

The Return of the Princess Bride

Cover Sheet

Adventure by William Dymock

01/04/96 - 11/06/96

Player Characters

Stark	Namer	Human	Male	Mil Sci
Icarone	Solar	Human	Male	
Anathea	Wiccan	Human	Female	
P.J. DeBourgenac	Non-mage	Human	Male	Leader
Flamis	Fire	Human	Female	
Basalic	\Earth	Human	Male	Scribe

Plane

Jann/Illimar

(with stops on: Malthria, Gran Brutan, Relateth, Alerus, Rloth, Morak, and Malac).

Places visited

Amath - Jann

Rasalteth - Jann

Employer

Jacob Carlyle - The Traveller

Major NPCs encountered

The Grand Vizier at Rasalteth

Greatspear - an Illimarian elf

A Mountain Man who collected mages

Myrene - captured E&E mage - from Jelmarre

A spideroid seer

Slandeshi - an Illimarian

Prince Millideta of the Illimar

Princess Farzana of the Jann

Mission

To seek and return a princess from the Black Tower of the Illimari

Return of the Princess Bride

Adventure Summary

Hired by the Traveller, Jacob Carlyle, to go and rescue a Jann princess that had been forced into an unsuitable marriage with an Illimari prince. The Jann believe all the Illimari have been driven insane because of their captivity from the Calimari.

03/04/96

After preparations, started 'hellriding' (dimension-hopping) towards the plane of the Jann. On Gran Butan we were attacked by something called 'ornithopters' and people wielding strange pikes.

On Relateth, encountered the remains of a battle between humans and amphibian Doomprophets.

10/04/96

After many worlds later, we reached Jann and spent the night in the city of Amath.

11/04/96

Lost PJ.

12/04/96

Discovered the Mayor's Magician had PJ thinking he was a demon familiar. PJ escaped. Decided to leave.

15/04/96

Arrived in the capital city of Rasalteth and spoke with the Grand Vizier. They would open a portal to Illimar tomorrow. Described inhabitants of that plane as psychopathic maniacs and most are mages.

16/04/96

Prepared for the trip.

17/04/96

At midnight the portal was opened and we went through. Had a vision about being a solar warrior fighting an evil sorcerer in a zuggurat. Managed to defeat him.

22/04/96

Awoke and found myself on a boat with a badly injured chest.

23/04/96

Encountered a Mountain Man. I was captured and was taken to his lair where he had a collection of mages - one of each type.

27/04/96

Rest of the party finally turned up. Stark convinced mountain man to 'loan him his Earth Mage'. He also told us we needed to see a seer who could tell us where the Prince's tower would appear. It travels around and appears at random spots.

28/04/96

Flew to the next mountain range where the seer was. Took refuge from s storm in a cave.

29/04/96

Found the seer who would tell us where the palace was if one of us would stay with her - as the meal. The seer was a spider-woman. She'd settle for a bandersnatch so an attempt was made to summon one. Got an Illimarian , Slandeshi, instead.

He told us that the palace's movements are controlled by the Price and it remains in one spot for as long as that area can support the inhabitants. Last place it was, was the Eastern Desert. Decided to go there.

Reached the desert. Couldn't find the castle. Sand has a major curse on it. Headed back for the mountains.

30/04/96

Attacked by a hydra. Defeated it, then headed south.

01/05/96

Encountered a sylph. She didn't know where the palace but her sister might. She lived in a lake, three days away. Headed off in that direction. Late that evening we heard the tower arrive.

02/05/96

Flew towards the tower and landed a few miles away. Managed to sneak inside and spent the night in a storeroom.

03/05/96

Somehow, one of our party shapechanged into a cat creature and started rampaging up the tower. We followed. While in pursuit, we were captured. Two of the party were changed into stone statues, the rest were put in cells.

04/05/96

The remainder of the party managed to see the Princess, after the Illimari ascertained their story was true. Couldn't convince her to leave. Instead, party reconfined, separated, and tortured.

04/06/96

Guild rescue party arrives. Party rescued and had to pay ransom for items.

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Basalic/Flamis

31/03/96

We were sitting in the Guild meeting chamber listening to offers of employment, when a man stood up wearing bright clothing and a floppy hat with a feather in it. There was something about him which seemed familiar, but neither of us could place him. He announced himself as Jacob Carlyle, representing the servants of a certain princess who had apparently been forced into an unsuitable marriage. They wanted her rescued and were prepared to pay with their services. Flamis thought it was really romantic, and before I realised it, I was being dragged off to meeting room twelve.

An officer from Guild Security was there holding a small and very scruffy urchin child. He explained that the boy was in fact PJ de Bourgenac, a noble fighter, who was under a curse which caused him to look like this for the first two weeks the observer was with him. To make matters worse, he suffers from an uncontrollable shape-change to centaur form which occurs at midnight. Also in the room were:

Stark: Once purely a fighter, now a Namer, dressed in heavy plate armour, and carrying an awesome assortment of weaponry.

Icarone: A Solar Celestial mage, and also a useful man in a fight.

Anathea: A young woman dressed in white, who announced herself as a Witch. She carried no weapons, preferring to use her magic. She is life-aspected and does not like killing. She was wearing a sentient amulet she introduced as Obsidia.

Flamis: My wife, and a fire mage. She was wearing red as usual, and proceeded to explain all about her Doom as the Consort of the Eternal Champion. The employer looked at her most curiously at that point. She also depends mainly on her magic, but carries a quarterstaff, and has quite a collection of useful items.

Basalic: That's me. I'm a good keen bloke, a farmer and an Earth mage. Mind you, I'm quite handy with a broadsword, and I've finally got my hands on a permanently magical sword of ice.

We elected PJ as party leader. PJ has led parties successfully before, and he'll be okay. Flamis and I agreed to share the duties of scribe, and Stark was selected as Military Scientist, mainly because he has rank 8 in it.

By questioning the employer, we found out that the reason the Princess Farzana's servants wanted her "rescued" is because they consider her husband, the Prince Millideta, to be quite mad. In fact, their people, the Jann, believe that all the prince's race, the Illimari, have been driven insane by their captivity under the Calamar. At that statement the entire party reacted. No-one likes the Calamar except possibly other Calamar, and we'd all rather hoped not to have signed up for an adventure involving them. Furthermore, the employer admitted that an earlier guild party had been employed by the Calamar to stop the wedding. They had failed, on purpose. The marriage had obvious political ramifications, forging an alliance between the Jann and the Illimari against the Calamar. We were all having second thoughts, and that was before we were told that the princess's one true love was in fact, none other than Engleton, who had been leader of that party.

By now it was obvious that we would be going off plane, and the employer revealed how he intended to take us there, by a method he called "hell-riding". He explained that this was like driving a rapier through the planes like a stack of paper until you reached the right one. Sounded delightful, but at least it would be an excuse to get the horses out of the stable. But Flamis stared at the employer with sudden recognition. "I know you. You're the Traveller," she said. Then I remembered. This was the chap we met on Zentrada in the middle of that valley. He said that he was a traveller between the planes. This must be how he does it.

We offered a pony from our stables for Anatheia, but Stark had just purchased a set of jousting plate. Talk about a tin can crossed with a lead weight! Nothing would hold him short of a war-horse, and none were available for love nor money, so we got him a draught-horse.

Stark asked the party if we could take out a couple of days so he could add some true names to his list. Ones like Calamari, Illimari, and Jann. It sounded sensible, so the rest of us spent two days organising ourselves. I searched the library for relevant information, and was able to have word with Engleton.

Flamis did her divinatory things. It sounds odd that a Fire Mage should be so good at searching out the future, but there's no doubt about her skills. She performed a Flamesight ritual first. In the flames she saw the party running a hall of mirrors, some of which distorted our reflections as we fled. Next she looked in the crystal of vision, and saw the party standing before a tall mountain, with fortifications built into it. The party turn to each other and begin to argue. The mountain vanishes, and still the argument goes on. Finally she performed her ritual of Conversing with Other Selves, asking these three questions and getting the following answers:

What effects will it have on the Balance if the Princess Farzana is taken from her husband? If the Actoris is not destroyed then can the great battle occur.

What are the Princess's current feelings towards her husband Prince Millideta? Overhead her dimmed light falters.

How may we find the Princess Farzana?

Her gaze reflected in blood
Times of sorrow are upon us
The red swan falls from the sky
It dies
In the bowels of chaos
It transmogrifies

Flamis went to the library to see if she could find out more about the Actoris. All she found was scribbled in a margin in an ancient book of prophecy. Beside it was written "When the Ring of Kings the pale hand adorns... destruction and doom falls." Apparently the Actoris is this Ring of Kings. When she told me about all of this I began to wonder what we had got ourselves into.

While we were waiting we met the Princess's servants. The Jann are tall, brown-skinned and humanoid in form. And not a one spoke a word of common.

03/04/96

It was the third of April when we left. PJ had changed into a centaur. Much more noble-looking.

We had cast the usual preparatory spells. I wasn't sure that we'd be needing the Armour of Earth and Protection versus Magical Fire, but as it turned out Flamis was right. I cast Speak to Animals so that I could talk to Sod, and as we began to gallop across the meadow he told me that he could see a black road stretching out in front of us. Suddenly we were riding through forest. The name of the plane came up as Malthria. The scene changed again and again every few moments.

Then we were moving through a burnt-out forest. Too much fire magic? As we rode around a hill there was a whirring sound. Anathea called out that we were about to be attacked by ornithopters, and before we could ask "What's an ornithopter?" they were on us. Giant metallic birds firing some kind of grenades. Explosions went off to the left and the right. We rode for our lives, hoping to find ourselves elsewhere very soon. We rounded and were confronted by four men wielding what looked like pikes, but they shot beams of red fire.

Stark triggered a Wall of Bones around three of them, while Flamis cast a Dragonflames at the other, who only looked a bit singed. In the process she managed to fall off Flamefoot and was picked up bodily by Stark. Then Stark's horse was shot out from under him by the ornithopter. The Wall of Bones disintegrated from the inside out. We charged and the melee began. I walloped one on the way through, then wheeled around and came back for another whack. The guy didn't have a chance to react. The ornithopter disappeared to the north, probably fetching reinforcements. Two pikemen confronted Stark, knocking him stunned. One left the other to finish off Stark, who wasn't so easily finished off, and charged the riderless horse, Flamefoot. Leaving Flamefoot stunned he attacked Flamis, and struck Flamis a glancing blow, not enough to put her off casting. Next moment he was dead, burnt to a crisp in a second by her spell. And then it was all over.

We checked the pikes, but they were not magical. Very strange. Of course we'd never heard of the plane which was called Gran Brutan. I healed Flamefoot with a spell, and we mounted up and rode on.

.2.

A few paces further on, and the scene changed. We were in a desert, rolling sands under a bright blue sky. Stark spotted a snake, and discovered that its plane of origin, this plane, was called Relateth.

As we rode over a dune we found a scene of battle. Red pennants were fallen about the bodies which were of two kinds; human and amphibian, killed by sword and spear. The amphibians were called Doomprophets. In some of their bodies were arrows with a magic on them of slaying Doomprophets. We found one survivor, a human, whom Anathea and I were able to heal. He told us that he was from the city of Tarenth, and that an evil sorcerer had summoned the doomprophets to attack their city. Flamis had been examining the tracks and had determined that the two groups had met apparently at random, that there had been three human survivors and one elf, and that they had headed back to the city. The red banners turned out to be magical, the nature of the magic being inspiration, cast by a Greater Summoner. Can't say I've ever heard of that one. Having done our bit, Stark picking up a banner, we rode on.

We rode for hours, passed through several planes, when we came to a jungle world that called Alerus. Jacob said there was a city nearby, which sounded just like what we needed. Then we heard screams, and a drumming sound. We ran to investigate, but when we got there all we found

was a collection of perforated bodies, two of which were not as dead as the others. They had been attacked by a giant headless zombie warrior, with a necromantic version of Diamond Javelin called Spectral Warrior, and they had all fallen over in seconds! It had then stomped off into the jungle, looking for its killer. After we did what we could for them, we rode on, and indeed found ourselves outside a city, after crossing planes yet again.

The plane was called Rloth, and we found out as we went to enter the city that a civil war was in progress. A very civil war it seemed. We were asked as we entered whether we were for the King or the Duke. Since the blue arm bands of the King were rather more numerous than the yellow arm bands of the Duke, we elected to be of the King, and were sent to a Inn called the Fox and Hound where all the arm bands were blue. The Innkeeper was very nosy, and Flamis was worried that the Inn might be attacked in the night, but nothing happened.

We travelled the black road again, passing through several worlds, until at evening we found ourselves in a forest on a world called Morak. After we set up camp, a two-foot tall figure came marching through. The golem simply looked at us, not responding to any of our attempts at communication. Then, it walked on. Fearing that it would report our presence to its masters, Stark and PJ chased after it, and secured it. Flamis wasn't so sure that this was a good idea, and it seemed like she may have been right, when Stark and Icarone, on second watch, heard the sound of people on Fireflight roaring overhead. As we broke camp, there were explosions, and then an almighty wrenching sound as a tree fell over. Behind we saw four figures all self-immolated. Flamis released the golem in the vain hope that that might placate them. But still they came, and we leapt onto our horses and galloped for it. As we ran for it across the blasted forest, they shot at us, in the back.

Fortunately those of us who were shot managed to hold onto our horses, and then the scene shifted. To a dark place of constant rain called Malace. Flamis spotted a heat source in the distance, but as we rode we smelled sulphur. This was a bad scene, and though we were tired and in pain, we hell-rode on. To a much more pleasant place, called Terif, where we found untended fields and an old half-ruined farmhouse. We camped here, and slept well into the next day.

10/04/96

Some days, and many worlds later we reached Jann. We found ourselves in hill country, near a city. Jacob didn't know which city it was, so we rode up to the gates and asked. The city was called Amath, and the place where we needed to go was Rasalteth, three days away. It was full of nine-foot tall brown-skinned humanoids who patted us on the head far too often. Apparently we're cute, especially Flamis. It seems the Jann have Lesser Enchantment as a racial talent. We found an inn to spend the night. Dinner was distinctly spicy and Flamis demanded to know the recipe. There was only wine and coffee to wash it down, no beer.

11/04/96

Next day we went shopping. Flamis and I took Jacob which made it much easier. She bought some of the local spices, a recipe scroll, and some local clothing, a brief embroidered top and full filmy trousers, which although made for young Jann looked very good on her. There was also perfumes, and toys for Emrys. When I reminded her that we'd be coming back this way, she said that we should shop when we could, because you never knew what might happen. Female logic, no doubt. But I could tell that she was enjoying herself. That evening there was no sign of PJ when we went to the stable to look in on our noble centauroid leader. We searched for him, into the evening, and got Jacob to ask the city watch if they had seen him, but it was no use.

12/04/96

In the morning Flamis suggested we start at the stables and try to trace his movements. The stable-boy told Jacob that he had found a scruffy little ruffian in the stable the previous day, and had thrown him out onto the street. We sighed, and started questioning people, asking for a small boy in chain mail. Eventually we began hearing stories of a demon in the shape of a child. It turned out that the Mayor's Magician had him. Apparently he thought PJ was a demon who could grant wishes, and was trying to bind him as a familiar. As we tried to talk the Mayor's guards into letting us have him back, we heard a loud clattering sound, like someone falling to the ground in plate mail. It could only be PJ, and we rushed out to find him. It was all right, with guards in pursuit, and us in pursuit of them. I cast Hands of Earth between PJ and the guards, and they were caught. Everyone else scattered, and Icarone made him unseen. We decided that it was time we were all elsewhere, collected our gear, and rode off.

15/04/96

It took three days, but then we were at the gates of an even more magnificent city. We went in, and headed for the biggest building, the Palace. There we had an interview with the Grand Vizier, who seemed a nice chap. He told us that they would open the portal to Illimar for us tomorrow, and offered to put us up at the Palace, which was decent of him. One strange thing though. Jacob kept getting our names wrong, not randomly, but consistently. Flamis was Magda, every time, for instance. Weird. He couldn't tell us what the names meant to him either.

.3.

Over dinner conversation with the Grand Vizier evolved into a lengthy philosophical discussion. Much of it was over our heads, but I did try to follow it. Jacob was annoyed with those people, notably Guild members, who meddle in affairs they don't understand, especially ones off-plane. He quoted the story of the Guild orcs who had been hired to stop a hobbit from throwing a magic ring in a volcano. They had succeeded in that job but their success had disastrous consequences for the plane in question.

Then there was our present situation. Because the previous party had not stopped the marriage, there was now an alliance between Jann and Illimar. But since the Calamar controlled 17 planes (at last count) and this alliance only had two they would have to expand their holding. The inhabitants of Illimar were described as psychopathic maniacs, and with most of them were mages, it soon became apparent that being conquered by this lot would be worse than the Calamar. The Jann, while well-meaning, lacked the political skills to rule multiple planes. As Jacob put it, what appears to be beneficial at first may have worst consequences than what would have been less desirable in the short term.

In the last six months, according to Jacob, no less than four pending apocalypses had been forestalled by Guild parties. This was something that was causing him grave concern. Was Alusia becoming a lodestone for omnipotent god-like beings? And was it our fault? Maybe we needed to speak with the Guild Council when we got back.

Jacob also mentioned that Illimar was a young plane. Everything there looked sharper and more clearly defined. The princess was most likely to be in a mountain fortress which sounded very like the one Flamis saw in the crystal of vision. The Actoris, also mentioned in Flamis' ritual, was a small ruby containing powerful magics and on no account, was it to be destroyed. The great battle is meant to occur, it seems. The answer to Flamis's third question seemed to be the work of Rene,

another planewalker like Jacob.

The portal could only be opened at midnight, hence it was decided we would get well rested and open the portal on the next night. So we retired for the night. During the night, Flamis had a nightmare. She dreamed that she was flying over a forest (not using fireflight or wings) then was suddenly attracted towards a black ziggurat pyramid which filled her with terror.

16/04/96

The next day we spent preparing. I did some sparring with Stark and quickly discovered he had a rather unusual fighting style. Maybe I should take up warrior training if that's the result.

17/04/96

That midnight, the vizier opened the portal which appeared as a shimmering gateway in the middle of his casting circle. We stepped into it ...

I was Ryan, Solar Warrior, and my companions were Markessa, Torrileth and Philip. All four of us were on a mission to destroy the Evil Sorcerer who had devastated our land, killing most of our fellows. Currently we were in a pit, on a jungle covered island, the same island where said evil sorcerer had made his base of operations. All of us were Solar mages, except for Philip, and were similarly attired in black.

I couldn't remember how we had got into the pit. We must have fallen in. Fortunately we had avoided the worst of the spikes. As I regained consciousness, I saw a person wearing bright colours and a floppy hat pulling out a black rod from a pouch before disappearing into the wall. Must have been a hallucination so I thought no more of it.

The walls of the pit consisted of soft earth so Torrileth started sticking stakes in the wall. Once he was done, Markessa, being the lightest, climbed up, found some vines and the rest of us crawled out.

We discovered that quite a few bodies were scattered about, the results of a battle. Closer examination showed them to be the sorcerer's minions. Many of them had been dismembered by what we quickly concluded to have been our weapons. Must have been a really good battle.

We could sense the direction the evil was coming from so we went that way. When we were certain the evil was near we prepared ourselves with Coruscates and Swords of Light on our weapons. Soon we reached a set of abandoned buildings with a black ziggurat in the middle. The sense of evil was very strong now. I was sure there were eyes everywhere watching us.

Just then I was attacked by something invisible. Only Philip, of all of us, could see it. Once I recovered from the initial attack I was able to fling it away but not before it was able to inflict a near fatal chest wound. The others managed to finish it off.

We rested for a short while and healed ourselves before entering the ziggurat. Inside the main room, seated on a throne at the far end, was a man wearing black plate armour. This was most certainly the sorcerer. I tried shooting at him, but both arrows seemed to swerve away just before they would have hit him. Markessa charged in and nearly skewered him, before he blasted her

with lightning bolts, knocking her to the ground. He continued to bathe her in agonising blue fire while Philip charged in and struck one mighty blow, cleaving the evil sorcerer in twain.

As I healed Markessa the others examined the black sword the sorcerer had been wielding. Its Aura showed that it was exceedingly magical with the nature of the magic being storage. What it was storing was souls. We decided not to attempt to carry it away or even touch it. Someone more versed in the Arcane Arts could come back to deal with it. Instead we headed back to our boat and set sail. Once at sea I set the boat on course for home. The others were already sleeping and soon I joined them.

.4.

22/04/96

We found ourselves lying on a boat. Boy that must have been some portal trip. But there was no sign of our party employer. I had a memory of a very strange dream. Or was it? My chest felt like I had been very seriously wounded. Clearly I wasn't going to be fighting for a while. Comparing notes with the others implied that Flamis, Icarone, and PJ had similar dreams.

Meanwhile Stark and Anathea had a different tale to tell. They had landed in this place, which had DAed as Illimar, and were in a valley bounded on nearly all sides by mountains. While exploring they discovered some curious tracks. After a while they encountered some elves who told them that they haven't seen any humans at all. Mind you, none of them had even left the valley. One of them, named Greatspear, decided to tag along. An encounter with some ogres followed. They were defeated but, during the fracas, Jacob and an ogre disappeared in a black disk. It was four or five days since they appeared here before we were found in the boat floating on the river.

I got Anathea to strap up my chest but I soon discovered it hurt when I laughed - especially after one of Stark and Flamis's arguments, Stark started doing a Morris dance. I soon figured out what was going on. Stark was trying to entertain small children. Hmmm... Unfortunately it still hurt to laugh.

Flamis reckoned the boat we were on was the same one in the dream so we tried DAing it. Formally living aura but no plane of origin. A divination might help on a sample of the wood but Stark's idea of getting a sample was to start chopping at the boat with his great axe. We managed to stop him before he hacked a hole in the boat. Flamis gathered up some splinters.

It was finally decided to head back to where those tracks had been found. Stark reckoned it was going to take a few days to get to the clearing where they were. As we made camp that night, Greatspear was standing in such a way that seemed very familiar.

Anathea had originally done a divination on PJ that indicated a transference had taken place. I asked her to do one on me and she got the same result. Meanwhile Flamis did a Flamesight ritual on the boat bits and saw six swords rising in front of the boat, each held by a black gloved hand, coming to a single point. A bit later on we saw what we thought was an eagle flying overhead but we soon determined it was a griffin, carrying a stag, flying off towards the distant mountains.

23/04/96

Purified the next morning then did the usual Armours of Earth and Strength of Stones. Stark

started sparring with Greatspear and, for some reason his spear work style also seemed very familiar. When Stark had finished Flamis took over.

Finally we reached the clearing where the tracks had been but we couldn't find them. So we headed in the direction where Stark believed they went.

A short while later we heard a rumbling sound coming from the north so we headed south - as rapidly as possible. Trees crashed to the ground behind us and we could see a huge shape following us as we headed out of the tree line. A giant hand was pulling out the trees as the entity advanced. Many of us went Unseen while I tried a Blending.

However that didn't help. The entity reached down and gently picked me up then strode off towards the mountains. According to its aura it was a long lived sentient with a Generic True Name of Mountain Man. Certainly was big enough. It seemed to be made of rock.

A short time, and a couple of mountain ranges later, we entered a huge cavern (huge to me that is). Inside were a couple of rooms and in the second one was a ledge, 800 ft off the floor with a row of human sized cages on it. One was unoccupied and I was placed in it.

The cage, bars and all, were made of stone. I figured that I could quickly tunnel through that but then there was the problem of the 800ft drop. Besides, any escape plan had to include getting everyone else out - if they wanted to go. Abandoning them would not have been honourable.

I tried communicating with the others but the only ones who understood me was a male elf who wasn't very communicative, and a female human in the next cage who seemed very pleased to see me. She introduced herself as Myreen, an E&E mage, and the elf as Sepiriz, a Celestial Shadow. She said that many of the people had been here for so long that they had forgotten much of their skills. Each of them had a different College.

Meanwhile the others debated what to do. Finally they decided to leave the horses in what they hoped would be a safe place, away from griffins, then fireflight after the mountain man. Fortunately his tracks were easy to follow.

Every so often the mountain man would come and leave food for us and would allow us out of our cages for exercise. The first time he did that Myreen ran over and began clinging to me. I tried to point out I was already married to a fire mage with a temper but, either she didn't care, or she wasn't listening as she continued to make like a leech. I had to ensure she didn't squeeze too hard as my chest still hurt. The mountain man tried to separate us but finally gave up and put us both in the same cage. I soon determined she wasn't going to be much help in any escape plan having forgotten most of her spells and skills.

27/04/96

It was about four days later by the time the others turned up. That morning I had been awoken by a 'splat' sound then nearly being squashed to death by a very nervous Myreen. Maybe I'd better learn basic Healer so I can fix my own crushed ribs. Turned out the air mage had jumped off the ledge - and he hadn't intended on flying.

It was an hour or so later that I saw Flamis and Anatheia fly in on a tarpaulin. Flamis got the cage

door opened and rushed over. Soon I was enveloped in Flamis. Then she noticed Myreen, still hanging on to one arm. I tried to defuse the situation but the impending cat fight was interrupted by the arrival of the mountain man. I quickly Blended Flamis and told her to hide behind me but she was seen by the mountain man and gently picked up. So she cast a Fireflight and took off. So I was picked up, along with Myreen, who was refusing to let go, and carried into the next room.

We were deposited in the middle of a circle. The giant sat down and began a ritual. At the same time Flamis landed close by. She cast Fireflight on both of us and we took off, heading for the entrance. Before we got there a Wall of Stone materialised, blocking the way so we peeled off and landed on the ledge.

So the mountain man picked up Icarone and put him in the circle. After a short while it was apparent that he and Icarone were communicating with each other but we couldn't make out what was said. After a short while he picked up Icarone and vanished - literally. We took the opportunity to get Flamis and Anathea to ferry everyone off the ledge. Stark and I analysed the Wall of Stone and discovered it had been cast at Rank 12. At this scale it would be too large to Tunnel around.

The mountain man chose that moment to reappear and we scattered to various locations. Most of the people were caught and put back on the ledge. Then the mountain man picked up Stark and placed him in the circle, did his ritual then conversed with Stark.

Once he had finished he vanished. Stark told us that Icarone had desired to meet a princess so that the giant had taken him there. However it wasn't the princess we were after. The mountain man had gone to get him back before he was sacrificed at midnight. Also he needed an Earth Mage to complete a collection of mages.

The mountain man had described himself as a wizard. He, and his compatriot wizards, were attempting to collect a set. Earth mages were rare but he was willing to give me up for a Greater Summoner. When Stark had asked why he didn't have a Binder in the set he had declared he hated Binders. He'd rather annihilate them. He knew of the Jann princess we wanted to contact and also of the magical ring that we had been told about.

Stark finally manage to convince him to loan him his Earth mage (i.e. me) for a period of eight years in exchange for a couple of trolls. Unfortunately Stark also told him our home plane. Great. So in eight years, Seagate was going to be visited by a mountain man intent on re-collecting his Earth Mage. The only two ways I could figure out of this was to either die or give up my College, neither of which appealed.

The mountain man, with Icarone, reappeared at this point. It scooped the rest of us up and we suddenly found ourselves elsewhere. Anathea summoned two trolls and the mountain man collected them.

.5.

The mountain man had told us to see the seer in a mountainous region nearby. This seer would be able to tell us where the Prince's tower was. Apparently it travelled around and appeared at random points throughout the plane. We were also warned to watch out for spiders.

Meanwhile I was still concerned about Myrene. I had originally thought she was a local to this plane but, during conversation, it became obvious she wasn't. So I DAed her and discovered she was from Jelmarre. She had been the Court Mage for Baron Calvar in the village of the same name. All she had was the clothes she stood on so I lent her a dagger. Somehow I was going to ensure she got home, even if it was via Alusia and the Guild. Something else she said, as we were setting up camp that night, also was interesting. She mentioned that there was a Church of Chantris in Jelmarre which was established by the Prophet Rowen. Was this the Father Rowan of Seagate?

28/04/96

Nothing happened during the night but, during purification, two large creatures, later identified as ogres, started tossing rocks into the camp, hitting Stark and Flamis. The next rock hit me but fortunately I was able to get the Hands of Earth off which grabbed one of them. Unfortunately it broke free. Meanwhile Stark and PJ advanced boldly while Flamis let loose with a Dragonflames. It was about then that the ogres realised that they had perhaps bitten off a bit more than they could handle. Anathea was considering blinding them but realised it would make it rather difficult for them to survive in these harsh conditions so settled for warts instead. As I removed the Hands, they fled but not before getting blasted by another Dragonflames.

After everyone was healed up, I cast the required Strengths of Stone & Amours of Earth before Flamis cast Fireflight all round. Icarone also tossed a few Witchsights about but once he got his fireflight he was off into the sky and performing acrobatics. Then Flamis mentioned this was only his second flight.

Our course took us to the next mountain range. As we reached there, the clouds overhead grew threateningly. This range was littered with cave openings, mostly cracks and crevasses. A few looked reasonably large and we landed in front of one - just as it started bucketing down with thunder and lightning accompaniment. All we could do was to huddle in the cave and wait it out. The rain continued to fall as it got dark outside.

29/04/96

By dawn, the rain had stopped so we left the cave and explored around. After a while we discovered a cave that was full of webs. Then we heard an old voice in our minds saying 'Come in'. When asked she told us she was the sage. Also we were not to harm the spiders as they were her pets.

We entered cautiously and soon reached a large, round, chamber. This was full of webs and the centre of the mass glowed. Icarone and PJ climbed towards the light.

The seer told them that she knew where the moving castle was but there was a price. One of us would have to stay with her, without struggling, for the rest of their life. We quickly surmised that she wanted one of us to stay for dinner - as the meal. However she would be satisfied with a bandersnatch. Apparently her last meal had mentioned one. For locating Jacob she wanted a piece of black metal. For why Jacob was calling us by different names she wanted the Actoris.

So we went outside and Anathea tried to summon a bandersnatch. But what she got was an Illimar who wandered up to her, swept her in his arms, and kissed her soundly. He said his name was Slandeshi and he had come to serve. It was soon apparent that he was a bit demented. When asked how to get to the tower he said 'Walk between worlds. Follow your dreams, follow your

nightmares between worlds and you'll be there'. Apparently he could teleport there, taking us one at a time. He also told us that Jacob was a bad man - someone to scare small children with.

Flamis suggested that we try using the means of divination we had available to us before even considering feeding someone to the spider. So Anathea got out her tarot cards, while Flamis built a bonfire and had a conversation with her other selves. These were her questions and the answers she received.

Where will we be able to find the tower?

South of the Sun, and east of the Moon.

What is the current location of Jacob Carlyle?

A nomad is everywhere and anywhere. Doubly so for the Guardian of the Staff.

Why do both Jacob and the Spider Sage call us by strange names?

What's in a name? Does it define you or you define it?

.6.

We didn't get much more in the way of useful information out of the mad Illimari. Except that his job was to guard the treasure. What treasure, he didn't know. The movements of the castle are controlled by the Prince, and it remains in one spot as long as that area can support the inhabitants, who regularly go out hunting. Our captive was out hunting for some kind of herbs when he was summoned. The last place the castle was located was in the Eastern desert.

Figuring that the castle might still be there we decided to use fireflight to head west over the mountains and into the desert. After an hour in flight we had to land on a high plateau for Flamis to cast again. The goats grazing there must have realised that we were thinking about having them for dinner because they headed for the hills. At the end of the next hop we were at the edge of the desert. Flamis pointed out a barely visible black smudge far out across the desert. Could it be the castle? We took off again and shot off in that direction. When we had to land again it was still a black smudge, but not the right shape. Ruins perhaps, but no castle. Then Stark looked at the sand and exclaimed that it was magical. Cursed with a major curse, the nature of which was burial, cast by someone with a very high magical aptitude.

That did it. No way would we camp on these cursed sands, for fear that we would not wake. We took off back to the mountains and just reached the edge when dusk fell. The bad news was that we could not find a suitable campsite, and were forced to camp in a narrow and windswept canyon. Flamis cast temperature alteration, and I put up Hands of Earth as a windbreak, but it wasn't enough. Flamis and Icarone woke with frost bite.

30/04/96

We were just preparing breakfast when there was an almighty scream. Followed by another. Flamis started casting fireflights as a huge multi-headed snake writhed into the canyon. Hydra! Stark was all for running away. He'd come across one of these before. Flamis wanted to blow it away, but he insisted she cast more fireflights. I cast Hands of Earth in front of it, but it just rolled over them. Stark soon discovers that bladed weapons are useless on a hydra, slicing off one head only to find it replaced by two. Icarone and Anathema took off and landed within spell-casting distance. Anathea set about systematically blinding the hydra's heads while Myrene put them to

sleep. Then Stark vanished, triggering Windwalk. Apparently he didn't realise that he wouldn't be able to hit anything in that state. Meanwhile I was poisoned, and both of us were trampled. PJ managed to trigger a trolls skin on me which saved my life, then he was run over too. Mind you, it was quite apparent now that the Hydra wasn't at all immune to fire damage. Every time it trampled someone with firelight it took damage. This dinner bit back! Finally, after I was unconscious, and dying, PJ badly injured with a chest wound, and Flamis out of fatigue and poisoned, Icarone shot a bolt of Starfire into the Hydra, and it was slain.

What a disaster! We'd used up most of our healing potions, and achieved little more than a dead snake. Mind you, it might make good armour. Flamis was very angry, mostly at Stark.

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After Stark had a go at skinning the hydra we realised that it wouldn't be an easy task, or a quick one. The very thought of spending all day in desert heat, without a water source, and with our food supplies running low was enough. It simply wasn't worth it. Flamis took out the crystal ball, setting the viewpoint high above us, well above the mountain tops.

It was immediately clear that the closest green area was to the south east. Considering that was the direction Flamis wanted to go anyhow, given what her ritual had said about where we would find the tower, she made the decision for us, and that was the way we went. The problem was that we couldn't find the plateau and the best landing spot Flamis could see was a ledge near the bottom of a gorge. Most of us landed safely, but Icarone misjudged his landing and somehow ended up caught on a tiny outcrop a good hundred feet up. Stark immediately started climbing, while Flamis and Anatheia organised rope and pitons. Then Anatheia cast instil flight, and they floated up. Flamis knocked in the pitons and set the ropes, so that Anatheia could cease concentrating on flying and staunch Icarone's wounds. By then Stark had reached them and was able to lower first Icarone, then Anatheia, and then Flamis down to our ledge.

After a brief rest we took off again and landed in what I identified as a glacial moraine, a broad valley strewn with rocks of all sizes from boulders to pebbles. Flamis found water, a icy stream flowing down from the glacier and set traps. Then we slept until morning.

01/05/96

Half of us woke feeling rotten. We hadn't thought to check for infection after the fight with the hydra. Fortunately, Anatheia manages to cure almost everyone. Except me.

After we'd packed up the camp ready for takeoff, Flamis started casting firelight. She'd only got one to go when an arrow struck me in the back (truly this was not my day). We looked around, but there was no-one in sight. PJ called out "What do you want?" There was no response, except a rushing wind which swept the area, knocking most of the party off their feet. Then a lightning bolt struck. We heard a voice saying something in a language none of us understood. Then the wind died, and we picked ourselves up. A graceful fairie form hovered above us, fluttering on gauzy iridescent wings, and wielding a wicked looking dagger. This was a sylph. According to Myrene, who managed to cast the spell of speaking to enchanted creatures, she wanted to know if we were food. This area was apparently her hunting ground. She could not tell us where the city was, but perhaps her sister could. Her sister lived in a lake, three days south of here. A water nymph perhaps?

We set off for the lake, and landed in foothills within sight of it. before resting for the rest of the day. Flamis set snares and nets and caught enough for everyone to have a bit of dinner. We went to sleep still hungry, and were abruptly woken soon after by a prodigious rumbling in the distance, followed by an immense thump as if a mighty colossus had stamped one tremendous foot. The earth beneath us shook. The tower had arrived.

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02/05/96

Stark was all for heading straight for the tower, but Slandeshi laughed. He told us that from the sound it was yet many leagues from us, some days travel on foot. We all agreed with Flamis that flying at night wasn't an option - too conspicuous, and too dangerous by far. So we stayed put, and slept fitfully until dawn. The sun's morning rays sparkled from the tip of a mountain to the south east. A mountain which hadn't been there last evening. It could only be the tower.

Over breakfast we discussed how we'd get into the tower. Should we announce ourselves as messengers and ask to meet with the princess? Slandeshi thought that was an immensely funny idea, and described how the Illimari would fill us with metal and banish us off-plane. These are not nice people. He then suggested that the best way for us would be through the fissures and the fire-pits. That got Flamis's attention and through questioning Slandeshi we learned that the fissures were at the base of the tower, and that they were guarded.

We decided to fly in closer to the tower, and then walk the rest of the way. Flamis had already started casting when Anatheia wondered if we should leave Slandeshi. Too late! As PJ remarked, when the fire mage starts casting fireflight she doesn't stop until she's done every sentient entity in range. We landed in a pleasant valley some few miles from the tower. Flamis got out the spyglass and the crystal ball for a closer look at the immense monolith. It was distinctly mountain-shaped, a rough cone with the palace nestling between twin peaks at the summit. Gouts of magical flame erupted from crystalline structures near the tower's apex. A wall girdled the tower's base. We could just make out people like ants upon the wall. A pair of huge double doors were plainly visible half way up the tower, some distance above a massive iridescent gemlike structure set horizontally into the tower's side. As we watched, six griffins bearing lancers flew out of a triangular aperture near the summit.

Flamis focused the crystal ball on the palace for a closer look. As luck would have it, we could see into an open solar where two large grey-skinned Janni women sat, one very richly dressed working on a tapestry, while the other waited on her. "The princess, it must be the princess!" Flamis exclaimed excitedly, and called Myrene over for a good look with a view to future attempts at locating the lady. Then Flamis moved the point of view to the tower's base. We could clearly see long fissures in the side of the tower, and a bored looking guard arguing with a pair of dwarves. According to Slandeshi they were probably traders. Apparently, wherever the tower lands the local people come to trade with the Illimari. After saying that, Slandeshi wandered off under Anatheia's hypnotic suggestion to remain nearby.

While we were doing this, Stark and PJ had gone hunting and returned with a deer. Anatheia and Flamis foraged for roots and herbs, and we had a very tasty lunch. In view of Slandeshi's comments about fire-pits, Flamis suggested fire-proofing us all before we left for the tower. After all, it's a long duration spell, and it sound like it might be hot in there. When she got to Icarone something went badly wrong. He started shivering, and complaining of the cold. The air around him became freezing, as if he was sucking all the warmth out of his surroundings. Flamis was horribly embarrassed and apologetically started trying various methods to alleviate Icarone's

suffering, but nothing she did from counterspells to temperature alteration seemed to do any good. We had a problem, but there was no point in staying put after we found Icarone could walk.

It was getting onto dusk when we arrived at the tower. Myrene cast invisibility on us, and using a rope as a guide (we didn't want to ask Icarone to cast witchsight) we headed for the nearest fissure, with Flamis in the lead, as the stealthiest and sneakiest of the party. Some small sound alerted the guard as the party were creeping past. Silently Flamis picked up a stone and threw it past us. The guard turned at the noise, and we took the opportunity to scuttle past. We were in!

The fissure was wider than it looked, and led deep into the mountain. The darkness was soon complete and Anathea cast catvision on those who could not see. We trudged through passages between caverns where herd animals quietly murmured and chewed their cud. A light spilled out from a side passage. Flamis scouted it out, and came back with a description of two guards at a table, playing chess. Behind them was a locked door. We decided to leave well alone, and continued up the main passage. It led to a wide corridor with tracks that I recognised as being laid for ore carts. This level must be used for mining. We followed the tracks and came upon a circular stairway, and a crude elevator. There were cries from behind, which were silenced by the lash of a whip. The shouts indicated that it was just a slave having a nightmare. We backed off against the walls as we heard the sounds of footsteps on the stairs. Two Illimari guards marched past with drawn swords.

Continuing on up the main passage we discovered that it opened into a huge cavern dominated by the bright red glow from a great pit of molten rock in its centre. Flamis identified some of the structures around the pit as being used for artisan or mechanic craft, but quite alien in design. Others she could not identify. After scouting out the passages leading from the cavern she told us of cells and slave pens, of storerooms, of cart bays, and of a guardroom where two guards sat playing with dice.

We holed up in one of the storerooms, casting unseen on ourselves before sleeping. Icarone was no better, still freezing cold, and growing stiff, especially in his extremities. Anathea and I used trollskin and various healing magics to help him. All we could hope was that the backfired fireproofing would soon run out of duration.

03/05/96

(Flamis takes over the narrative)

When we woke it was past dawn and the room was no longer dark. Maybe the tower was letting the light through somehow. We spent the day purifying and such like, and listening to the noise of the foundry. Anathea was able to cure Basalic's infection before it became fatal. Several times during the day Anathea winced at the raised voices of guards abusing slaves. Basalic was sure she was itching at the chance to do something about it. When night came, Icarone still wasn't any better, but I wanted to scout (I was getting more than a little bored). Stark and Anathea went with me, Stark refusing to let me be in charge.

We got as far as the guard room, when all destruction broke loose. A huge white cat-like creature sprang from nowhere at the guards. There was the sound of screams and crashing about and then a bestial growling. Realising that the creature had been invisible, and that Anathea was missing I quickly came to the conclusion that the beast was none other than our gentle Anathea, rampaging through the tower, savaging the guards. We ran back to the camp and collected the others and our

gear. Then we followed, but whatever she had become, she was fast! Up the stairs we went, knowing that the way had been cleared before us, and found ourselves in farmland. Crops stretched before us as far as we could see. Anatheas trail wasn't hard to follow, and we continued on.

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Myrelle levitated the still freezing Icarone so that PJ could more easily tow him, and Basalic cast strength of stone which also helped. I was worried that we weren't exactly prepared for a combat, but the others didn't want to take the time to cast the necessary spells. Across the fields we came to another broad set of stairs, which took us up to a wide corridor flanked by smaller doorways. By now we were 400ft up and a tenth of the way to the top. We followed the trail of blood and wailing and the screaming. It was terrible. I found it hard to believe that even in her current state Anatheas would kill women and children. Something was badly amiss. Then we came to an intersection where the trail of blood split both ways. I asked Basalic to determine from the blood's aura the time since death, and we charged off down the most recent trail.

Soon we heard the sounds of battle. Then we could see humanoid shapes fighting some kind of large amphibian. Mousie, perhaps? The frog-like creature seemed to be winning with a vengeance, but we didn't stay. We ran, back the other way. It led to steps and a gate, bent inwards. We kept going. Then we heard voices, yelling "Halt!", from somewhere off to one side. PJ called out, "Obviously, they don't mean us!" as we kept running. We ducked around a corner, and assembled, with myself and Basalic at the back, preparing to cast. Basalic's Wall of Stone almost filled the width of the corridor, and my Wall of Fire closed off the gap. But the guards didn't stop. They came running through the Wall of Fire. Truly these Illimari are crazy. But their tactics worked, and ours did not. Stark ordered Basalic to cast another Wall of Stone, even though I protested there was little chance that there wouldn't be a guard in the way. Of course there was, and by then the guards had gone straight for the mages. Me and Basalic. We were cut down mercilessly, even when I protested that we were only running from the monster. What the fighters were doing and why they did not block the way, I do not know. The guard captain stamped the life out of my dearest Basalic and I was disconsolate. I cried and cried, as they led us off to our cells.

Fortunately, I was not so distraught that I hadn't managed to smuggle my rings, my gloves, and my amulets into my purse. Which they could not remove from my person. They took the fighters' armour and weapons, and what jewellery they could find.

04/05/96

Next morning we were brought before the Prince. When asked, he told us that they had taken Basalic, and turned his body into a stone statue. Apparently they found his agonies amusing. I broke down in tears at that, and they found that amusing too!

We were accused of invading the tower and bringing the Doomguard - the giant amphibian creatures. It didn't help that they had found a Doomguard banner in Stark's gear. We explained that we had been sent with a message from the Princess's servants for the Princess. The Illimari brought out a Mind mage who was able to confirm that we were telling the truth. So we did get to see the Princess after all. We told her our story including the dire prophecies regarding herself. She didn't seem especially happy where she was, but she was making the best of it, and was content to be doing her job. I tried to explain that the Illimari could well be worse tyrants than the Calamar, and that she really should try to get away. Of course, we'd made a real mess of things,

and could not offer her any help. So we were escorted back to our cell.

Later, they demanded my purse. I eventually allowed them to take it on the condition that they returned it. After all, they could not open it. To my absolute horror, they returned it, some hours later, opened! They wanted to know about how I came to have in my possession a twenty thousand year old artifact. So I told them all about Rye Khellar and Moeg Khellac. They were all for summoning Moeg. Well, all I could think of was more power to them. If they succeeded in summoning him, they'd deserve all they'd get!

After that they returned me to a cell by myself. I complained of boredom, and asked for something to read. Instead they took me to a torture chamber and hurt me! It was ages before I felt that I could move again. Then they wanted me to make magic items for them. Not likely!

There was only one thing to do. Devise a way out of here. I examined the lock on my door. Laughably simple. Obviously designed for show, not to actually keep anyone in. I carefully greased the hinges that night with fat from what they called dinner. I waited until it was quiet outside and gently, deftly opened the lock with the wooden picks I had made. Then I gently opened the door. My door guards were chatting to another pair of guards by metal railings. Great. Time for some concealment. Smoke Creation! Quickly I cast the spell and filled the hall with smoke. My infravision let me see through the smoke and I targeted the first guard. Dragonflames! He flashed into bright flame and fell down. I hoped he wasn't dead, as the next one came straight for me. I tried to dodge, but he was too fast and hit me. I stood there stunned as he tried to grapple and restrain me. The thought flickered through my mind. I should have cast Self-Immolation! Bother! he drew a dagger on me, and ordered me to stop resisting. Which I did. There wasn't much point in getting hurt any more than absolutely necessary.

They chained me with iron, and that was it. Powers of Light and Darkness, I'm bored!

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But that wasn't it. They didn't leave alone. Oh, no. Periodically, they hauled me out of my cell, and hurt me some more. I don't know how many times they tortured me, because I can't remember it clearly, but it was during one of those horrible times that everything changed. There was a tremendous crash as the door of the torture chamber burst open, and there was Engleton. I don't think I've ever been so glad to see anybody. He was followed by some others, and they set about slaying the torturer and the guards. Manacled as I was, all I could do was watch, giggling and crying in relief and pain.

When it was done, Engleton came over to me, and gently removed my bonds. Another person, whom I knew as the priest Rowan touched something furry to me and I felt my perceptions alter as I shrank smaller and smaller. I was a mouse! They picked me up, reassured me that I would be safe, and tucked me into a backpack.

Then it was all a jumble and a rush. They got all of us out, and safely back to the Guild. Our rescuers had taken prisoners, and made arrangements to ransom them. In return, we would be able to ransom back our items. All except my mirror of auras, which the Illimari had sold to a demon in return for its favours. I wasn't impressed, and neither was I enthusiastic about the bill for over 30000 silvers to get back what was rightfully mine. Still, at least I am alive and free, and so is my beloved Basalic. It could have been worse, much, much worse.