

# Disappointment At Destiny

Cover Sheet

(Adventure by Mike Parkinson)

01/10/91 - 23/12/91

## Player Characters

Brightflare	Fire	Human	Male	Leader
Engalton	Namer	Human	Male	Critic
Kryan	Illusionist	Human	Male	Scribe
Bozo	Star Celestial	Hobbit	Male	Mil Sci
Starflower	Mind	Elf	Female	Spokesperson
Aqualina	Water	Human(Orc)	Female/Male	Scribe

## Plane

Elushia

## Places Visited

An island near Destiny (Albu Longa)

Drow Island - somewhere to the south

## Employer

Commander Fish, Captain of 'Sword of Mercy'

## Major NPCs encountered

Captain Babbington-Smythe

Lieutenant Prudence

3CPO Obedience

Don Carlos de Calatrava (Self proclaimed Duke of Destiny)

Priestesses of Zigma

Saint Ferdinand (Saint of the Church of Destiny)

## Mission

To eradicate a bunch of drow

# Disappointment at Destiny

## Adventure Summary

01/10/91

Summoned to meeting room to join rest of party. Mission to pick up an army near Destiny and transport them to an island to fight drow explained. We would be serving as midshipmen on the 'Sword of Mercy' under the command of Commander Fish. Equipped ourselves and boarded the ship. Marriage ceremony between Starflower and Brightflare as well as Kryan and myself.

02/10/91

Got underway, heading north towards Destiny.

08/10/91

Arrived at a bay near Destiny. Went ashore to find the army.

09/10/91

Captured a hobgoblin. I fell into a pit with poisoned spikes. The others interrogated the goblin, who DAed as an orc, and found out that it is a corporal in an army. They had a Commander in Chief and a higher entity referred to as 'Ghod'. Then the party were under attack and were forced to surrender after the death of Starflower. Brightflare managed to find out that this was part of the army we were here to pick up. While the rest of the party went with Captain Barrington-Smythe back to the army camp, Kryan and I returned to the ship to report to Commander Fish.

Reported then returned to rejoin the rest of the party. Both of us ended up falling victim to Fossegrim.

Meanwhile the others had reached the camp, spoke to the C-in-C, then to a handsome man sitting on an ornate throne, mounted inside a gold tent. Bozo and Engalton were awestruck by him. He reached out with his sceptre and resurrected Starflower. They're planning an invasion of Destiny. Also there's a Greater Summoner somewhere in the camp.

After a while they flew back to the beach and reported. While the ship's officers discussed battle plans to invade the camp and stop what was happening the party found our bodies and brought us back for resurrection.

10/10/91

Kryan and I woke up. Meanwhile the others tried to attack the camp but were repulsed. Starflower was returned with a note pinned to her which read 'Go away. I'll let you have your army back when I've finished with it'.

11/10/91

Brightflare had lost his equipment and wanted it back. However a chameleon chest had been retrieved. Inside was a rapier, more gold cloth and a couple of scrolls. One of the scrolls was a map of a nearby mountain.

12/10/91

Headed off to explore mountain. Found a hidden valley with long flight of steps leading through it. One step had an aura on it so we flew over it. Another ward on the last step. Met with Priestess

of Zigmar and conducted to their temple. Talked to the Head Priestess and discovered that the Ghod person was Don Carlos, who had claimed the Regalia of Destiny and was a claimant to the throne. Now he was trying to regain the Kingdom that had been here.

On the way out Bozo passed through the ward. So I followed. Zap! When I woke up I found myself in a male orc body, that being all that could be found.

We were on a beach. Soon an elderly elf appeared to negotiate for the return of Brightflare's equipment in return for Don Carlos' and a note of apology from Brightflare. This was agreed to.

An illusion of my old self was put on me and we returned to the ship.

14/10/91

Reached a Destiny portal and portalled back to the Guild for examination and curse removals. Returned to the ship.

18/10/91

The army was returned so we headed south.

17/11/91

Reached the drow island. Our mission was to destroy the drow's portal so we went ashore to do this that evening. The portal was a disk inside a circle of stones. After a battle with a drow Mind Mage and an E&E we reached the portal and destroyed it with grenades and magical fire.

19/11/91

Returned to the army. The drow village had been captured, and some of their ships but Fish's ship, with Fish on board, had been captured.

30/11/91

It had taken a while to secure the area but it was finally over. Used a drow ship to sail back to the Guild.

22/12/91

Arrived back at the Guild.

# Disappointment At Destiny

by

Aqualina & Kryan

(with a bit of help from Starflower)

30/09/91

Even though I wasn't planning on going on an adventure, I decided to attend the main Guild meeting just to see what the news was. Also I was curious to know just what Cystennin was doing here. He hadn't said very much on the trip back from Cottingley. All he would say that it was something really vital and I'd find out at the meeting. He was right. It turned out that something was draining the mana level from Faerie and that he needed a party of adventurers/heroes to check it out. I wanted to go but he reckoned it could be too dangerous for me. The ones he was going to take were going to leave as soon as possible.

There was another adventure mentioned that sounded very interesting. It was introduced by Commander Fish, from the Azurian Navy. He wanted a party to join the navy and help in destroying some sort of item. He also mentioned that a water mage could be very useful. I thought about it but decided that maybe it was about time one of the others had some fun. Drizzle perhaps.... For some reason Commander Fish had looked rather nervous as he entered the meeting. First he asked Herkum for reassurance that he couldn't really be harmed in the Guild Hall. Somehow I suspect that Commander Fish is not well liked by several Guild members.

After the meeting finished I went back to my room, then spent the rest of the day finishing off my spell practising.

31/10/91

(Entry by Kryan)

We were told we were to be midshipmen and as such, we were expected to run messages, serve in the wardroom etc. The journey to where these drow were, would take at least three weeks. We also had to buy all our food, plus a meal for the officers, as well as a bottle of good wine, also for the officers. Starflower volunteered to take care of all that.

Kree had been there before and he told us that all the drow were Death Aspected and the island was infested with them. He wouldn't go there again. Also mentioned that Fish isn't a nice person. The Guild recommended we should have either a Water or an Air mage in case we needed another way home. They seem to think that Fish is in trouble but that we should be okay. The drow usually can detect any landings on the island but maybe not our boat as it has some sort of Major Indetectability on it.

That night there was a party meeting. Engalton and Sowlean want to pull out. Aqualina and Bozo were mentioned as replacements. Aqualina is a Water Mage and Bozo is a Star Mage

Next morning we were able to get the Guild to delay the captain by a day or two while we sorted out replacements. Starflower went to find out about something called 'mana storms'. They were mentioned as a hazard to shipping and were summoned by magic. They sound like bad news.

01/10/91

(Aqualina continues...)

I had a few hours to spare before going to enrol in language and dance classes (I wanted to learn elvish and become a troubadour in dance and acrobatics) However, about mid-morning, there was a knock on the door. When I opened the door there stood a tall and beautiful elven lady, with long auburn hair, dressed in green leathers. She introduced herself as Starflower.

I had heard of Starflower. She was a Mind Mage of some skill and a healer. I invited her in and asked her what she wanted. It turned out that she was going on Commander Fish's expedition and they definitely needed a Water Mage. Especially one who had been ranking Ship Strength. As it happened that was exactly what I had done.

She went on to tell me that they had the initial meeting with Commander Fish. He told them that the item that they had to destroy was a portal which had a vampire at the other side. I hoped that it was going to stay there and made a mental note to stock up on garlic.

We also had dark elves, or drow, to contend with. They were pirates. The rest of the navy were going to distract them while we snuck in and dealt to the portal. They needed the ship strength in case the ship we were going in on was destroyed. I told Starflower I also had Mage Wind ranked in case we needed it. I also pointed out that I could always summon a few dolphins and ask them to take us. Much more fun. Starflower mentioned that there was also a Star Mage with Star Wings for extra transport.

We would have to join the Navy as midshipmen. This meant that we were junior officers, above the common crew, but would be of the lowest rank and to obey orders of any higher ranking officer. We were not to cast any magic while on board. Also we had to wear the uniform and basically do as we were told and speak only when spoken to. This trip did not sound fun. Still I need the money - badly. I finally agreed to go. It turned out none of the other Water Mages were available.

I quickly packed, and followed Starflower to Meeting Room #3.

.2.

There, I found out who the rest of the adventurers were

Brightflare - Human, male, firemage. He came across as rather egotistical. He was 6'2", athletic build, wearing hard leather black armour and a black cape with red lining. I could see he was carrying a falchion, a dagger, a crossbow, and some round objects that he said were grenados.

Engalton - A big chap with lots of weapons and rose coloured plate mail armour. He said he was a fighter and didn't like mages. I later found out he was a Namer.

Kryan - an illusionist, human male. He was of average height, small build, with mousey brown/greyish hair and blue eyes. He's reasonably good looking [Handsome! - K]. He's dressed like a typical illusionist. I could count at least ten clashing bright colours. The only weapon visible was a dagger in his belt.

Bozo - He's a hobbit, 2' 10" in height, wearing light green cloth and a battered top hat. He looks relatively cute. He's a Celestial Star Mage and knows StarWings. His skills include Beastmaster, Ranger, Thief and Troubadour and can speak five languages. For weapons he uses slings or

grenados. A tulwar and scimitar were also visible. Both were bigger than him.

Starflower - Elven female mind mage, 6' 4" tall, dressed in green, auburn-haired, and very pretty. Wish I looked like that. She said she was a rank five healer, a ranger and philosopher. Then she waved her hand in the air and sliced the edge of the table. Apparently her sword is invisible. Made of air.

Aqualina - That's me. Human female Water Mage. 5' 1" tall, average looking, dark complexion, long dark hair. Currently wearing a short, aquamarine dress and a dolphin shaped pendant. I'm also a Navigator.

First thing we finally managed to decide was who was doing what. Both myself and Kryan volunteered to be scribe. Instead of deciding who was going to do it, we decided that we would both scribe and compare notes every so often. Next followed a rather long argument to see who was going to be party leader. It finally turned out to be Brightflare, with Bozo as military scientist, and Starflower as party spokesman. Kryan reckoned that Starflower and Brightflare ought to be joint leaders as they seem to work well together as a team. Engalton was given the title of Critic.

We also found out that, as midshipmen, we had no duties as such and it was the Captain's job to see that we are brought up as gentlemen. We can be court-martialled and have our pay stopped. We were basically there to learn. The ship is called the 'Sword of Mercy' (Starflower said it sounded Michaeline, but I have no idea what that means) and we work to the day, rather to the watch.

The ship had one special feature, some sort of magic that rendered it invisible. However, when it was in that mode, everyone had to be very quiet as the spell only blocks sight. There was a small chance the ship could be detected while in 'stealth mode' as it produced a 'dimple' in the water.

Starflower reckoned it would cost about 600sp to equip us all. This trip could take up to a month. She went shopping for provisions. I went back to my room, collected my navigation texts, packed, then went out shopping. I first spent 15sp on a uniform, followed by 24sp on a large wooden chest to put everything in, then 2sp for a mattress. I managed to scrounge some stuffing for it.

Starflower re-appeared dressed in uniform and wanting 100sp each from us for all the supplies she had ordered. She accepted 50sp from me, with the promise of the balance later. She then wandered down to the dock area while the rest of us got ourselves organised. Engalton wanted to put some of his stuff in with mine. Since I had lots of room I let him.

A short while later Starflower hurried in. We were to get on board the ship as soon as possible. I had just finished waterproofing mine, Kryan's, and Brightflare's chests by then. Engalton had wanted his crossbows done but, for some reason I just couldn't get it right. I even felt a mana impact as if I had successfully resisted a backfire. I finally had to refer him to the Water College as I was getting tired. Another spell to practise.

We arrived at the ship and reported to the Officer of the Watch, a female by the name of Lieutenant Prudence. Brightflare suddenly produced a bunch of roses and gave them to

Starflower. I think he's trying to tell her something.

Just in case something goes wrong we decided to use false names (well this was supposed to be an undercover operation). So Bozo became Pan, Kryan became Grey, Engalton called himself Peter, Brightflare was Bill, Starflower was Silverwind and I said I was Marina. I'd better make sure this diary is well hidden.

We are led towards the cabins by another midshipman called Peter. There were three small cabins available. Each has two cots and a shelf. Brightflare and Starflower take one. Engalton wanted to share with me, which left Kryan and Bozo to take the other.

Peter reckoned that, for our own protection, it would be better if the ladies among us were married. Starflower glared at Brightflare, and muttered something about the inevitable. Brightflare perked up at that. Engalton was giving me looks which reminded me of Ugh Bash's expression when he was hit by the love dart in faerie land. Starflower suggested that I would be better off with Kryan. I'm not really keen on this but I guess she's right. So Kryan and Engalton swapped cabins. Peter offered to arrange for the chaplain to perform a double ceremony. Once he left, Starflower pointed out we could always get the marriages annulled later.

We headed back ashore to get the rings. I decided to let Kryan deal with that detail. He came up with two simple gold rings. Each had a gem on it, an aquamarine for me and a topaz for him. They were also inscribed with our alias names. Each was worth 200sp. After that we went to the Guild and signed the contract, then headed back to the ship.

Once there, we reported to the Officer of the Watch (a requirement every time we stepped on to the quarterdeck). I went to the rail and stared out to sea for a short while contemplating this trip. Starflower fetched me a little while later to help me get ready. The ceremony was at sunset in the officer's wardroom.

It was a short ceremony. For some reason, someone had selected the Eastern ceremony. This involved the two grooms strangling a chicken each, then Starflower and I ritually bleeding them. We were then pronounced man and wife.

Dinner was in the ward room fifteen minutes later. Engalton and Bozo were serving. The rest of us, being newlyweds, were exempt tonight. Sometimes all I could see of Bozo was a tray bobbing up and down between the tables. [Cute! - Real cute! - K]

Kryan slipped out a little while later. When he came back he announced that he had found Peter, unconscious below decks. The ship's surgeon, followed by Starflower and Brightflare hurried down to look.

About an hour later we were summoned by Commander Fish. We found him down by our cabins. On the way down I found out, from Kryan, that Peter had been found dead, of suffocation, in Brightflare and Starflower's cabin. They had been moved to another one. Also Brightflare's chest had been opened. Peter had been the victim of something Brightflare had left there as a trap for unwary thieves. Peter's body had been slipped off to the Guild for resurrection. Brightflare was meeting all the costs. The whole affair was being kept secret from the rest of the crew.

Brightflare was rather annoyed about having to pay for the resurrection, reckoning it was Peter's fault for poking around in the chests in the first place. Commander (Captain since we're on board) Fish replied that there was nothing wrong with Peter examining the contents. I suspect that Peter was under orders to see what we had. Probably some sort of security measure. Brightflare wanted to abandon the mission on the grounds that the working relationship was going to be intolerable. Finally Captain Fish left us to discuss the matter among ourselves and ordered us to see him in his cabin in fifteen minutes. He assured us that we wouldn't be eavesdropped on.

It took a bit of talking but we finally came to a working compromise. Brightflare would pay half, as he had planted the scroll, but we reckoned that the Navy, in the person of Fish, should meet the rest of the costs. Before we went to see the Captain, Bozo suggested Starflower cast telepathy. She did [I presume she went off ship to do that - K], and as we knocked on his door, I noticed a faint grin on Starflower's face. I guessed she was reading the Captain's mind.

Bozo told Fish what we had decided. The Captain agreed that yes, Brightflare should pay half but it wasn't up to the Navy to pay the other half. Finally we decided to get the other half from whatever Peter had. With that settled, Brightflare, Engalton and Bozo stuff Peter's body in his trunk and take it off to the Guild. Meanwhile Starflower decided to wander around the ship checking minds. She ended up helping the ship's surgeon put things away. I retired to my cabin and checked over my navigation notes.

At the Guild they discovered that Peter was rather well off. Also that he had a set of lock picks that increased the chances of detecting traps in locks. The necromancer said that Peter hadn't actually out to pinch anything, but just checking to see what we had, at the "suggestion" of the second officer. It was fairly late by the time the others return. Brightflare gave Starflower another bouquet of flowers. She kissed him. Maybe she really does like him.

02/10/91

We're finally under way having left on the 2am tide and start heading north. As far as I can see there is good weather ahead.

The next morning the seas were looking rather rough. I had to get Starflower to tie my hair back (something I usually don't like doing). Bozo was looking rather green. We found out some of the ship rules like no leaning on the rail and don't stand on any ropes.

07/10/91

It's been rather uneventful so far, as we head up the coast. Apparently there's some marines we have to pick up before heading south. We are all being taught the basics of navigation (except Starflower. She's learning to be a physician. Odd? I thought she was a pretty good Healer already). It's a bit different than the system I'm used to but I soon got the hang of it. We are taught the use of the sextant and how to use it to determine our latitude. Also we are instructed on how to calculate our longitude, something that is rather more difficult in a canoe. We had to start by learning their alphabet. They speak Common but their script is different than ours. It was all rather fascinating. By late afternoon we had started to head east.

08/10/91

We sailed with the sun behind us and discovered we were headed to a bay near Destiny. That



evening we weighed anchor in a natural harbour. The water was calm and cool. We were summoned to the Captain's cabin again. He wanted us to go and find an army he was supposed to be picking up here. They were supposed to be camped by the beach but the camp has been abandoned and the forest has already started to conceal it. We were also asked to collect water. The army consisted of 6 to 7 hundred men and they are all in red coats. They had been in the area for a few months on manoeuvres. Fish gave us a dispatch to pass on to their commanding officer to identify us. He also gave us a folding mirror so we could signal the ship when we were ready to be picked up.

We changed into our adventuring gear, but still retained the blue cloaks which were part of the uniforms (I like mine, I think I'll wear it as part of my outfit). We were rowed over to the beach by a couple of sailors in one of the longboats. Once the sailors had rowed away, we made our preparations. The camp has definitely been abandoned and the aura indicates that the plant growth has been speeded up. At the insistence of Starflower and Bozo we settled down to purify. I cast Water Breathing on myself and slipped into the water. There, I was able to complete a full three hours purification.

09/10/91

It was midnight when we had finished and were prepared to advance into the forest. Bozo cast witchsight on several members of the party, including myself. I noticed Starflower was also casting. Bozo asked what and why, and she said it was telepathy, so she could find people. He reckoned she'd be lucky if there was anything close.

Suddenly Starflower shushed us. She whispered that she could detect something. Something looking for us. It knew we had noticed it. Then she said that it was thinking that female looked tasty. She thought it was her. I don't know whether to be insulted or relieved. Bozo asked where it was, and Starflower pointed, saying it was over two hundred feet away and how it could detect us at that range in the dark she didn't know. Bozo disappeared.

.4.

Starflower then said she was going to cast Indetectability so no one could see her. She cast the spell, but it didn't seem to work. I could still see her. So could most of the party. Except for Engalton. Starflower then reported that Bozo had made the other mind unconscious.

We headed off to catch up with Bozo. He's captured what he thinks is a hobgoblin but its aura said it was an orc. Last spell to impact on it was Walking Unseen. Bozo has the 'orc' tied up. While the others interrogated it, Kryan and I kept watch. It appeared that there was another one out there. We decided to take this 'orc' back to the beach and question him there.

I was helping carry part of the 'orc' when the ground gave way under me and I felt myself falling. Then something sharp cut up my right leg and arm, making a mess of the fur sleeve. I felt dizzy and passed out.

When I came around Brightflare was in the hole with me. He said that I had fallen down a pit and had cut myself on some wooden stakes. Coated with poison. But I wasn't to worry as he had already started to neutralise it. He also said that he didn't think I'd be permanently scarred. I just lay still. I was feeling very fragile.

The others decided to stop and interrogate the 'orc' now. They found out that the 'orc' is a scout and is a corporal in an army. The army is planning an invasion for the morning. The pit was part of their perimeter defence. They had a Commander in Chief but also some higher entity that they referred to as 'Ghod'. Just then Starflower called out that she could detect other minds coming rapidly. We then heard owls. Owls? There hadn't been any around. Suddenly the party was under attack. Something nine foot tall and flying was firing at Bozo. Bozo later discovered that it was a 'pixie' but was much larger. Engalton tried to shoot it down but missed. Brightflare was bursting with impatience to get up there and help but he couldn't interrupt the Neutralise Poison. Just then I heard Starflower scream and a voice called out "I've taken care of the Mind Mage".

[K - At the same time we were being attacked by their 'Special Force. I had created multiple illusions of Engalton. Two of them 'died'. Once it looked like we were going to be overwhelmed I said we'd better give in. We surrendered quickly afterwards.]

Just as Brightflare finished, a goblin fell into the pit. He shot up to see just what had happened. Meanwhile I decided to lay still and pretend I was dead. Brightflare had managed to figure out that this was part of the army we were to pick up and ,after a while, he managed to convince their leader, a Captain Babbington-Smythe, that we had been sent by Commander Fish with a message for their C-in-C, a Lord Mitchell. Babbington-Smythe inspected the message and told Brightflare that our party was to accompany him back to his camp. Brightflare wanted to send a message back to the ship and inform Fish what had happened. I heard that and called out that I volunteered. I wanted to get back and be healed. I'd feel better once I was in the water. I managed to climb out of the pit (someone had a rope dangling down). Kryan said he would come with me. I found it was painful walking so I was grateful for his support. On the way he told me that Starflower had been killed. That made me feel very sad.

Once we reached the beach, after 20 minutes, Kryan reckoned we should wait for dawn before signalling the ship. He would take first watch of three hours and I would take the rest. So I slipped into the water, cast Protection from Cold, and slept in the water before relieving Kryan. I watched until dawn broke.

.5.

Once dawn arrived, Kryan and myself went back to the ship and reported to Captain Fish. We informed the Captain about the ambush and what we had learnt. ["There's a chap there calling himself Ghod. Perhaps you know him?" was what I said. - K] For some reason Captain Fish got very annoyed with Kryan when he mentioned the Ghod person and sent him below. [Oops. Maybe I shouldn't have said that. - K]. Fish asked me where the camp was where the others had been taken. I replied that I didn't know but I would attempt to find out. So I went back to the beach, along with Kryan.

My idea was to talk to the local seabirds and see if they had seen anything. Kryan used an olfactory illusion to attract them. Talk about a waste of time. I ended up feeding them a lot of fish and learning absolutely nothing. Seagulls are stupid, unhelpful, selfish birds with a singular food fixation. FEED ME!!! They were flocking all around me and screeching for food even as I attempted to summon some food for them. They even resorted to aerial bombardment to try to force the issue. But I nimbly dodged. It finally took two summonings plus, at least, four failed attempts, before I was finally able to get rid of them.

The next plan was to sail up the river and see if we could find the camp. After all it seemed

reasonable that the camp would be near a water source for ease of supply. Kryan and I managed to collect enough wood to make a canoe, then I cast Ship Strength. There it was. One standard outrigger with triangular sail. I don't think Kryan had ever seen one before. Then I made a Mage Wind to propel us along.

Kryan kept an eye out while I concentrated on keeping our craft afloat. I must admit I was pleased when he kept referring to me as Captain Marina. [I'm not a troubadour for nothing - K] We blundered up a few wrong tributaries (okay so I made one little mistake in navigation) and got stuck a couple of times before we found a branch that took us in about the right direction. That took us about two hours. A few hundred metres up the river branch we discovered a pool. Beyond it was a small cataract. We would have to carry the raft through before we could continue on upriver. The pool looked very peaceful and I was sorely tempted to take a swim but Kryan wasn't in agreement. He also admitted he wasn't a very good swimmer. I offered to teach him.

As we crossed the pool I saw something glinting on the bottom. Treasure! Must be! There had been no sign of any habitation so far and I was feeling desperate for a swim. The water was looking more and more inviting by the second. Finally Kryan gave in to my insistence especially after I promised I would only be a few minutes. After we beached the raft I cast Water Breathing on myself, stripped down to the bare essentials, and plunged in to the water. (At this stage I was totally unaware that there was something in the water that was causing me to think this way).

The water was very clear and very pleasant. I felt like I could stay there for hours - especially since the Water Breathing had triple effected giving me a duration of 27 hours. I soon found the cause of the glinting. It was a small collection of coins. I gathered them up. I should have then gone straight back up but for some reason felt reluctant to do so.

Just then something grabbed my ankle. I spun around and found myself facing three aquatic "dwarves", armed to their very sharp teeth and wearing really mean expressions. (I later found out they were Fossegrim and I had been invited for dinner, with me as the dinner). Uh oh! Suddenly the pool no longer seemed so nice so I attempted to activate my new Water Form talent. It didn't work. Double uh oh! I drew my dagger and vainly attempted to defend myself. However to no avail. I was quickly overcome. My last conscious thought was that I was going to be in debt for another 6000 silver pennies for the resurrection.

[While she was in the water I had a feeling I was being watched. I threw a rock in but nothing happened. Just then I noticed our boat fall apart. Something must have happened to Aqualina. I grabbed a log and used that to support me as I bravely headed out into the pool. Two water dwarfs popped up nearby then disappeared. I went swimming after them, even though I'm not very good at this. For some strange reason I seem to be breathing water. Or am I ... - K]

.6. & .7.

10/10/91

When I came around, I was back on board ship, on my bed, and feeling very sore. Kryan was there too. I dressed and went up on deck. As I did so I saw the rest of the party and the officers arriving back. I was very pleased to see Starflower back alive.

After a long discussion I was able to piece together what had happened. Yes, I had died and had lost a bit of Endurance permanently. I would have to do training to get it back. The Fossegrim

had left some rather awful marks so I asked Starflower if she could fix it when she wasn't busy. She would get to it when she could. At the moment there was more urgent Healing to do. As Engalton and her worked there was a lot of professional rivalry going on. I went below to get some more sleep and write up what I had been told.

What they told me was the following: They picked up Starflower's body and were conducted to the army camp. They spoke to the C-in-C, an ogre, for a short while and were rested and fed. Later on they were given an audience with 'Ghod'. They entered a tent, made out of gold cloth, where the person who claimed to be Ghod was. Bozo and Engalton were so struck by the radiance of this being that they felt they wanted to co-operate with him in anyway possible. He appeared to be a handsome human male holding a sceptre in one hand and with a beautiful rapier at his side. He was wearing a jacket that Brightflare recognised as being similar to one worn by an Admiral of the Fleet. [However Ghod's was fancier - K] He had once had one like it. He had resisted whatever it was and was mildly sceptical. Ghod reached out the sceptre and touched Starflower, who awoke. To her surprise and delight, she was restored with full Endurance and Fatigue and hadn't lost anything except for her Enchantments. Just as if she had been on the Plane of Faerie.

Ghod seemed very pleased to find that he'd captured a group of mages. He asked about mages on Fish's ship. Bozo and Engalton told him there was a Celestial, a Water, an Enchanter and a Namer (that was Fish). Also there were two Earth mages among the marines aboard. Ghod smiled at them and Bozo reckoned he felt very good. Just like midnight at the Winter Solstice he reckoned. Ghod later said something about Namers being not true mages. For some reason this greatly upset Engalton and, after they left the presence of Ghod, he began to feel suicidal. Starflower had to make him angry to snap him out of it. She told him that him and Bozo were under the influence of mass charm and domination. This really made Engalton angry and he accused Starflower of doing it. [S - "Why do you think I've charmed you?" E - "Because I haven't knocked your teeth out yet"] He then went to a corner of their tent (one had been provided) to meditate.

Meanwhile Starflower went on the prowl - a mental one. She found out that they were intending to go ahead with the invasion as planned and that the presence of Fish and his crew could be of some help (evidently they were on some sort of secret agenda of their own and had no intention of going with Fish). She managed to detect the 'pixie' and found out that he was really tired but he intended to go through with it and keep his ring on. The pixie turned out to really be a pixie, just a greatly enlarged one. Also that he hoped that the summoning would go well in the morning. Starflower was aghast. Odds were that there was a Greater Summoner in the place, and that Ghod person was suspect number one. Those dudes are Nasty with a capital N.

Engalton finished his meditations and discovered that what had hit them was some sort of curse. It had been triggered by entering into the golden tent where Ghod was. The only ways to cure it was death or a remove curse. A Mind Mage Hypnotism could counter the effects temporarily. Engalton sought out Starflower and asked her to do the job. After a few attempts Starflower managed to hypnotise Bozo with the phrase 'You will regard all requests and orders from the entity known as Ghod to be the same as if they were from Silkin. Also you are feeling alert, your normal self'. (It should be noted at this point that Bozo trusts Silkin - whoever that is - as far as he can throw [spit - K. I was being polite - A] her). Engalton looked rather alarmed at that and reckoned he would have to counter Starflower's hypnotism as he reckoned Bozo would now be too hyperactive. She soon calmed him down. Engalton then requested that his suggestion be

exactly the same as Bozo's first sentence but replace the name Silkin with Dramus (Dramus I have heard of - he's a necromancer) Woe betide her if she added anything else. So she cast and succeeded.

It was getting close to dawn by now and the party were told that their cook should go to the mess tent and get some breakfast for them. Starflower went. She was going to get four meals but Bozo requested that she get six. Starflower did. Soon they were all tucking in, especially Bozo. Starflower didn't feel all too hungry so Bozo finished off hers as well.

As dawn broke there was the sound of many trumpets and the troops assembled in the parade ground facing a large rostrum. Ghod appeared on it and addressed them saying it was the start of a glorious day and there was going to be a great victory. Soon he had them all stirred up and there was lots of cheering and chanting. Bozo managed to see the pixie and also managed to check out the ring's aura. It was magical, its effect was transformation and its side effect was to make the wearer very tired and fall into an enchanted sleep.

Ghod left the rostrum and everything went quiet. The party reckoned that the summoning had begun. They resolved to disrupt it, by Engalton casting a counter-spell. Apparently a Greater Summoning counter-spell cast on an area will prevent it being used for that purpose for twelve hours. Dangerous... but does anyone want a daemon invading Destiny? Starflower discovered that the pixie was reading minds so she cast a Mind Cloak on herself (she said it was a risky spell for her, but aren't they all) and Bozo passed around some special tobacco for the others to smoke. It also produced Mind Cloaks. All their Mind Cloaks would last an hour. Then they pondered. What were they going to do next? How do you stop a Ghod who has an army on his side?

They wandered out of their tent. Bozo was Detecting Auras and discovered that a demonic effect had caused one of the soldiers, once human, to become non-human. The demon in question was Voso, the Leopard President with an MA of 35. He also found that one of the "humans" with a Generic True Name of Werewolf and a College of Earth. For some reason Starflower was feeling rather sick (too many cloyingly sweet thoughts around her - so telepathy does have its drawbacks) so Brightflare amused himself putting a Protection from Magical Fire on her. They were sharply reprimanded by an officer for holding hands and were sent into the forest to gather wood. Meanwhile Engalton had managed to get the counterspell to work and headed out of camp himself. Bozo was wandering near the cookhouse when he found another werewolf that had only been one for three lunar months. It had been a Erelain before that. He then detected a covered Medusan followed by a Doppelganger. He raided the kitchen for a bit then, after spotting Engalton, decided to follow him out, while sampling some bananas.

Soon they met up with Starflower and Brightflare. Bozo cast StarWings and Walking Unseens on them all, then followed up with a set of Witchsights. Once that was all done they took off. Starflower reckoned someone may have seen them but, fortunately, whoever it was took no further action.

They flew back to the beach and found the purser waiting for them. He told them we had been there but had gone off looking for them. Bozo told him what they had found out. The purser activated a device and spoke into it. They could hear the Captain's voice coming out of it. He told them that the officers were coming over to the beach to discuss battle tactics in order to invade the camp and stop whatever it was that was going on.

Brightflare was more concerned on finding us. The purser said they had a bit of time to spare so it was decided to do a quick rescue. He cast a Locate (he's an enchanter) and managed to lock on to my body. Bozo cast StarWings on him and they all took off. The purser was flying in a zig-zag fashion. He explained he was attempting to determine the distance.

Four minutes later they spotted the pool. There was quite a bit of turbulent water there. Brightflare reckoned the trees on this island were dangerous as well as the rivers, pools, in fact virtually everywhere (He had been here before - now he tells us). [He also said that if you fly too high, you get struck by lightning - K] They decided to land on the other side of the pool - well away from the trees. Engalton crashed into a tree when landing. The others landed a bit more sedately.

Starflower could detect minds in the water. They seemed to be hungry and were thinking thoughts of anticipating a good meal. She mentally attacked them. Meanwhile Bozo stripped off most of his clothing. When they spotted some heads appearing from the water, Brightflare blasted them with Web of Fire and Bozo followed up with Web of Starlight. Suddenly Engalton wandered down to the water's edge. He had been charmed. So the purser sent him to sleep.

Finally all the Fossegrim were dispatched. Bozo swam down and retrieved our bodies. Kryan was untouched (it turned out he had got worried over my non-appearance and attempted a rescue) but I had been nibbled at and had also taken damage. The purser used a Wizard's Eye to look for anything else interesting. The only thing he found was a quiver. Bozo retrieved it. It had some arrows in it and it also had some sort of magical trap on it. Engalton was woken up and our bodies and gear were flown back to the ship to be preserved in anticipation of the resurrection.

Once that had been attended to, the party and the officers, discussed what they were going to do about this Ghod entity. The party couldn't have any help as the other mages were required to defend the ship. However they would cast any magical preparations that they could. So they were all healed up. The Warrant Officer/Gunner, who was a Fire Mage, offered to cast Magical Fire Protections on people. He did one on Engalton and Engalton got burnt [two or three times - K]. Engalton threatened that mage with a loaded crossbow. Brightflare finally took over. Soon all the party were outfitted with various spells such as Witchsights, Invisibility, Trollskins, and Quickness. They then were to Windwalk in to do whatever they could. One thought was uppermost in all their minds. Were they going to survive this? Or were they going to join Kryan and myself in cold storage - if they were lucky.

Starflower arrived first and hid near the tent they had previously occupied. She set up telepathy and picked up a guard in the gold tent, standing near a throne, and guarding someone doing a ritual. Meanwhile Bozo popped in. Starflower picked him up as well. Engalton landed on one side of the tent. Bozo had managed to remove a tent peg and slip in the back, behind the throne. At that point Starflower lost the link with Bozo. She also realised that she hadn't detected Engalton either. The guard must have been very alert because Starflower picked up his thought that he had detected something then, much to her annoyance, disappeared from her telepathy. Bozo also heard the guard mutter 'I could have sworn I heard something' so he stayed very quiet behind the throne.

Brightflare popped in, in front of the tent. He could see a bugbear guard, wearing light chain mail, Ghod, and could just make out someone seated in the throne. This person was wearing a crown as well as a bulky surcoat over leather armour. Ghod was performing some sort of ritual

while reading from a scroll. He started to trigger an invested Hellfire.

Meanwhile Bozo had spotted another person wearing robes and carrying a rapier. He also saw a hand of the person sitting in the throne. The hand was resting on a very large sword. There was a large ring on the hand. The robed person must have seen Bozo as he drew his rapier, very fast.

At that moment the Hellfire exploded in the tent, getting the guard and the person in the throne. Bozo took that as his cue to leap around the side of the throne and attack the bugbear valiantly. Engalton leapt in, straight through the side of the tent, and went for the chap in the throne. Starflower had been trying to get an ESP going when she was suddenly hit twice by a rapier plunging through the tent. She prudently backed off.

Bozo was pressing the attack on the bugbear heroically while Engalton fired his crossbow at Ghod. Just then Bozo realised that the robed person was casting a spell and was appearing to be tracking Starflower, still on the other side of the tent. So he decided to finish off his current opponent quickly by using both his scimitar and tulwar. He soon succeeded in doing so.

Starflower moved down the side of the tent, hoping to shoot at Ghod. Engalton was already doing that and scored an excellent hit, knocking him over. He then made the comment 'Don't blame me. I'm only the crossbow bolt delivery agent'.

Suddenly lightning bolts from the sky hit Brightflare and Engalton as well as damaging a nearby tent. The robed swordsman ran towards them. Bozo decided to leap towards the guy on the throne and strike before he was noticed. So much for that idea. As Bozo approached he lifted his sword but Bozo was faster scoring a hit. The guy struck back, twisting and standing as he did, scoring an grievous blow, crippling Bozo's primary arm. He called upon Bozo to surrender in the Power of the Church.

Brightflare had recovered from the nasty jolt and sidestepped in true military fashion. Meanwhile the guy with the rapier jabbed at Engalton in the leg. After knocking him over, he charged at Brightflare, who was frantically loading a crossbow. Brightflare got knocked over.

Starflower managed to make an excellent shot that passed over the spot where Ghod had been. [Admit it - you missed - K] Unfortunately he wasn't there any more. 'Abandon ye the ways of your evil companions' the crowned guy called out as he savagely attempted to hit Bozo - and missed as Bozo nimbly evaded. Starflower tried to hit him with a crossbow but missed. The bolt whizzed past Bozo's left ear. She then picked up the guy with the rapier running in her direction.

Bozo dived around the back of the throne with the other guy following. Engalton later remarked that they were playing ring-around-the-throne.

Starflower suddenly remembered that her StarWings were still active so she decided to float like a butterfly and sting like a bee. (When I made that crack, Starflower made a face when I mentioned butterflies. Must find out why.) So she took off, straight up. The guy's sword just bounced off her. As she flew she could tell from the guys thoughts that he was casting a spell on himself.

By now the camp was in an uproar. There were cries of 'Attack! Defend the Golden Tent' Starflower landed on the other side of the tent and prepared her crossbow. Meanwhile Engalton

was taking potshots at the guy with the crown. Ghod was lying prone so Bozo charged him. His reaction was to suddenly recover and fight back, much to Bozo's surprise. The other guy was now cowering behind the throne and calling on Bozo to cease his sacrilege.

Starflower burst through the tent (the fabric was double layered golden silk cloth and was easy to get through, but it also had the interesting property of repairing itself) and fired at the guy with the crown. To her chagrin she missed. Suddenly the other guy burst through the roof, right on top of Engalton. Engalton dodged the attack but failed to dodge the lightning bolt that the crowned guy threw.

The fight continued on with thrust and counter-thrust. Somehow Ghod was looking a lot more healthy than he was a few moments ago. Also Starflower suffered the embarrassment of dropping her crossbow. The crowned guy was yelling 'Kill the invisible mage in front of the tent'. He must have meant Brightflare.

There was no time for Starflower to reach her crossbow so he pretended to surrender to the guy with the rapier. He moved towards her and kicked her crossbow away. Engalton had stepped to the front of the tent. He could see a lot of people charging. Starflower reckoned their minds were confused.

Meanwhile, poor Brightflare had just recovered from the last savage attack. Bozo stepped in and DAed Brightflare. He reckoned the last spell to hit him was 'Wrath of God'. However it didn't really seem like a spell. Engalton tried to pick up Brightflare but failed. Brightflare and all his gear was too heavy. While the crowd converged on the area, Engalton jettisoned Brightflare's pack and took off with him.

Starflower was being covered by the guy with the rapier. He insisted that she put her hands on her head. She was also told not to make any false moves. She was a little too slow to respond and was knocked out.

Bozo had moved back to the back of the tent and triggered an Invested Hands of Earth just outside. The guy with the rapier charged through and got trapped in one. Just then the guy with the crown noticed Bozo and charged, drawing his sword and yelling 'Renounce your evil ways. Submit to the tender mercies of the True Church'. Bozo decided it was time for a strategic withdrawal.

Engalton fed Brightflare a Healing Potion as Brightflare discovered his were gone. He was rather annoyed. The guy in the Hand yelled out so Brightflare and Engalton took pot shots at him with Bolts of Fire and crossbow quarrels respectively.

Bozo snuck back into the tent and found the guy with the crown bent over Starflower. He waded into him. Engalton crashed through the tent. As he looked around something invisible struck him and he collapsed. Bozo struck the guy with the crown again. To his utter surprise he disappeared.

As far as Bozo could tell, Engalton was dead. Starflower was barely alive. Someone had sapped them on the back of the head. Engalton had a large lump.

Meanwhile Brightflare, in true firemage style, was creating havoc by igniting a pile of wood. He then took off to find his gear, only to discover it being taken by a group of soldiers. An arrow hit



him. Brightflare recovered, just in time to miss a very large tree, and fled back to the ship.

Bozo re-examined Engalton and discovered he was breathing. He ducked behind the throne just as smoke began to billow in. He swings the contents of a waterskin around to see if there is something invisible about. In one area it looked like it hit something. Then he noticed a tendril of smoke picking up Engalton. He read its aura. It was a non-aspected creature of mana. By now Engalton was wafting out of the tent and Starflower was being picked up. Bozo cast a Web of Light at it and got a weird outline of something large. Bozo bailed out of the tent as the entity knocked it over. As he did he noticed a chest. A chameleon chest.

A Bolt of Fire hit the entity revealing it to be 25 feet wide, two headed, and horrible looking. There were screams of panic. Bozo grabbed the chest and bugged out back to the beach.

As he flew, he could see clearings appearing, going in the same direction he was, that is, heading west. Engalton and Starflower are floating just above tree height. Bozo finally figured out it had three legs. [The footprints were 10' by 15' - K]

Brightflare had arrived back and reported to Fish all that had happened. Fish was asking awkward questions like who and exactly how many. Brightflare also requested refuelling, respelling and rearming. At that point Bozo landed and reported the invisible entity on the way. Fish told him that something had been dispatched to fetch the other two. They soon arrived. Fish told the others that they needed to consolidate and be on the defensive.

Engalton and Starflower finally came around. Starflower was fighting mad. As she healed herself she discovered that she had taken no damage from the last head blow and had been temporarily preserved. Engalton discovered the same thing. She then discovered a little note pinned to her. It read 'Go away. I'll let you have your army back when I've finished with it'

It transpired that one of Fish's crew, probably the purser, had been using a Wizard's Eye to follow the progress of the battle. Starflower wanted to know if they knew where the bastard was. Fish severely reprimanded her for bad language and then asked just which bastard she was referring to. She replied "the person ..er with the over-inflated opinion of himself". 'Oh you mean the Summoner' Fish replied. Unfortunately they had lost track of him.

That basically brought us all up to date. Fish had put the entire ship on yellow alert and we were cloaked which meant we were stuck on board. Having nothing better to do I went below to rest.

11/10/91

Fish issued a standing order that the standing order on using code names has been rescinded. Apparently all pretensions of security had been breached. We could revert back to using our real ones. Brightflare slipped out and used another of Bozo's StarWings to fly over the area where the camp was. However he discovered it had been struck. So much for recovering his equipment.

The ship was still on yellow alert, even though there had been no 'incidents' in the last forty eight hours. Occasionally the crew were running out the guns and doing other drills. I was on deck for a while then went below where Starflower got to work fixing up my scars.

That afternoon we had a party meeting in one of the cabins. Brightflare definitely wanted his equipment back and was planning on going and getting it, with or without permission. Bozo

mentioned the chameleon chest. It was in his cabin. Engalton went to fetch it but returned saying he couldn't find it even after Bozo had given him specific instructions where it was. Finally Bozo dragged it in.

Engalton reckoned it should go to the Captain. Meanwhile Bozo DAed it and announced it wasn't cursed or magically trapped. Finally Engalton had his way and Bozo, with the assistance of Brightflare, carried it out. As they ascended the ladder, they met a midshipman coming down. He told them to leave the chest where it was and that the Captain already knew about it. Is there another unethical Mind Mage about? [You mean, how many are there? - K]

We transferred our meeting to the wardroom. Since it was a consecrated area there would be less chance on us being 'eavesdropped' on. Also we cleaned the place up while we talked. It was finally decided that Engalton would divinate the chest. So he did so. An hour later he had discovered that it always reflected the aura and colour of the surroundings. There may be some preservation, as well as an anti-locate, on the contents as well. He wrote a report on it for the Captain.

Then they decided to open it. There were two catches on it and both had to be pressed and slid over. However that meant the person had to be right in front of the chest, in perfect positioning for any trap. So Engalton produced a couple of large shields. Bozo and Brightflare went on either side. Brightflare also requested a wet blanket in case of gas.

I decided to go up on deck, just in case. As I was watching the never-ending drills, I noticed the Officer of the Watch trying to say something then collapsed. I called for help. No sooner had I done so then Starflower, and Kryan, closely followed by Obedience, also known as 3CPO (Third Chief Petty Officer) arrived. Starflower examined the body, looked at us and announced gravely, 'He's dead'. Obedience gave her a warning look and told her to keep that quiet. Kryan and Starflower carried the body into the wardroom and Obedience told us to keep watch outside and let no one in until further notice. As we did someone called out and asked if anything was wrong. I replied that everything was under control, nothing to worry about. [What about shutting up Starflower three times? - K]

A little while later Obedience and the other officer walked out. He wasn't dead any more. Now I know how I recovered.

We went back downstairs and found the chest opened, a rapier lying next to it, Engalton in the middle of a ritual and a very angry Brightflare tied up on the bed next to him. Kinky! Bozo conducted us to another cabin and explained that Engalton was in the process of divinating Brightflare in order to see if that rapier had affected him in any way. Apparently Brightflare was feeling strongly attached to the rapier and they were attempting to determine whether or not it was a magical compulsion. Starflower told Bozo what had happened on deck and it was soon established that the Watch Officer had collapsed at the same time the chest had been opened. I felt sick. I had been standing nearby at the time. It could easily have been me. I decided to lie down for a while.

Later on Engalton had finished with Brightflare and he was untied. They couldn't detect anything out of the ordinary but there had been a faint hint of something that Engalton couldn't identify. He started on the rapier itself. The blade consisted of bound force. The hilt had a scene of a shepherd and sheep, the same one as on the inside of the chest, with three gems embedded in it,

blue, green, and red. The blue one made everything that was invisible, visible to the wielder - including the chest. The red one turned it into a weapon of flame (Brightflare had burnt a blanket with it) and the green one reset the other two. The blade always existed, even when it could not be seen - except when the blue gem was pressed. [You missed out on Engalton and the hobbit on a box behind him, ready to sap Engalton if something went wrong. - K]

By now it was late afternoon. The chest was moved to a safer location and opened. Inside was some more of that gold cloth, two scroll cases, and some purses of money. Brightflare was fishing around inside. After Kryan put the sword in the chest, Bozo closed it. Brightflare had extracted the scroll cases and put them on the bed. He then struck Kryan. What for I don't know. Turned out that Kryan had been using the rapier and the invisible blade had passed rather close to Brightflare. [Actually Brightflare just thought that. The sword was in my other hand. I'm not stupid - K]. One of the two scrolls turned out to be a map of a mountain.

.8.

We had a party meeting to decide what we should do next. Brightflare still wanted his gear back, especially the expensive magical stuff. He reckoned no amount of compensation was going to make up for it. Starflower suggested she could do a reconnaissance flight to determine where the army was or the purser could be asked to do a Locate on Brightflare's crossbow. She could also drop a message requesting the items back. Maybe we should swap what we had of theirs, such as the chest and its contents.

We finally decided to see the Captain. Fish told us that he would like the army back otherwise dealing with those drow would be rather difficult. Technically he couldn't command the army, he has to liaise with the C-in-C. It could be rather difficult to liaise if the C-in-C was still charmed. If we could bring the C-in-C back discreetly then he wouldn't have any objections to us trying. Fish also mentioned that the C-in-C was a very distinguished chap, his second cousin on his mothers side. They had worked together before. All the army could be accommodated on board ship but we were ever only planning to take two-thirds of them. It was suggested that we could attempt to do a deal for half the army and leave the rest alone. The only thing we could suggest, as a bargaining point, was to go along and help them invade Destiny and make sure they won. In reality all we'd really be able to do is help out with small tasks. Engalton reckoned the Guild wouldn't think that was a good idea.

Fish requested the Admiral's Eighth. This turned out to be one eighth of any treasure obtained while on this island. It could also be a perfect opportunity to get Brightflare's equipment back.

Back to our cabins and we continued our discussion. We believed that the mountain, marked on the map, is one 15 miles to the south east. There was a 'M' marked on the map. We reckoned it's a monastery or maybe a mineshaft. Either way it could be worth investigating. Perhaps it held the secret to Ghod's power.

Engalton gave us a new version of the term Firefight. That's when the firemages cook the party before the party go into battle.

We finally decided that Bozo should be the overall party leader. Also that we should stick to the code names, just in case. Bozo asked us what special skills or items that we had. He mentioned a device that he had, that allowed him to step outside time and look around while time is frozen. That was how he was able to 'jump' from one place to another. Brightflare told us he had some

more skinchange items, like the one that zapped Peter. Starflower admitted to her odd Aspect while I mentioned the Water Form.

We spent the remainder of the day investigating the scrolls and the contents of the chest. Starflower noticed that there were two spells on the second scroll, one written in Common and the other in Elvish. Engalton was insisting that he should have the rapier as his share of the treasure. After he divinated the scroll we discovered that there are two one-shot spells on it. One needed to be deliberately invoked and it is used for protection from summonables. The other is used to send creatures back to their own plane.

We found some bags in the chest, which turned out to contain mostly coins as well as some amethysts, rubies and even a few small diamonds. A small flat object we found, proved to contain seven large, thin coins. The design on them were of a man and a woman facing each other. Bozo said their container had cantrip magic. One divination later showed it to automatically keep the coins polished. There was also bits of gold cloth. Starflower and I were trying bits on in various places to see how they would look. The DA on those was formally living, mulberry leaves. It was later explained to us, by the Captain, that it was silk. Starflower told me that she thought gold didn't suit my complexion but I still think the material is nice. I'm sure I'd be able to think of a use for it. It looked like the rest of the contents served as packing for the rapier. Bozo found a false bottom and opened it. Inside was three pieces of paper, with an unknown script written on them. It could be the same document in triplicate. Bozo suggested they could be letters of contract. In some places we could see small differences.

We went to see the Captain to show him the chest and contents. Even though it was getting late he didn't seem to mind. The big coins were Double Royals - the largest coin in Destiny. The chest itself had one to four Rank 10 Hand of Death spells on it each day. It fired out to maximum range in a straight line.

Fish also approved our request to check out the mountain but warned us to be on our guard. He wanted to know how long we would be. Bozo reckoned that if we weren't back by nightfall that we weren't coming back.

Before we went to bed, Starflower insisted that we purify before we leave. I told her that I didn't think I could as I can't purify outside of water. She told me not to be so silly and that it was a matter of concentration. Kryan agreed with her.

12/10/91

Breakfast was the usual fare - ships porridge. Engalton was able to obtain crossbows for Brightflare and Starflower, although Starflower complained that she'd have to use a cranequin. A what?

The crew had provided a small raft, which was now floating alongside. We were going to use that to get ashore. Kryan jumped onto the raft. So did Bozo, rather nimbly I thought. Hope I get to be that good after practice. Starflower jumped and just made it on the raft. I threw my equipment down to Kryan then decided to attempt a graceful swandive into the water. It didn't quite work. Something else to practice. I stayed in the water and watched as Brightflare, followed by Engalton, were lowered by the bosun chair. I lost count of the number of times they banged against the side of the ship, much to the amused delight of the crew. Bozo suggested I get on board the raft and start paddling. Paddles had been provided.

Kryan and I started paddling but when Engalton remarked that he had done it before Kryan gratefully handed the paddle over. Engalton had a more powerful stroke than I had so, for a short while, we were skewing to one side. [Seemed more like we were going in circles - K] Also I was getting crowded on my side as people moved over to compensate for the weight of Engalton's armour. I wanted to cast a Ship Strength on the raft but Bozo thought it wouldn't be worth it at this stage. What's more it might freak out the crew watching from the ship. Soon we reached the shore. The raft was dragged up and covered over with leaves. Bozo started casting StarWings on people. I decided to put a WaterBreathing and a Resistance to Cold on myself - just in case.

.9.

Starflower announced that she was casting Telepathy and asked us not to resist. Resist? What's that? She then announced that she was picking up a nebulous entity, but she couldn't pinpoint it. I back nervously towards the water. Engalton strapped large shields to his front and back. Spot the turtle. We took off. Brightflare was using his levitation boots to help him manoeuvre. On the way we spotted a dark mass. It turned out to be a swarm of insects. They were heading in the approximate direction of where the camp was. We went around them.

As we approached the mountain we saw a trail going up the mountain in several broad, large, steps. I could detect a fresh water stream running near the path. We could also see some grassy, level flat mounds near the path. We were approaching a cliff face. Just then Engalton pointed out a narrow opening through which we could now see a hidden valley. Bozo landed on one of the flat areas and we followed. It was mostly grasslands with a few trees and shrubs dotted about. Just then Starflower detected a creature with a sense of curiosity. It was approaching us and showing no fear. Maybe M stood for Monster. Maybe even Minotaur. It turned out to be a hairy humanoid figure and bent over. It looked four foot high but would be eight foot if erect.

It paused and watched us for a while. Brightflare started hovering in the air while Starflower started a coloured ball cantrip. The creature seemed more fascinated in the hovering Brightflare. It must have lost interest a little later on as it ambled towards Starflower and tugged at her clothing. Starflower offered it some dried fruit. It took it, ate some and handed the rest back. Brightflare was trying to talk to it in all sorts of strange languages but he wasn't getting any response. The creature then plucked some berries from a nearby bush and handed them to Starflower. She tried one. It was rather tart. She said that they would go down well in a pie. Bozo finally managed to achieve some sort of communication with the creature and found out that its name was Ugh. Ugh wanted Bozo to follow him so he did. He found the remains of an old building, very overgrown and a long thin bowl. He claimed it was a banana split bowl.

We soon came to the conclusion that this place was an overgrown herb garden and soon most of the party were getting samples. Starflower had bits of plant stuck everywhere. Brightflare made the comment that Ugh was leading us up the garden path. Bozo found a raised area with some sweet tasting grass on it. There were four raised areas, each with a different type of plant. Engalton reckoned one of the plants had some sort of healing property so he tried it out. He reckoned it was making him feel real good. Brightflare and I had discovered some overgrown irrigation channels and a collapsed well as well, while the others helped Starflower collecting herbs.

Ugh led us up the path. Each step had a two and one half foot rise on them. Suddenly Bozo asked us to stop. He had detected an aura on the step ahead. Engalton was asked to read its aura and

replied with a very odd answer. Brightflare went up to him and did an empathy check. All he could detect was that Engalton was feeling really good. Brightflare said that he was 'narced'. When I asked him what that meant he said that Engalton was under the influence of a narcotic drug that was making him feel better than he actually was. Starflower's telepathy had run out so she tried to cast another one. Instead of the magic landing on her, it landed on Engalton, causing him to become even more confused.

Bozo told us to fly over the aura so we did. I managed to stumble on the landing and scraped myself up rather badly. It hurt - a lot. So Starflower tried a bit of that healing herb while Brightflare did a Soothe Pain. Shortly I felt better. I'm going to have to get a new dress when I get back as this one was getting rather tatty. Starflower successfully cast another Telepathy on herself and we continued up the steps. Bozo stopped us before we stepped on the last one. He had detected a Ward on it containing dangerous fire magic. Brightflare lifted Bozo up in the air and they soon determined that the warded area extended 65 feet up in the air. While they hovered above that mark we flew over. This time I made a near perfect landing. Bozo announced that I was finally getting the hang of it.

Just after we landed a human girl in a white linen robe approached us. She was carrying a staff with a bell on it. Bozo went to speak to her but she ignored us and spoke to Ugh. However she did smile at Kryan when he gave greetings in three different languages. [I tried Human, Elvish and Unicorn. She responded to the Unicorn - K]. She then turned around and walked back the way she came indicating that we were to follow. Bozo managed to determine by DA that she was a Priestess of Zigmar.

We reached a large building with large double doors that had been spiked open. It looked like what had previously lived here had been some sort of giant creature, more suited to the stairway. We were led down a corridor, into a room, right into another corridor and into a throne room. An older woman was seated on the throne.

She greeted us and told us that we were welcome to stay as long as we wanted. They didn't want us to cast any magic or kill any creatures in the valley or anywhere near the 999 steps. They also didn't desire any contact with the outside world.

After a short conversation we found out that the Ghod person, who was in fact Don Carlos, had been here. He had claimed the Regalia and had taken the ring and the sceptre. Apparently he had claimed descendance from the old King that had ruled the area before the Baronies had been formed. Now it looked like he was attempting to regain that kingdom.

We were told we were free to observe in any of the common rooms then Ugh conducted us to quarters. Quarters turned out to be a large common room with rolled up mattresses. Shortly a large, sturdy woman arrived bearing a large bowl of hot rice. We ate it. After that a woman - called the Preceptor - came out with some chess sets. So Brightflare, Starflower and Kryan played her simultaneously. She beat them all in a short space of time.

We found out that Don Carlos, otherwise known as the Pretender, had picked up some rather powerful items. They worked for him as he knows their names. That was only supposed to happen if he was the rightful ruler. The Regalia consisted of the Sceptre, Crown, Orb, Ring, and Sword and was the Royal Regalia of the King who ruled the entire area. The Crown was being separately looked after. Legend had it that the rightful heir would someday return. Now it

looked like Don Carlos was that heir or descendent. The ring had the power of multiplying someone's size by four. Bozo recognized it as being the one on the pixie. The sceptre resurrects and also can be used to remove any current magic. Zigmar had been one of the Old Kings.

After a while I found my way to the bathroom. It was a large communal bath and was six foot deep. I soon discovered that something was affecting the Water Breathing as it was running rather erratically. However I didn't mind. A little while later I was joined by some of the priestesses. We ended up having a good game of underwater 'tag'.

.10.

After a few hours of cavorting around I heard someone calling my name. It turned out to be Starflower. It was time for us to go.

I was told, by Starflower, that the situation at Destiny would be more of interest to the Guild than we first thought. Apparently one of the Guild members, Fenris, was the next in line to the Destiny Dukedom. He had got that by being married to the Duke's eldest daughter. This meant that it was now imperative that we inform the Guild, and Fenris, about what was going on. As I put it, Fenris's Destiny was in peril.

We stepped outside. I was wondering how we were going to pass back through the outside ward until I saw Bozo walk through with no harm befalling him. So I concluded it must be safe. However when I stepped forward to follow him there was a blinding flash of light and ...

My first thought upon regaining consciousness was 'Oh no. Not again'. Everything felt very strange like I had just woken up. Engalton put a bandage around my eyes as he said that the light might hurt them. Fair enough. I had a vague recollection of being lifted up before losing consciousness again.

.11.

I remember vaguely the bandage being lifted off and Starflower saying some soothing words. When I fully regained consciousness I discovered I was now a male orc. For some reason I didn't feel too depressed about the whole thing. Indeed I felt that this could be a whole new experience. Brightflare kept calling me 'Orcward' so I immediately started addressing him as 'Dimglow'. He also produced a small, beautiful and intricately carved vase which he said contained my ashes. I wanted him to scatter the ashes at sea but he reckoned I should keep them as a memento. Maybe he's got a point. That way I'd remember not to be so stupid.

Bozo explained that the ward had been designed to zap anyone who was not worthy. Apparently he was and I wasn't. By whose standard of worthiness I wondered. Still what's done is done. I bet Drizzle was going to laugh when she found out. I decided to see what sort of condition this body was in. It was definitely stronger but not as agile. I sure this body had never been swimming in its life. After attempting to swim the length of the beach and back I checked to see if my waterbreathing was working. It was but I felt so tired after casting the spell that I sank into sleep right in the water. The other party members had to pull me out. While I slept, someone spotted two large black birds in the trees. They reckoned that there was something odd about them so Starflower cast telepathy. She got Engalton again! He wasn't pleased. It turned out that the two ravens were sentient. One was of the Fire College and the other was Mind. Bozo launched a Ring of Starlight at them.

Fire was confirmed when a Wall of Fire suddenly erupted between them and the party, stretching from the water's edge to the treeline. We moved around the Wall and could see some sort of rune burning in the sand. Two triangles with the points touching.

Just then an elderly elf appeared. He said he had been sent to negotiate an agreement between Don Carlos and Brightflare. The reason for that was that, while I had been unconscious, the rest of the party, except Starflower and Kryan, had flown over the army and Brightflare had dropped a note 'requesting' the return of his equipment. However Don Carlos had found the tone of Brightflare's note rather insulting and was demanding satisfaction.

After quite a bit of discussion it was decided that we should swap Brightflare's equipment for Don Carlos's and Brightflare should add a note of apology. That part was quickly agreed to and Kryan offered to compose the apology. However we were told that Don Carlos would also appreciate some sort of cash bonus as well.

I asked the person what the rune was and he said it was a rune of Willingness to Negotiate [or treachery depending on how it was viewed - K]. He said that the monetary bonus could be classed as a loan. Also that the army would be back in five days and Don Carlos wouldn't want them any more. They would be turned back into their proper shapes before we left.

The elf chap wandered off for a bit while we discussed the whole thing among ourselves. Kryan created a phantom orchestra to stop the elf eavesdropping. The elf started accompanying it. Personally I was wishing they would just hurry up and get on with it. Soon one of the ravens appeared and asked us if we wished to ask any questions. We soon found out that Don Carlos's father, the current Marquise, would not be able to hold out against the army. Don Carlos was attempting to jump the queue of succession as he was the son from the second marriage. This was getting very complicated.

Starflower came back and produced a hot broth of some sort. It had the effect of waking me up a bit as I was still very tired. While the others argued I slipped into the water and checked to see if my magical talents, including the new one, still worked. Fortunately they did. The raven also told us that there were some odd effects on us. Engalton was excommunicated from the Church of Destiny. Apparently the guy with the crown he had killed was a Saint, St Ferdinand. Furthermore the raven noticed that I was not really what I appeared to be.

[Now that's odd, the raven said Engalton had killed the saint, but I was originally told it was Bozo. Weird - A]

Apparently several Powers of Light were backing Don Carlos as well as at least two of the Powers of Darkness. No way was I going to go against them. One of the Powers of Light was Michael. When that name was mentioned Starflower turned white with shock. She told me later that Michael was the most militant one and wanted to start the final battle between Light and Darkness. Engalton offered Bozo a salami. Bozo told him he wasn't hungry. Everyone started wondering whether Bozo was okay. A hobbit refusing food?

About an hour after the elf appeared, the ship rounded the headland and soon we were aboard a boat being rowed back. Kryan had put an illusion on me so I would look like my old self. He told me not to touch anyone and to say nothing otherwise my voice would give the game away. Soon the story was out that I was off colour because I had picked up a non-contagious throat infection.



So I had to be kept isolated in a darkened room. Starflower had to convince the ship's physician that I was in no need of her ministrations.

Bozo reported to Commander Fish and told him what had transpired. Fish agreed to put up 50,000sp for a six month loan with ten percent interest plus 100,000 for three months.

13/10/91

During the night Starflower had to soothe me again as I was feeling rather upset about the body swap. Don't ask me what she did but I felt much better afterwards. We went back on shore to exchange the goods. Brightflare also added a gift as well. The elf reckoned that Don Carlos would be satisfied with that. We ended up with Brightflare's equipment back as well as the now empty chest. Since no-one mentioned it we presumed we were allowed to keep it. [Actually Bozo wrote loopholes into the agreement. It took quite a bit of work - K]

14/10/91

There was a portal to Seagate nearby so a few of us flew there and returned to the Guild. Starflower and Kryan went in for curse removal while the others went shopping for more provisions. They decided to leave the chameleon chest at the Guild for safe keeping.

Meanwhile, I was getting tested by the Guild examiners. They found that my Magical Aptitude and Willpower had dropped because I was in a foreign body. I would need to transfer into a human or an elf to regain my previous ratings. Also all my physical skill levels were down, especially my swimming, as I wasn't used to controlling this body. I was not pleased about this at all. Starflower later commented that I should take the advantage to learn how to use a sword and crossbow as I now had the strength. I might just do that.

18/10/91

After a three day wait we have sailed south again. The ship was crowded as we have all the army on board instead of the two thirds we were going to take. That meant that a lot more food was needed and some of our supplies mysteriously disappeared. Just as well the others stocked up. Also we were now three to a cabin. I ended up moving in with Brightflare and Starflower so Starflower could keep an eye on me. She reckoned that we should be able to find a nice drow body for me to live in. I hope I'll be able to take care of that one better than the last one. Maybe adventuring just isn't my forte.

.12.

16/11/91

Finally we are getting close to our destination. The trip had been rather uneventful. Engalton and Starflower had taught me the rudiments of sword and crossbow however it had been nearly impossible to actually practise. I had been confined to my cabin for the entire trip and managed to study up quite a bit of navigation as well as the elvish language.

Our mission was to destroy the portal the evening before the army would attack the drow village. They would give us 5% of their salvage in exchange for half of ours. I also had a private word to the army commander and asked him whether he could put aside some drow bodies for me. I explained to him why before he got the wrong idea. Somehow I don't think he liked the thought of having a drow in the crew.

17/11/91

Preparations were made. We would strike that evening to destroy the portal before the army's attack on the village the following day. We were given the communication crystal (magically linked to an identical one on the ship) so we could inform them of our progress. To that end, we were given Rank 15 Strengths of Stones, and Brightflare did Protections from Magical Fire on us all. He also did a Protection from Normal Fire on himself. Bozo cast Witchsights all around.

We were only supposed to carry as little as possible in case some people had to be carried out. I decided to leave the diary with the Captain. If worse came to worse I'd have to rewrite the whole thing from memory. There was a possibility they would have to scuttle the ship in order to stop the drow from getting it.

[It took Engalton about half an hour to sort out his 300lbs of equipment. - K]

I also ended up carrying one of Engalton's crossbows (loaded), one of his swords, Brightflare's buckler shield, a sledgehammer for smashing the portal, and other miscellaneous bits and pieces. When we were about four hours out, Captain Fish ordered complete silence as the ship, and all on it, were going invisible. No talking except when absolutely necessary. We spent the time attempting to purify. I managed to get an hours worth.

We finally arrived in the bay and were windwalked off. We had been told that the portal was about three miles from the beach, near a hill. So we travelled in that direction. On the way we passed over a wide stone circle, crossed a stream, then followed a well used path to what looked like a rough circle of standing stones, with other stones on top linking them. Two poles with faintly glowing spheres stood at the entrance. There was a circle in the middle.

We landed on top of the hill nearby. Not much vegetation was here. Kryan made us look like drow while Starflower cast Telepathy. It was disconcerting having the ground not moving below us.

Starflower picked up a mind back towards the circle of stones. She reckoned that he was a guard and was bored. However he does have a companion. Just then he went alert. Something he had heard. Probably us. There were some sheep grazing nearby so Kryan cast the illusion of some more. [And it was very nice, especially when they turned into wolves - K] As we got closer we could see that the structure consisted of round blocks holding up the lintels. There wasn't much of a gap between them. Nearby was a bunch of what appeared to be large rocks. Through the gaps we could just see the slightly raised disk in the centre.

Starflower was able to determine that the companion was his aunt. We both agreed that her body could be suitable, if we could get it. Just then she realised that the aunt had to be a mind mage so she cast a Mind Cloak on herself. As we snuck closer Starflower told us that he had just cast Quickness on himself and his companion as the Mind Mage had detected us. Great. He's an Enchanter.

The guy stepped around the entrance pole and shouted an obvious challenge. Starflower hollered some kind of reply but it wasn't good enough. She fell flat as an arrow scraped past. He fired again hitting Brightflare very badly. The arrows appeared to be tipped with some sort of acid. Engalton cast Mind and E&E Counters on himself. Meanwhile Kryan had fallen unconscious. Mind Mage mental attack. All the illusionary sheep disappeared. Another shot grazed me but I

dropped. Starflower and Engalton were attempting to shoot him down. Starflower crossed over to us and started tending to Brightflare. I saw him aiming at us so I attempted to get him with the crossbow. Just my luck. Missed him by that much.

By now Bozo had gone right around and was hitting the guy from behind. Brightflare was back up, had triggered some ShadowWings and was flying away. He then circled around and flew over the structure with the intention of dropping grenades in it and getting the drow Mind Mage. Another mental attack sent him crashing to the ground on the far side. Thank goodness he had put that normal fire protection on. [Nicely understated - K] I was on my way forward as the drow guard was dispatched by Bozo and Starflower, my intention to find the drow female. Halfway there I felt something strange happening ...

18/11/91

When I recovered it was all over. Starflower told me that the drow female had hit me with a molecular rearrangement and I had been a large mass of butter for a while. Bozo was calling me 'Butterball'. They had attempted to kill the drow female but she had escaped through the portal. The others had checked the portal and it had been a disk of tree section with Rank ten rune magic on it. Now it was a smoking pile of ash thanks to Bozo throwing Brightflare's grenades on it then Brightflare, after he recovered, hitting it with a Web of Fire.

Kryan and Engalton had been killed. Those two globes on top had exploded as they were attempting to get them down, showering them with sharp shards of gold. Starflower theorised that they were like the communication crystal and someone had destroyed the ones at the other end. As much as the gold that could be found had been gathered up.

The stone supports and lintels turned out to be more like petrified wood that had been affected by necromantic magic. However we were very suspicious of the nearby 'rocks'. According to Bozo they were part of some sort of lesser undead. Those rocks could be fingers. [As they were five feet apart & three feet wide, a very large undead - K]

While they had been waiting for me to recover, some drow had come up the path with the intention of escaping through the portal. When they found it had been wrecked they ran off in panic. We realised that something must have happened to the ship when the crystal we had began to vibrate. Bozo threw it away just before it exploded. We were sure that it wasn't the impact of landing that had broken it.

We decided we weren't going to hang around here so Bozo cast some wings on us all and we headed to a place on the coast near an abandoned lighthouse. There Starflower was able to Preserve the dead bodies of Kryan and Engalton. Brightflare had to transfer some fatigue to her, so she could complete the job. Meanwhile I went looking for enough wood to make a canoe. Much to my disappointment there wasn't any.

19/11/91

We finally managed to contact the army. They had managed to capture the village and some of their ships. However it appeared that Fish's ship had been captured [with Fish on board - K]. All the drow bodies had been burnt much to my annoyance. I was told there were some stored on board the ship. Fat lot of good that is now. I was wanting to try and contact some cetaceans to find out what had happened but then I remembered that these waters were heavily shark infested, thanks to the drow. No self respecting dolphin would venture anywhere near.

30/11/91

It had taken a good while to secure the area but it was finally done. Obedience resurrected Engalton and Kryan. One of the drow ships was in a reasonable shape and could be made serviceable with a Ship Strength. Since I had the highest ability in it I offered my services to the army which they accepted.

Finally we sailed back to the Guild arriving on the 22nd of December. Starflower spent the trip talking military strategy and tactics with the marines, while I continued studying my navigation. I decided to go and see the priests of Zigmar to see if they had located a suitable body. They had but there was a price. They had found out, from the animals, that we had 'cheated' getting through the ward. They did say it wasn't the gorilla that had given me away. As a penance I had to do something virtuous in this body. That meant that I had to go on my next adventure as an orc. I accepted their challenge and resolved to climb all nine hundred and ninety-nine steps on my next visit, ward or no ward.