)

Loxi's Reading

O Rose, thou art sick!
Unseen Worm flays in the night,
In the howling storm.

Sir Christopher's Reading

Nothing holding me,
just the company gentle,
killing ...
Don't ever try.
To be anymore M—,
you've got a lot to answer for.

You unlocked some of the doors ...
Trust you to get caught.
Up in somebody's war, you'll come out;
of it all, intact, I'm sure, Just.
Remember what?
Friends were put here for M—;
You've got a lot.

Sir Christopher's (second) Reading – after the doom

Nothing holding me,
just the company gentle,
killing the afternoon
Don't ever try.
To be anymore M—,
you've got a lot to answer for.
You unlocked some of the doors ...
Trust you to get caught.
Up in somebody's war, you'll come out;
of it all, intact, I'm sure, Just.
Remember what?
Friends were put here for M—;
You've got a lot.

Loot from scrap of 14th Meadow.

5 charges of Invested *spell* (sic) of **Trueform**, Rank 10, BC=55 otherwise like *ritual*

True Form (R-6) *Range:* 5 feet *Duration:* Immediate *Experience Multiple:* 300 *Base Chance:* 20% + 3 / Rank *Cast Time:* 3 hours *Resist:* Active *Target:* Entity, Object *Material:* None *Actions:* Concentration *Concentration Check:* Standard *Effects:* By means of this ritual the Adept may force a target that has been magically altered, cursed, or rearranged into a form other than their natural one to assume their true form and nature. It will not remove effects that could occur naturally. For example, the ritual would restore the form of a human that had been cursed into the shape of a toad, and would return to flesh a human turned to stone but would do nothing to remove a curse of weeping sores or restore a lost limb.

5 charges of Invested spell of **Spell barrier**, Rank 10, BC=65

Spell Barrier (S-9) *Range:* 10 feet + 5 / Rank *Duration:* 1 minute + 1 / Rank *Experience Multiple:* 300 *Base Chance:* 30% *Resist:* No *Storage:* Investment, Ward, Magical Trap *Target:* Volume *Effects:* The Adept creates a thin, glowing, translucent wall which blocks the passage of magic. The barrier is either 10 feet high and 20 feet long as a wall, or 10 feet high and 5 feet in radius as a ring \\ The Adept may increase any dimension—other than thickness — by 1 foot per Rank. This barrier obeys all of the usual rules for insubstantial walls. Any magic cast in such a way that a direct line drawn from the caster to their target passes through the wall (from either side) has a 40% [(+ 3 / Rank with this spell) (- 3 / Rank of the target magic)] chance of having its energies dissipated. If a spell passes through more than one Spell Barrier only a single roll for dissipation should be made, with the highest dissipation chance being used.

5 charges of Invested spell of **Bane**, Rank 10, BC=55

Bane (S-1) *Range:* 10 feet + 10 / Rank *Duration:* 30 seconds + 5 / Rank *Experience Multiple:* 300 *Base Chance:* 20% *Resist:* Passive *Storage:* Investment, Ward, Magical Trap *Target:* Area *Effects:* This spell strengthens reality and stabilizes the mana in an area 15 feet in diameter (+ 10 / 5 Ranks) such that all magical Cast Chances are reduced within the area by 5% (+ 3 / Rank). This will affect spells and rituals, and talents with base chances. The spell has no affect on stored magics (such as invested items), shaped items, or magic without base chances.

2 charges of Invested spell of Dance of Swords Rank-19 BC=93

4 charges of Invested spell of Dance of Swords Rank-19 BC=93 (see above)

Dance of Swords (S-5) *Range:* 5 feet + 5 / Rank *Duration:* 30 minutes + 30 / Rank *Experience Multiple:* 250 *Base Chance:* 15% *Resist:* None *Storage:* Investment, Potion *Target:* Entity *Effects:* While under the effect of this spell, the target may cavort and leap with surpassing grace and extravagance by evoking the magic of the dance. \ The target may walk and act in all ways normally, however, when they enter combat they may “dance” adding 2 (+2 / Rank) to their Defence provided they move at least 1 hex each pulse. If the target is unwillingly confined to a single hex (by the effect of melee zones for example) the target must halve the defence bonus due to this spell. If the target is unable to move freely (in close combat or stunned) then no defence bonus is awarded. The target may also subtract the Rank of this spell from the dice roll for any AG Check solely involving Agility (e.g., avoid knockdown, leaping pits etc.).

2 amulets of Luck; 1 amulet of Elder flowers; 2 amulets of carbuncle; 1 amulet of Betony; 1 of Diamonds.

The namer had a yew runestick that went with his semi-shaped hanger (only 6 charges left). On drawing the stick from the hanger it changes into a Rank-15 **Runeweapon:** hand-&-a-half, lasts 16 minutes, -10 to BC.

Namer had 3 *delicate* vials of **antiPoL blade-venom:** last upto 30 seconds or 5 strikes (whichever is the lesser); hisses & bubbles on the blade. Namer’s vials have strong cords attached & it becomes clear that a vial is intended to be tied to the runestick with several wrappings of the cord: when drawn from the hanger, first the vial is broken & the cord cut. If a blow with an A- or B-class weapon does effective fatigue or endurance, then the venom does an additional **D+4** damage to anyone *Pacted* to a/the Power(s) of Light [Greater/lesser], **D** damage to anyone who counts as “*faithful*” to PoL without actually being *Pacted* to them; **D-2** damage to anyone *neutral/innocent* to the POL; **D-6** damage to anyone *Pacted* to a demon. The poison does damage only in that pulse (but a new blow can do new damage)

Persons of moment

Employer - Her grace, Ninishtar, duchess of Armede

Ninishtar, Duchess of Armede (a province of Raniterre). A lady of discernment. Dark skinned drow, being a separate race from the previous owners. Cousin to the Drowkönig, King of Drowkönigreich – who is probably female as the court-form of drow is non-gender specific. An Illusionist, unlike most royal drow, who are aligned to celestial or the moon goddess (which was archaic even in the time of drow rulership.

She could have been drowkönig, but chose another to rule, and went off to have a life, by marrying the Duke of Armede. She is likely to have a

sexual child (which is odd as most drowkönig and close kin reproduce asexually). She is second cousin to most of the Royal Drow.

Duke of Neverre- A nasty piece of work, though pleasant compared to his uncle, the Dread Duke. His father ruled for some minutes following the death of the Dread Duke. The presumed opposition are presumed to work for the Duke. The opposition desecrated the orb and took it off-plane to Ares to avoid the doom – possibly led by a rune-mage.

Fey of Ares Humanoids living in or about the islands of the Candor Chaos on the planelet of [Ares](#). Some dwellings have been spotted on the Ceti & Baetis mensae & the Ophir Chasm (see map), but are believed to dwell dugong-like beneath the water. They stand about 6 to 6 ½ feet tall and have no eyes, thin slit-like mouth and have an odd shape to their body. They wear only a skirt, and no discernable (mammalian) females have been seen, their hair is long, plaited or weird down their back and their skin is very pallid. They can project their speech without speaking loudly. All in all it feels like they have strong mind-talents.

They appear to be similar to the "Alven" of the New Continent back Home, but even more spiteful, malicious, & uncivilised. Not a threat if you leave them alone; although there are urban legends that some humans have traded with them beneficially in the past -- but the myths emphasise that the fey don't value the same things that humans do. Major power seems to be sinking boats that stray into their territory. It is not advised to visit with them.

Ogres The ogres to the south are large humanoids. The priestesses have high-quality beading on their loin clothes, which sets off their blue-dyed skin to good effect. 4 arms and two faces (opposite sides of the head) mean they are hard to surprise, as they do not have a rear-facing, and DA as Oogres. They can evade and strike in the same action. The priestesses have reasonable PB as if they have been transformed into a travesty of human-kind. The ogres perform ritual sacrifice on top of the pyramids. The sacrificial ogres are male or old females and uniformly ugly, having the routine brown skin and two arms. The sacrifice is like a ritual dance, with each decapitation part of the movements, although they are careful not to throw the offerings on to the steps on each corner.

Hobbits There are hobbits in the northern parts of the jungle, just to the south of Raniterre. They may be arboreal.

Tall Hobbits The hobbits on [Ares](#) look like they have been stretched to 6 feet tall, but the arms stay the original length, which looks horrible. They came from the 'Home' sub-plane by aetheric ship, but now cannot go back due to their 'long limbs'. GTN = 'Hobbit'. We think they visit the 'ruins' or monoliths (big stones) fairly frequently but without telling the authorities. They are very careful about the monoliths.

Tall Humans Humans born on the plane of [Ares](#) appear to double in their size, to about 12 feet tall. Many work in the mines.

Rori	Air mage provided by our employer to accompany us on the mission, primarily to assist in travel magic. Bit of a wuss really.
Gabrielites	A hit squad of three fake gabrielites rode into Guido last moonday as if the hounds of hell were after them. They demanded urgent transport to Korn, not even waiting to check in with their local chapter house. Since found them to be Lady Lydia (rune mage), Hyssop (an Azurian Elf Mind Mage) and Rufius (tough fighter). 3 humans, who almost never spoke, and seemed to be a highly efficient unit; professionally non-descript, but had some good equipment. The rune-mage (Lord Lydia) was possibly a female in disguise, a not unknown practice. Colleges of the others unclear - one was probably a mind-mage. No indication to DJ that they were on a mission, but there might be good reasons why the government would want him to have plausible deniability.
Sir Cuthbert	Michaeline knight at hostelry near Quorn . Bit of a gabbermouth.
Sir Guthlac	Knight, somehow associated with the portal at Guido-city.
Brother Leofrik	Urielite, permission holder for portal at guido-city. Permit has black border – some significance.
Mayor of Quorn	Currently Veronica Speedwell . The mayoralty is chosen on merit. A better description perhaps is Guild Master, whose guild are guides and scouts. This profession dominates the entire town.
Living Dead	The dust of Ares is toxic, causing deep wounds to become infected. Those affected fall into a zombiie like state, and are probably hard to kill as they don't realise they are almost dead. Brigands should therefore be avoided as they may be a band of Living Dead. The infection requires a Remove Minor Curse, with a high MA and non college.
Legate	Senior military officer or representative, from a senior family. They are senior to all military tribunes, who are appointed by popular acclaim. The Legate who escorted me to the Bretlond Ambassador is Publius Aversius Lexicon, who just happened to be Legate to the 3 rd Cohort – which I think makes him the commander of six centuries or about 500 soldiers and 100 auxiliaries – so he must be young as most legates would command an entire legion with the senior centurion or primus prior commanding the cohort. The Bretlond Ambassador has the honorary rank of Legate.
Praetor	The two praetors are magistrates appointed by popular acclaim from within the senior families. Second in authority to the two Consuls. One rules a capital, another rules the hinterlands, and others may rule a province as governor. Duties are probably limited to only resolving litigation or judging serious felonies.
Quaestor	The junior-most officer to be chosen by popular acclaim from the entire populace. Quaestors joined the senior families in guiding the realm. Their main function is fiscal, although they could be appointed to do anything (at an appropriate level) including auditing or resolving

- a specific issue. Quaestors were often appointed to run the finances of a particular province.
- Tribune Chosen by popular acclaim as a magistrate for a specific group (plebs, soldiers and possibly others). They are senior to Quaestors but junior to Praetors.
Military Tribunes were appointed by a general or the assembly of notables, to rank below Legates.
- Bretlond Ambassador Count Don Jirraldo. A true Carlosile: all quivering chins, grotesque moustaches, gothic jewellery of diamonds and pearls, large baroque single earring, and wearing a Michaeline uniform of black. He is an hideous man of little merit with fawning or even groping manners and an execrable taste in wine, overwhelmed by his sense of self-importance and delusions of mediocrity. Or possibly a man of tremendous power and erudition well hidden behind a façade of licentious stupidity. He has an [aeir yacht](#).
- Fidelia Comfrey: Human sized 'tall hobbit' Ranger Rk 9; Herbalist 8; Cook 7; Healer 6). Her acknowledge spells are all Generals at Rk 6 except Enchanted sleep (10); Location (19); Invisibility (16). The specials are Ventriloquism (sp); Enhancing Enchantment (11); Enchant Armour (18); WizEye (16); & Quickness (7). She also has a spell that, at the cost of TMR, grants traction (cast on a voume or a person): it assists in surefootedness & leverage in combat, and even permits one to slide down cliffs without reaching break-neck speeds. Her E&E talents (including DA & Sense Danger) are reasonably ranked. She also has Rank-11 Greater Ench & Rank-6 Crystal of Vision.

Locations of moment:

- Raniterre kingdom at bottom of 'africa'
- Azurian Empire country about where 'algeria' is
- Drowkönigreich hidden city of the Drow. Ishiwara's establishment is the 'foreign enclave' where visitors stay.
- Armede duchy of Raniterre. Has icy relationship with Never, and wants to delay the war for at least 18 months till the military training gives their army some certainty of success. They have a lovely fine silk, that is dark grey until dyed. It is used for dress fabric, rope, bags and many other items of utility. It is socially unthinkable to wear the silk undyed.
- Neverre ducky of Raniterre. The duke recently inherited on the death of his late, unlamented father.
- Pyramids Two 3-sided, truncated pyramids, about 10 miles apart. Located in Mistlond, about 500 leagues south of Raniterre. About 2 million orcs and ogres live near them. There appears to be a magical impulse to go

to the western pyramid first, which is insidious and continuous, so the eastern pyramid is quite a challenge.

The eastern pyramid is aligned to the Blood Moon, so it is best attacked during the day, but the doom is likely to start the following dusk. It has a large, spheroidal chamber, reached from the summit by a single turn, spiral staircase. A tall, drowish (male) statue has an over-large outstretched but empty hand (possibly where the orb was). High quality artworks adorn the walls, though the subject matter (blood sacrifice) is an old theme: obviously not a drow mural but it is trying to portray an idea, if only we could tell what it is. The decoration is not essential to the room, which appears to be **consecrated to the moon**, as there is a stylised, horned moon. One panel shows another pyramid. There is human blood on the floor: fire, earth, celestial and air magics have all been used in battle here (MA 25). Wordsmith says many counterspells, illusions and Trueform have all be cast here, with varying success.

The western pyramid is aligned to sun, so is best attacked at night, although the doom will start at sun rise. It has a similar chamber, with a drowish statue holding a shield (that glows). The statue looks like it has been morphed, or misshapen, like a wax (female) figurine that gets too warm. The panels show much better artwork – still horrid but at least it is art with brighter colours. There are illustrative scenes of blood sacrifice, and one where the pyramid is glowing (like an extension of the shield), indeed the surrounding area is shown in one panel to be devastated by a storm although the pyramid and immediate environs are safe – protected by the pyramid / shield?

The female statue appears to be martial, and to represent chaos. The male statue is civic and appears to represent order. It is possible that the shield has had all of its inherent orderliness removed and placed in the orb, and all of the orb's chaotic nature may have been placed in the shield. So both objects are powerful, but are not aligned, nor opposites.

- Guido A city with too many urielites and others, capital of [Bretlond](#). They appear to control a portal or bridge to the village of Korn on the plane of Ares. The portal is opened at midnight on each moonday, but could be opened for very special reasons.
- Bretlond Realm, formerly part of Raniterre and very poor. The Michealines bought the province from the demon-worshiping Raniterrans and paid for them to relocate abroad. The portal must be significant to the Michaelines.
- Azmuth Abbreviation: Region of Ares including the Provincial Capital.
- Capital There was lots to see as we flew over the city: we first cross vineyards, and then a ridge of stone, to show the city is built onto a rocky outcrop of seven hills: nearly all of the land is used with many storied buildings extending down the side of the hills and tall apartments in

the valleys – a bit like MiddelMarchHauptstart but without the attitude. The best houses are of white-washed sandstone, sited on the tops of six hills, with a major temple to the dead on the seventh and highest. The weather here must be lovely as the government meets in an open air forum – which just happens to be where I got off the boat. Most people – poor and modest alike – live in lower reaches called the “Subura” which is distinguishable from the use of cheap, unwashed red sandstone. The markets and all things merchantile are down at the bottom where I guess there is enough land for warehouses and so on. The Governor’s palace is quite nice with plants in pots (I am guessing they imported the soil as the local stuff hardly supports a daisy), as are some of the other better-appointed palaces, with some going so far as to import rose-tinted marble, possibly as a mark of respect for this rosey world but I think they would have shown more taste by building a folly at Home out of the material as a hint of their colonial service, which have extravagant spires and balconies leaning way out to catch any breeze that passes. There are slaves, probably born to servitude or possibly for being a pauper – I must write that it seems unfair to enslave children just because their parents were, but then I haven’t seen any horses and humans like their luxuries.

Quorn

A village on the plane of [Ares](#). A few hundred ‘tall hobbits’, mostly scouts for the locals, who act as guides for any ‘visitors’. There is a Michaeline hostelry just outside. There are 9 clans, with the current mayor coming from the Speedwall clan, one of the oldest. Most villages etc are placed in a slight depression so that the light dew can be collected for waeter

Ares

A sub-plane or planelet of existence in the ‘Home’ plane – Ares is similar to the Mars of Alusia. There are [tall Halflings](#), [tall humans](#), normal humans and [Fey](#).

Swords are considered barbaric, as the wounds become septic very quickly, to a magically enhanced plague that needs successful healing and Remove Minor Curse to cure.

The entire planelet is a place of power for Mind Mages.

Things weigh about half what they do on Alusia, and Alusians can jump higher and further than at home.

The sky is tinged red, and the sun shines but weakly. There are massive canyons, several miles high and stretching across the entire planelet.

The elements of aeir, eairth, waeter and feire are unlike our elements (and the Alusian elemental colleges of magic don’t work there). People sink in the waeter, as it doesn’t support vessels properly.

The food is edible but doesn’t provide the proper sustenance – wine festivals are very good though. Honey and spices abound, and some even assist in wound recovery. Most plants are straggly, though perhaps from lack of water.

Ares was colonised by humans and hobbits from 'Home', a planet of several hundred millions. Most humans come here for 30 years and then retire back to 'Home' – few humans like Ares. There are some estates for nobles. Most middle to high status people serve a 'military service' and hence form readily available contract labour to undertake civic works, like building the afore mentioned estates. Ares is sold as the 'rosey world'. But most [tall hobbits](#) and [tall humans](#) born here cannot visit Home due to their stretching, and anyway they like it here. The human settlers have a governor, military and taxes. There are special "wizards' Eyes" that stay high above the planelet enabling the governor to track changes, swarms of locusts, worms, ships and the denudation of forests.

All metals will tarnish, other than truesilver and gold, so it is best to store them in wax. Not a good idea to talk about the powers of light. There are fey and mind-masters in the high-lands, where the aeir is so thin few can live. There are large gliding insects. Sand resistant clothing is recommended for travel outside the cities.

There are no horses, but they use [aeir-ships](#) to move around in. They take about four hours to go 400 local miles (about 250 Alusian Miles), and several weeks to travel to the 'Home' sub-plane (you have to take your own aeir with you as you can't breathe aether!).

The [trade of Ares](#) is discussed separately.

Sir Hwan, Michaeline, gave the following advice on Ares:

1. Don't wear or use edged or pointed weapons
2. Don't resist the portal magic, as it transforms you into a local native, which may be why we can eat the local food.
3. The Village of Quorn is on the other side, which is run by hobbits – these are scouts who see colours.
4. Recruit a local guide if you leave the village as they are quite helpful and the place is intrinsically dangerous.
5. Stay at the Michealine hostelry.
6. If you have to leave the village, go to the provincial capital first, and use the order's 'legate' (local speak for ambassador or consul).
7. Use the local coinage, which is gold – we can provide some.
 - a. The gold coins are all identical, with a woman's face and the word "victory" written on it. The edge of the coin is 'milled'.
 - b. Several golden 'slivers' make up a coin.
8. Young local males hit people on the head twice a year in a fertility ritual, so don't object.
9. Some immoral business practices do occur, and business can only occur on certain days, so check first. There is significant corruption.
10. Punishments are traditional, so harsh but predictable.
11. Take food, and some water, though the wines are quite good.

The Micheline order has been given permission to build a compound a few hundred miles away on an island.

There are no known portals off the planelet other than the Michaeline one, high probability that there are none, only reservation is that not all "monoliths" have been investigated. Monolith is the generic term for places that have tall stone structures, obelisk-like that are apparently remains of an ancient indigenous culture that has since disappeared.

[Carefully manipulated?] popular belief has it that the aborigines died out *because* of these monoliths. These often have an effect on those exploring them & civilians are not permitted near them -- for their own protection since they can unhinge the mind & often are associated with places that have high risk of "undead infection" and even worms.

Worms are rare native land-creatures that attack non-natives; often strong enough to kill an entire squad or two and engulf the remains. They are normally invisible; can be up to several hexes in size. They are called worms because they resemble a writhing mass of snakes when glimpsed at out of the corner of the eye -- and calling them voracious & deadly invisible tentacled devourers would discourage settlers & workers from coming to the Rosy planet. It is decades since they attacked any settlements. It is conjectured that they are mature forms of the "logoste" (a.k.a. "Gliders"), aerial creatures with dragonfly-like wings that occasionally swarm to the towns in their millions, but which are easily defeated by the military.

Trade of Ares The trade goods and value adding of the planelet of Ares is fundamentally controlled by the weird elements that make up the planelet. The earth does not grow good food, nor timber for charcoal fuel. The aier doesn't burn properly. The iron present is rusted. Coal is not reported. Golden vessels are cheaper here than glass vessels, though we are uncertain why this should be, but glass is exceptionally rare and not used at all in windows.

Gems are apparently rare and more valuable than on Alusia.

Toys are ok. Musical instruments are poor, little beyond rudimentary lyres.

Fine leather goods are available – the use of a major stone-guillotine is obvious, as traditional shears would not work here.

Prospectors seek minerals with different properties but these are not very profitable ventures. Or perhaps they just don't pay much tax?

Spices are an Imperial commodity and is harvested locally, shipped to Home for processing and then some is sent back.

Other goods are sent to Britonnia, but little of that is discussed.

There is almost certainly a sub-trade run by the hobbits, and possibly another by those humans born on the planelet.

Monoliths Collectively called "The Ruins" by the settlers, there are eight slender spires of stone, some 600 feet high and only 25 feet wide at the base. Inscribed

with indecipherable glyphs. The monoliths appear to be made of rock at least as old as Alusia. There was a major change to its aura at about the same time as the War of Tears on Alusia, and the ruin got its cosmic ‘tweak’ – probably same time the elements went a little weird, which seriously affected the planelet and its ability to produce food. The Orb gave it a slight nudge last night.

The eight monoliths at this site form one artefact which act together, although each is unique. There are ley lines to the other monoliths on the planelet.

The whole place is now one half of a rune portal, probably inter-planar, and possibly to Nevere. This would give Bretlond pause. {Wordsmith advises that Lydia will have to make a corresponding ritual at the other end, wherever that is, to make the portal workable}. There also the namer ritual of exclusion with a duration of 19 days (= rank 18) (multiple species including undead, deamons, and some unknown nasties).

They are set in a circle about 100 local miles across; the centre of “The Ruins”, so called, is 700 local miles West & 150 South of the Capital (about 440-450 Alusian miles between centre & Capital).

Apparently weird stuff happens if you go up to a monolith. The eight are uniformly arranged in a circle, but with the cardinal pints slightly out of alignment with true north.

The eastern most Monolith recently became self aware, in the last 100 years or so, and is a fountain of mana proving the magic for the planelet. Even Loxi and Rori can channel into themselves for the purposes of casting magic – they don’t need to draw mana from the planes of air and earth as there is enough free mana nearby.

The monolith is intimately associated with the plant life of the planelet. The plants are low within 50 feet of the monolith. All vegetation in the ruin is one big, though low, plant with a single aura: magical and unique to this locale. The magic has been in effect for centuries or millennia, but has no effect on other sentients.

There is more moisture here than normal, which is probably due to the intense mana field.

Those that approach the monolith without resisting get an ability the magnitude of which is related to their MA. Those that fear the monolith go mad. Few hobbits go mad as they know what to do.

Magic cast at the monolith is at additional apparent ranks (like a special Enhance Enchant).

Appendices

Divination of the Shield

Item of Chaos.

Non-combat spells receive a 50% boost to range — but the extra range fails maybe 10-20% of the time (whenever the GM whims that it should fail; no justification necessary). Its natural shape is that of a shield, suitable for a

large titan but will adjust to fit the sentient user. It is not visible, but normally glows in the presence of “power”: for example high mana, or being on consecrated ground. It also scintillates when magic impacts on it &/or its wielder. Upon announcing its True Name it can be compelled to adopt another moderately simple shape, usually something with protective overtones, anything no smaller than a thimble or larger than a medium-sized dinghy; perhaps, the most sophisticate shape being an animal cage. It will usually protect its possessor, or what it contains, & other in Area of Effect, according to the “level” of incoming magic. Roll once for each incoming magic, however the result may mean that all the protected targets must then roll MRs individually — or not!

Total immunity: target is totally unaffected by the incoming magic, and can ignore its effect on the surrounding area. (Only with *this* result is the magic nullified even when it is thought to be beneficial)

Semi-immunity: target can ignore the magic’s effect on the surrounding area. *If* target is entitled to a MR roll, then no penalties apply [e.g. ignore -20 for treble effect; ignore any statement in the write-up that states resistance is at -20, or whatever] and target suffers **no** effect from magic if they resist successfully. If the Magic Resistance is a failure, or a MR roll is not permitted, then that failure is ameliorated: damage spells are halved; and absolute effects are reduced to a less debilitating form (e.g., not petrified, but slowed) — BDE as GM sees it. Does not affect beneficial magic.

Save at +WP*: Each target gains a MR bonus equal to their WP, up to a maximum value of 35 bonus, in addition to **all** other modifiers. Non-sentients or objects get the full bonus of 35 — go figure. If a MR roll is *not* permitted then the MR **is** this bonus (but ignore greater, lesser, or other modifiers). If the MR roll fails then this item does not ameliorate that failure.

Auto-work: oops! Magic works, automatically, at full effect. Possessor is not permitted a MR even if they would have been otherwise entitled to one. Damage or effect may **not** be reduced, even if under a spell or possessing some other item that would permit reduced damage or effect, no matter how powerful that other magic may be.

LEVEL:	0 or 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12 or more
Total Immunity			1--1	1--1	1--1	1--2	1--3	1--4	1--6	1--8	1--9	1--12
Semi-immunity	1--90	1--81	2--73	2--66	2--59	3--53	4--48	5--43	7--39	9--35	10--31	13--28
Save at +WP*	91--100	82--99	74--97	67--95	60--93	54--90	49--88	44--85	40--83	36--81	32--79	29--77
auto work		100	98--100	96--100	94--100	91--100	89--100	86--100	84--100	82--100	80--100	78--100

Level is initially based on Rank: **0** if less than Rank 5; **1** if rank 6-10; **2** if Rank 11-19; **4** if Rank 20 or higher. The rank counts as the highest rank applicable to 1 or more aspects of the magic (e.g. Rank 14 with 8 ranks of

enhanced base chance counts as Rank 20+). THEN add however many of the following factors that apply ...

- +1 magic is **offensive**; +1 magic could **kill** (if target sufficiently weak); +1 caster is under an **“aspect buzz”** (does not matter whether a bonus or penalty); +1 caster &/or target knows **greater curse**; +1 caster’s &/or target’s **MA or WP** is functionally above or below the normal range for their species [e.g. 5-25 for humans]; +1 caster &/or target is a **namer** &/or a **dragon**;
- +2 target is under an **“aspect buzz”** (does not matter whether a bonus or penalty); +2 caster &/or target is currently under a [non-beneficial] **greater curse** or doom; +2 caster is **pacted** to God, Demon or Power of light; +2 magic was **gained** or enhanced as part of a pact, gift, payment, or favour from G, D, or PoL; +2 caster is an other-dimensional **minion** of G, D, or PoL (e.g. imp, cherub);
- +3 caster *is* a G, D, or PoL.

Terms “caster” & “target” are to be understood as loosely as possible. If Shield is covering several targets, then a factor that applies to any one or more targets counts towards the Level, but not multiply so.

FINALLY if caster &/or target is on consecrated, holy, or unholy ground, double the Level.

Normal **Area of Effect** is at whim of possessor: either their hex, or their mega hex (7 hexes), or 19-hex super mega hex; although an object cannot have a whim & only it is protected. Alternatively the possessor can whim to project a “wall-version” either immediately just in front of their hex, or 5’ further ahead, which projects multiples of 5’ on either side upto 100’ (does not have to be symmetrical). Wall instantaneously moves as possessor changes their facing. Magic is considered to pass through wall as per line of sight, similar to rules for the namer *Spell Barrier*. Wall is invisible but scintillates, as per normal shield format.

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