

Kings Quest

Cover Sheet

Adventure by Scott Whittaker

01/10/94 - 07/12/94

Player Characters

Jhiselle DeBernard	Fire	Human	Female	
T'ana Starflower	Mind	Elf	Female	Spokesperson
Stark	Non-mage	Human	Male	Mil Sci
'Bob' Burrfoot	E&E	Hobbit	Male	
Suratt	Air	Elf	Male	
Phaeton D'Tama	Solar	Human	Male	

Plane

Elushia

Places Visited

The Kingdom of Pelham on the Emerald Island
Port City of Kingsford
Capital City - Widdershin
Loring Wood
Orc complex up the Damrosil river
Caernstown
Dagdar's Thumb (a mountain)
Dolmen Moor
Pillars of Nimra

Employer

The Seneschal of Pelham - Gwydion

Major NPCs encountered

A mad elven druid
Baron Krell
Krell's butler, Carruthers
Caer (a wizard)
Loring the Lost
King Llywellan
Grellyn - twin to Llywellan
Diancecht - God of Healing
Arawn - God of the Dead
Queen Ardel of the Amazons

Mission

To find King Llywellan and return him to the throne of Pelham

Kings Quest

Adventure Summary

31/09/94

Met the party employer, who told us we were needed to find and bring back King Llywellan, to restore the monarchy of the Emerald Isles. There was a prophecy to guide us: With six hands of Loring the Lost upon the Wheel of Time, at the moment Bazel mounts his chariot to do battle with the Seven Daughters, the Dead King shall rise to seize the Triad with hands that cannot grasp and eyes that cannot see. All wards broken and the mystic barriers pierced with mating swords, and while the sundered earth spews forth the dreg of centuries, a new order shall come upon the land.

01/10/94

Left by ship.

07/10/94

Reached the town of Kingsford.

08/10/94

Went upriver towards Widdershin.

09/10/94

Went upriver to search the Loring Forest for the Wheel of Time. Attacked by ents, then discovered a colony of giant spiders.

10/10/94

Found a cave inhabited by wyverns. Vanquished them. Found a glen containing a cairn which had magical liquid that caused befuddlement. Also found a magical glove.

11/10/94

Continued wandering down paths. Attacked by mad druid and animated trees. Managed to escape. Finally found clearing with large stone circle. Defeated griffon and mantichore inside the circle. Found the Wheel of Time, a stone disk on a stone block and used the gloves to measure the distance between the two light beams - exactly six handspans.

16/10/94

Arrived back at Widdershin.

28/10/94

Left to find Baron Krell who was offering to sell special keys.

29/10/94

Reached a mountain pass. Spotted another party of horsemen ahead. Nearly got caught in a rockfall trap. Finally reached the Baron's estate and discovered he had already sold the keys to the other party. Decided to go after them.

Went past several traps then finally caught up with them. Big fight ensued. Found keys but one

missing.

30/10/94

Headed back to the Baron's place and acquired the missing key.

02/11/94

Back at Widdershin. Discovered that we needed to retrieve the remains of the Regalia from a bunch of orcs upriver.

06/11/94

Went by boat up the Damrosil River

08/11/94

Finally found the orc complex and crept in through a back way. Defeated a bunch of guards then found where the orc chief and cronies were. Got lucky as shamen tried to summon a demon, backfired, and got uncontrolled, very angry one. Retrieved the Regalia and left.

10/11/94

Once back at Widdershin discovered we needed to retrieve magical elixer of life. Sailed back upriver.

13/11/94

Reached Cairnstown for reprovisioning.

14/11/94

Reached bottom of Dagdar's Thumb. Climbed the mountain. Attacked by icemage and wolves. Worked our way through mirror maze. Reached sentient rock, answered his riddles and received the elixer.

17/11/94

Back at Widdershin. Now had to find Llywellan's tomb, somewhere in Dolmen Moor. Started going back upriver.

20/11/94

Reached the Fens of Tavoral. Discovered an ancient male human, Loring, singing the Linage of Kings. Memorised and wrote down the song.

21/11/94

Found the end of the Kingsway Road and followed it until we reached Dolman Moor. Found burial mounds.

22/11/94

Defeated spectre in one mound then discovered the one containing Llywellan. Used the Incants (previously retrieved) to remove the wards then used the keys to unlock the door. Inside was a painting containing two kings connected. Managed to defeat terrifying undead creatures inside the tomb. Once past them, found inner chamber with coffin on top of a catafalque. Administered the elixer and resurrected two people, one in the coffin (Grellyn) and another inside the catafalque (Llywellan). Arawn - God of the Dead turned up and wanted to know why we had ressurected them. Then Diancecht, God of Healing arrived. After we explained, Llywellan grabbed Arawn's

club and struck Grellyn. By this act Llywellan and Grellyn died. Arawn left, laughing. Diancecht couldn't heal Llywellan as the two men shared a soul and Grellyn was irrsurrectable.

But there was another way. There was a gap in the lineage. One of the kings had wanted to put his daughter, Ardel, on the throne and had sent her into the past for safety. Diancecht suggested we go and retrieve her. So he transported us to the Pillars of Nimra and we used that as a portal to the past.

We found ourselves in a tropical jungle. Found fellow that ferried us across the river and warned us that the other side was a battleground for two tribes. There had been one tribe but there had been a split after a new queen arrived six months ago. One of them had to be Ardel.

Crossed the river and carried on. Confronted by group of Amazons. Met Ardel. Attacked by other group. Discovered their leader was Marna. Concluded that Marna was a reincarnation of Llywellan. Decided to confront her.

Did so, and managed to prove to her that we knew who she really was, a clone of Llywellan. 'She' removed her headdress and revealed herself as Llywellan. He went with us and we all went to meet Ardel.

Used identical pillars to get back to present day Alusia arriving back in Dolman Moor.

25/11/94

Reached Widdershin with Llywellan and Ardel. Much rejoicing.

02/12/94

Attended wedding of Llywellan and Ardel. They intend to found a new dynasty.

05/12/94

Took ship back to Seagate.

12/12/94

Arrived back at the Guild.

Kings Quest #(so who's counting)

- Phaeton

31/09/94

I just had to front up to the Guild meeting today but felt it wasn't wise to do so openly. Instead Starflower added colour to my hair and I dressed in drab greys and browns. Nothing like my usual colour scheme. I also decided to let Starflower pick the adventure.

The adventure that Starflower selected was introduced by a stately gentleman who told us he wanted a party to search for a lost King in order to bring order back to the Emerald Island. They had overthrown their monarchy several hundred years ago because they had suffered from a line of bad kings, some brutal, others just incompetent. Now they wanted us to find the only good king they had - a King Llywelyn the Just. They had a prophecy to guide them and some of the symbology could be astronomical. This intrigued me as much as Starflower, and I was quite pleased at her choice.

Guild Security told us to go to meeting room 7A. Seemed appropriate, as there were eight walls. I kept my hood over my face as I carefully followed Starflower in.

So my fellow party members were:

Starflower She's a female elf, 6'4" tall with long auburn hair, green eyes, and wearing black plate armour as well as a shimmering silvery cloak. A dagger and her Bound Air tulwar were strapped on to her weapon belt around her waist, and a short bow was slung across her back. She's a Mind Mage and a rather good one.

Jhiselle Bernard - a young human female firemage. She is 5'3" tall with titian red hair on top of which was perched a large floppy hat with a red feather stuck in it. She was wearing black leather armour and I could see a white floral shirt under the jacket.

Stark - He's a human male fighter. Six foot tall wearing hard leather and a large number of weapons. He had a reputation for making some questionable decisions.

'Bob' Burrfoot - A male hobbit who was a beginning E&E and thief. Just under three foot tall wearing tacky yellow clothing and a well polished dagger.

Suratt - A male elf 6'2" tall wearing lots of blue with bits of white and black. I could also see a broadsword and maingauche. He told us he was a beginning air mage and healer.

Finally I introduced myself as Darci, a light mage and experienced Healer. I also had knowledge of the curse removal ritual.

Just as we finished signing the Guild contract (I ensured that I was last) our party employer walked in. He introduced himself as the Seneschal, Gwydion, and was a medium built human in stately robes. He re-iterated the story of the line of bad kings but there had been an revolution 300 years ago and the monarchy had been overthrown. But, after a while, the council they now have was falling apart and they were looking for a leader. Some monks found the following prophecy.

With six hands of Loring the Lost upon the Wheel of Time, at the moment Bazel mounts his chariot to do battle with the Seven Daughters, the Dead King shall rise to seize the Triad with hands that cannot grasp and eyes that cannot see. All wards broken and the mystic barriers pierced with mating swords, and while the sundered earth spews forth the dreg of centuries, a new order shall come upon the land.

It was believed that the prophecy referred to the only good King in the line, a Llywelyn the Just. Our mission was to find him. According to the monks, Bazel and the Seven Daughters referred to star groupings. There were no such groupings in our sky but it was quite possible they had differing ideas on the constellation groupings. I resolved to take my set of starcharts and compare them with their set.

The journey to the Kingdom of Pellham on the Emerald Islands would take us a week by ship. Usually it would take three weeks but their ships were designed for speed. The ship was called the 'Royal Edge' and was a three-masted vessel currently anchored in the middle of Seagate Harbour. Our pay was to be 10,000sp each.

After quite a bit of heated discussion we finally decided to have leadership by consensus but Starflower was to be the spokesman while Stark led in all things military. I became the scribe.

After leaving the meeting, I paid 1000sp for two 10pt Healing potions then had to report to the Fire College so Jhiselle could put rank 16 Protections from Magical Fire on us. Then I spent another 600sp for a Lesser Enchantment before obtaining the latest ephemeris for planetary positions.

That night, while the others were partying, I was busy doing Reading the Night Sky rituals.

01/10/94

I had spent the night in my room at the Guild, which I had arranged to be kept for me in my absence, but sneaked off before dawn and down to the harbour. This time I was in my usual regalia, white robes and rainbow cloak. The idea was to sail out just as the sun was rising. Once the others arrived, we were rowed out to the ship.

As we got closer we could see there were quite a few ballistae mounted on it and it was definitely built for speed. The figurehead was an outstretched sea eagle. It was definitely a well kept ship. All the metal fittings were clean and shiny.

We were met at the boarding ladder by the Captain then were shown to cabins. After breakfast I watched the view as the ship headed out. Then I spoke to the Captain about using their star charts. He agreed, as long as they didn't leave his cabin. I didn't see much of the others all the trip as I spent most of it secluded in the Captain's cabin studying the charts, in my cabin (we had one each) either studying or sleeping or on deck doing more Night Sky Readings using their charts as a guide.

I managed to get the following over the following nights:

About Bazel and the Seven Daughters

The heavens above move in their paths as they have done since the beginning of time.

What is the Triad

One to wear, One to protect, One to wield. All three to rule

About Llywelyn

Llywelyn the Just, Gem of all Kings. Twinned but not by birth or blood. Destined to rule again.

Dangers in going for the King

Those are not dead who sleeping lie, and with the passing of strange aeons even death may die.

07/10/94

That evening we reached Kingsford.

08/10/94

Spent most of the day on a riverboat going upriver to the capital city, also called Widdershin, where we were greeted by the mayor. We were also informed that there may be a connection between the 'Loring' in the prophecy and the nearby Loring Woods, a days journey up the Damrosil River. They recommended taking a boat to get there.

.2.

It was suggested that we look for the Wheel of Time in the woods which was described to us as a set of stone pillars, probably arranged in a circle. A henge Starflower called it. I suspect that it consists of six stones.

It was decided to obtain more information so Starflower and I headed off to the local library. There wasn't much information on the Wheel of Time, only that it was something that the ancient Druids had constructed long ago. Probably a place of power. There wasn't any information on where it is located in the woods or even much information on the woods itself either, besides the fact it was around 300 square miles in area, but I did manage to get hold of a map of the local area.

My next topic of research was Bazel itself. It turned out to be a slow moving, dim object in the sky that only appeared about once every thirty years or so. Curiously enough, it wasn't visible from Seagate which implied it wasn't very far away. This appearance was predicted to last a couple of weeks and Bazel was currently moving towards the Seven Daughters but wouldn't actually 'touch'. So I started some research into the future path of Bazel in order to calculate future conjunctions.

Starflower got bored with all the columns of figures and left saying she had other matters to take care of. Meanwhile Bob was in the local pub doing what hobbits usually do, that is, drinking. He was also talking to an old man who claimed to have been to the stone circle and had encountered a pink dragon, after crossing a stream by a fallen tree. However, as he pointed out, it had been a rather good wedding the night before. Jhiselle went looking for weapons and discovered an alchemist who was into weapons research. She obtained some standard greek fire grenades and a special device to deliver them to their target. It was a pole with a piece of string attached which the grenade was tied to.

Starflower was looking for an Enchanter and had discovered that there were two groups of mages in the area, the druids - all male, and the Ban-droi - all female.

I was fully intending to stay in the library and research late as I had several columns of co-ordinates to go through but Starflower turned up and insisted that I join the others for dinner. When I got there I discovered that the seneschal had joined us for dinner. Also there were two rather attractive human females. Starflower explained that one was an Enchanter and the other was an artist. Her job was to draw pictures of us which could then be used for Locates.

Dinner was excellent though, roast venison. Starflower suggested I should try the wine but I turned that down. As soon as possible, I left.

That night I went off to the observatory where I got more information on Bazel and also did two more astrology readings.

Where is the Dead King?

Beyond and behind our time and place. Through a jungle deep.

Who is the Dead King?

He who is called Just

09/10/94

I did an hours purification and carried on calculating co-ordinates while munching on the breakfast I had sent up. A bit later on we assembled by the river where a large river boat was waiting. We were going to have to paddle but someone unfurled the sail and Suratt succeeded in conjuring up a Mage Wind. Hence I took the opportunity to have a nap in the boat. The Mage Wind ran out just as we reached the side stream that led into the Woods so we started paddling. A short while later the stream began impassable so we decided it was time to get off. Nearby was the remains of an old road. Upon Starflower's suggestion, I put Shadowforms on everyone except herself (she didn't need it).

Suratt tried to speak with avians in order to ascertain the location of the Great Wheel but the spell went awry and everyone's weapons started glowing bright blue. Fascinating. Suratt was most pleased with the effect. I DAed my glowing dagger for cause of glow and got the answer 'Cursed Cantrip' Now that was one for the record books.

We continued north-east along the road. After a couple of hours we reached a stream with a fallen tree over it. If Bob's drunken friend had been correct, we were on the right trail. The tree was a large oak which appeared to have been there a while. I checked for wards but couldn't find any. Meanwhile Starflower put up an ESP and detected three hungry minds.

Jhiselle clambered onto the log and started fishing. Bob was going to follow but Stark pulled him off. So Bob clambered up a tree. At the same time, Starflower went undetectable and crossed the log. Jhiselle clambered off and prepared her bow. I decided to prepare a spell.

Starflower was most of the way across the log when 'all hell broke loose' as Suratt put it. Three of the 'trees' animated and began to attack. One was on the other side by Starflower while the other two were near us. I hurriedly backed off when one nearly hit me. Starflower tried speaking to the tree in order to ascertain the reason for the attack. It didn't respond to elvish but when she asked in Common it said 'All non-trees must die'.

My idea was to try and scare the tree off by using a Bolt of Starfire with the same colour as a Bolt

of Fire but the bolt failed to go off. Jhiselle's arrow didn't miss though. Bob scrambled down the tree he was in, next to one of the attacking trees while Stark and Starflower fought the other two. Just then we were enveloped by fire as Jhiselle blanketed the area with a fireball.

It was soon all over. Stark and Starflower quickly dispatched their two while Bob rushed around the third and struck it with daggers. I tried another bolt but something went wrong and my skin took on five clashing colours. I used my skin change talent to cancel that effect. By then the third one was also being turned to kindling.

We searched around the area and discovered a box under where one of the 'trees' were. Inside it were two potion bottles, a bone scroll case, three amethysts and some loose coin.

.3.

The Generic True Name of the fallen 'trees' was Ent. Now that was odd. From what I had heard, Ents were supposed to be benevolent keepers of the forest who usually gave out sage advice, not damage. Other stories referred to them as 'tree herders'. They don't usually attack unprovoked.

Just then I noticed that Starflower was acting rather strange. Her chitin plate armour was already scattered on the ground. I decided not to hang around to find out what she was up to, so I investigated the area behind the nearest bush. By the time I came out she had changed into her tight, formfitting, kraken skin armour and was preening herself in a mirror. Stark finally persuaded her that we had to move on. She wanted to camp here - and it was only just past lunchtime. So I stowed the cache and we continued on south.

By midafternoon we reached a fork in the path. The left path appeared to be the least used so we went down there. We soon found out why. Soon we discovered large web strands alongside the path and masses of webs in the foliage ahead. The strands were also sticky. Bob went Unseen.

Just then lightning bolts flashed out from the trees ahead and landed just in front of all of us - including Bob. Simultaneously we heard a voice in our mind 'LEAVE OUR AREA'. We left.

Back at the fork, Stark put a symbol of Danger on the left fork and we continued down the right, still to the south.

A couple of hours later we reached an area where the game was scarce and trees had been knocked over. We backed off a bit and set camp. Bob decided he was going to sleep in a hole so he started digging.

While dinner was being prepared, Starflower suddenly realised just what she had been doing for the last few hours. She dropped the mirror she had been staring into and her face flushed pink. She then disappeared amongst the trees to change her armour again while muttering under her breath in elvish. I continued plowing through the columns of co-ordinates for Bazel.

10/10/94

That morning, about 2am, a lightning storm suddenly gathered and the rain bucketed down. One bolt lanced down and neatly severed a branch from a nearby tree - the same branch that Starflower was sleeping on. I just huddled in my sleeping furs and tried to ignore it. Fortunately I was still

able to get in two hours of purification.

Finally the rain stopped just before breakfast. After breakfast we 'hit the trail'. Two hours later we reached another clearing as the path wound its way past a hill. Partway up, and still in the clearing, was the entrance to a cave.

Naturally most of the party wanted to inspect it. I wasn't too sure this was a good idea. I was right. Within seconds we were under attack by two wyverns. One hit me on the way past and the other one missed me and Jhiselle. Jhiselle managed to web one and it crashed to the ground. I was frantically trying to get the Shadowforms up on the rest of the party. Suratt hit the other as it flew by. It went for Stark then turned for another pass. Even with the Shadowform he was hit by the next pass. A viscous black fluid flowed down his armour. The downed wyvern soon ripped it's way out of the web. The other one came so close to Jhiselle that it nearly parted her hair. We then noticed that Jhiselle's hat was dangling from the wyvern's claws. Jhiselle was not pleased. She was even less pleased when the hat dropped off on the next pass and there was a large gash in it. Stark attacked the grounded wyvern while Starflower was hit badly by the other. Bob saw the poison tail penetrate so he dashed to where Starflower's pack was lying (he was Unseen) and left a Waters of Healing nearby. Starflower picked it up and drank it. Stark quickly dispatched the grounded wyvern and it toppled over. There was a screech of rage from the other one and it turned on Stark. Starflower's mental attack soon dealt to it.

Within minutes, it was all over. By now, many of us, me included had been taking refuge inside the cave. It was dark in there until I flooded it with a soft warm orange light. The rest of the party were busy skinning the dead wyverns. I lent my special scalpels to Jhiselle so she could remove the bits of wyvern she wanted more easily. I decided to examine the cave interior. I discovered several piles of bones, two potion bottles, a scroll case, a broadsword, seven gold coins, and four pieces of jewellery (pendant, tiara, armband, choker). The broadsword was magical with combat enhancement magic. No curses on the scroll case. None of the jewellery was magical.

Stark started smoking the wyvern meat. Bob wanted to give the hobbit bones a decent burial so I helped him sort them out.

After a while, we moved on. An hour or so later, we encountered a glen containing a ring of beech trees. Nearby was a small cairn of rocks. On Stark's instruction I cast Shadowforms all round before we entered the glen. The first thing we investigated was the cairn. On top was a shallow depression containing some liquid. I DAed the liquid and it turned out to be magical with an effect of 'befuddlement'.

It was decided to make camp here. Jhiselle and Starflower spotted the remains of a lyre. Nearby was one white, oddly proportioned glove with an 'L' monogrammed on it. The glove was magical but its aura was muddled. The lyre had one third missing and also had the same monogrammed 'L'.

.4.

11/10/95

Nothing happened all night then did three hours purification. I then sketched the trees before breakfast was ready. Bob memorised the cairn in case we needed him to locate it. One of the paths led back to the spider area so we took the other one.

We spent quite some time wandering down paths until Starflower reckoned she could hear some melodious chanting in elvish. We quietly proceeded down a side path in that direction with Suratt and Starflower in front. Soon we saw an old man, clad in thin bark and his dirty-grey hair and beard were tangled and unkempt. He was the one doing the chanting and the trees nearby were swaying in time to his motions. I DAed one of them and discovered they were under the effects of a ritual of animating trees. There must have been at least a hundred of them.

Just then we discovered we were surrounded by trees. "Beset I am again by fools. I know you're looking for the Wheel of Time" cackled the old man. "You will have as much success as that fool Loring. My true friends will aid me in your utter annihilation." He then laughed insanely. It was then we noticed that the trees were approaching us threateningly. The only way we could go was through a gap ahead. It opened to a small area on top of a 15 foot drop to a flat green plain below. Starflower jumped - and discovered that it was a bog and that she was being dragged down.

There wasn't much time before the trees would reach us so I figured I'd better save as many as I could. First I cast StarWings on Stark. At the same time he triggered a Wall of Bones in an effort to slow them down. I then put Wings on Suratt and suggested that he carry Bob. The Wall of Bones didn't manage to stop all the trees so Jhiselle put down a Wall of Fire inside the Wall of Bones. Meanwhile Stark and Suratt, carrying Bob, took off. Stark lowered a rope and managed to tow Starflower towards firmer ground. Just then the Wall of Bones went down and the Wall of Fire went out. Fortunately that had given Jhiselle and myself enough time to cast Fireflight and Starwings respectively and get away.

By now the others had reached the far shore of the bog. Suratt flew in low and dropped Bob. Unfortunately Bob landed very badly and managed to break his hip on a rock. We had no choice but to stop here. It took sixteen hours before Bob's hip was repaired. Meanwhile Stark and Jhiselle explored the area. Stark found the continuation of the path. We decided to camp here for a while.

12/10/95

We continued on, after I cast Shadowforms on us all. Suratt spoke to a bird and discovered that there is a large feathery thing, that eats birds, in the middle of a large stone circle. So we headed off down the trail. When we figured we were getting close we stopped and Starflower fed us a special brew that made us feel more alert and stronger.

We rounded a corner and saw tall stone shapes A white glow emanated from the centre of the circle. Starflower went undetectable while I cast a Blending on myself. Bob attempted to do a Wizard's Eye but he backfired causing an extra eye to grow on his forehead. After Starflower linked us all by Mind Speech we headed towards the clearing. Starflower picked up two minds and we soon discovered what they were. One was a griffon while the other was a mantichore. Both had lightning arcing around them.

The combat opened with the mantichore firing tail spikes at Stark and Jhiselle. At the same time six spears of lightning lanced from the sky and struck each one of us. Air magics for sure but not something the Guild mages can do. Call Lightning I reckon. Stark attacked the mantichore but got zapped by the 'lightning shield' (another new Air spell). The shield went down and Stark managed to deal a stunning blow. I followed up with a bright green Bolt of Starfire. Stark hit the mantichore twice more and it dropped. Meanwhile Jhiselle fireballed the griffon while Starflower mental attacked it. It collapsed as well. Stark fashioned some iron bands and placed them around the

griffon's legs.

Inside the stone circle was a stone disk on a block. In the centre of the disk a glowing gem was supported by a thin stone column. Beams of light from the crystal struck the disk at two distinct points. It looked like refracted sunlight. While the others searched the area I attempted to see if the beams were moving around the disk but I couldn't detect any shift.

Soon the others had found two separate nests nearby. In total, the treasure haul came to a scroll, morning star, hobbit sized scale armour, 900sp, 60gp. The morning star was magical with the type being enhancement.

We attempted to question the griffon but it remained stubborn. Just then the griffon cried out 'Master. Save your servant'. It suddenly disappeared.

We went back to examining the disk. It was magical with the nature being 'measurement'. The same was true of the crystal. Finally someone suggested measuring the distance between the beams with the glove. As we suspected, the distance was exactly six glove spans. We somehow knew that this was the right time for the prophecy to be fulfilled.

There being no other option, we decided to return to town to see if there was any further information. On the way we collected the wyvern skin.

16/10/95

We arrived back and got the treasure examined. The potions were: Rainbow hues, Philtre of beauty, Fireproofing and Undead control. The scrolls were Adhesion, Protection from Undead and Protection from Cold. The glove's magic was an equal mix of preservation and measurement.

Also we were told that the druids had matched the phrase 'the mystic barriers pierced with mating swords' with keys and locks. A Baron Krell, also known as the Robber Baron, had the keys and was willing to sell them for the sum of 10.000sp for the set of nine keys. Each key was a foot long and three were gold, three of silver and three were iron. The locks could be in a royal tomb. Our job was to go and get the keys.

For some reason the Baron wanted us to arrive on the date of the new moon. A later astrology reading revealed that the reason for that was 'a whim'. This meant that we had ten days to spare before we needed to be there.

.5.

28/10/95

It was time to depart. It was decided to go on horses and our hosts attempted to find horses that would match our skill in riding. Naturally I ended up with a horse that was rather old and basically needed little guidance from the rider. All I had to do was to hang on - once I got on. The first attempt, I ended up on the ground on the opposite side.

We rode off. The journey today was uneventful. The only thing mildly dangerous was the bear we saw at lunchtime.

Once dusk appeared, we stopped to camp. During the night Bob was attacked by a ferret. A while later he spotted a heat source in a bush so he enthusiastically pruned it gaining the title 'Bob - bush killer'.

29/10/95

That morning I did three hours purification then recast the Shadowforms on all who needed it. After breakfast we rode on. A while later we spotted another party of horsemen, dressed in black, a mile ahead and travelling in the same direction we were. We decided to keep our distance.

A few hours later we were in a mountain pass. Suddenly, ahead of us, there was a rockslide which skittered Starflower's horse. We wondered if the rockslide had been deliberately set to delay us so I checked the rocks for magic. I didn't find any but one of the rocks DAed as Formally Living with a Generic True Name of 'Lunchis Valiumus'. I put the rock in my backpack to show Valium when we returned to the Guild. Just then, up ahead, Stark spotted a ranger trap - a tripwire connected to a pile of rocks. We bypassed that and continued on.

The road continued up into the mountains and soon we spotted Krell's manor high up. Around the bend we encountered a fortified gatehouse. A guard stepped forwards and wanted to know our business. Once we explained our mission we were let through onto the path leading up to the manor house. It was a two story, well fortified, stone building.

Upon arrival we were met by Carruthers, Baron Krell's advisor. He informed us that the Baron did not wish to be disturbed and we were to wait in the courtyard where refreshments would be served. So that was what we did.

Carruthers arrived to tell us that the Baron would see us now. We were led into a large decorated hall where the Baron was waiting at the head of a large table. After introductory greetings we got down to business. The Baron told us that he had already sold the keys to a group of five adventurers who had already come through. However he reckoned it would be 'improper' to divulge any other information. So Stark slipped over 100sp. Krell then told us that they had headed out the back way, an hour ago, looking for a wyvern cave that he had told them about. He admitted that they had paid him to delay us. He also admitted that there wasn't a wyvern cave.

We decided to follow the other group and get the keys back. So we were conducted out to the back entrance where our horses were waiting. The back entrance led into a tunnel so we continued down it cautiously. We could see a light but it wasn't the light at the other end. From what we could make out it was a small glowing orb which radiated strongly in the heat range.

As I 'reached' out to DA it for further information it rapidly expanded into a fireball engulfing and damaging all of us. Once it faded we could see the door at the end of the tunnel and when it was opened we were back in daylight. Stark could see foot tracks ahead so we carried on.

Suddenly a spiked wall sprung up and smacked into Starflower. Simultaneously two scythes emerged from either side of the path and hit Suratt and Bob. I detected Animation magic on the mantrap. Even more cautiously we continued on.

A short while later, Stark spotted a tripwire ahead. At that moment Starflower detected a mind behind us. Then an advancing white mist appeared behind us. As I recognised it as a Necromantic Noxious Vapours, Suratt cast a Wind Whistle to blow the cloud away. We were going to deal with the owner of the mind but it had rapidly left. As I cast a Walking Unseen on Stark and myself, Starflower went undetectable. There was a pit trap just beyond the trip wire so Jhiselle threw a stone at it to see what would happen. Three logs swung past over the pit - designed to knock victims in. Spikes swung out from the bottom and the sides of the pit. We carried on.

After another half hour or so there was another small rockslide just ahead of us. Abruptly Starflower called in our minds, "Ambush!". Simultaneously two arrows leapt at us, one hitting Stark. We were momentarily enveloped by fire. Stark was hit by a Bolt of Starfire. Suratt and Bob were Slowed. We then spotted our assailants, on the hill above the rocks. Two waited closer, their weapons readied. By their movements, they were all quickened. This did not look good.

.6.

Starflower had slipped into the bush (she had already made herself undetectable) and mindspoke one letter to us, the letter Q. Time not to resist as she triggered quickness on us. Now things were a little more even. The fighter in plate confronted Stark, as the other began to cast a spell. Stark and Starflower argued a moment and then Starflower set off up the hill, ordered to take out the mages. She'd guessed that all except the fire mage had failed to detect her. Then she almost stumbled as fire struck her and somehow took some of her agility. Malignant flames, I said to myself. Mana impacted, and the hobbit started to run. A fear spell? I readied a Bolt of Starfire. Then Stark fell, victim to a spell of Sleep. Things were looking bad.

The fighter stepped over Stark and approached Jhiselle and I. Suratt slipped around, hoping to wake Stark. Jhiselle had succeeded in her counterspell, and their fire mage suddenly found that the mana wasn't there for him anymore. And looked even more surprised when my Bolt of Starfire struck. Mainly because I'd been trying for fiery red and succeeded in achieving jet black. Must remember that one next time I find myself fighting in the dark. By now Starflower had reached the top of the hill. I heard her mental exultation as the first mage fell to her blades and shuddered. The fighter swept his sword around striking both Jhiselle and I. I decided to play dead and slipped to the ground. Starflower waded towards the fire mage as Suratt succeeded in waking Stark. Stark found himself in combat immediately, this time with the fighter-mage. The latter didn't last long. The fire mage cast something at Starflower, and looked astounded and furious as she didn't turn into a pile of ash. She struck at the third mage and the fire mage simultaneously. The former stood stunned as her invisible blade slashed him viciously, and she concentrated her attentions on the fire mage. Meanwhile, I tried to trip the fighter, and failed miserably. Jhiselle fended him off, and then the massive plate-armoured body suddenly fell on top of me. Later I gathered that Bob had managed to successfully cast a sleep spell. Just at the right moment too. Stark came over to restrain the fighter, while Jhiselle headed up the hill. By now the military scientists had decided that we should attempt to take as many as possible of those who remained alive. She managed to get in one blow on the celestial mage, just as Starflower went for a knockout blow on the fire mage she had just stunned. And then it was all over as abruptly as it had begun.

"They're all dead," mind-called Starflower. "But I don't think I did it..." She bent over the fallen fire mage. "Poison," she mind-spoke. "In a tooth... something very very nasty." I checked the fighter and confirmed her guess. The stuff had a intensely black aura, and I read the name of it, "Al-Akana". Starflower looked thoughtful for a moment and then stated that she had heard of it in an obscure reference in a herbaria. Grows only in high mana areas in tropical jungles, and is instantly fatal.

We searched the bodies and discovered the following: A ring, four scrolls, a necklace, magical plate mail, a magical two handed scabbard, and a bag containing heavy metal objects. The ring had an aura I couldn't make out, the scrolls were identified (with Jhiselle's help) as maze, shadowwalk, delayed blast fireball, and fireball. The necklace was non-magical. Bob examined the bag and reckoned that there was a scythe blade in the bag. Curious though. Those things are usually three

feet wide. So we opened the bag. Inside was three gold keys, three silver, but only two iron. One was missing. I checked the aura on the keys. The age checked out, nature of magic opening, and appeared to be multi-colleged. It didn't seem to be a false aura.

Starflower stepped up and did a Healing spell on me. The next thing I decided to do was carefully remove the poison teeth from the two previously dead bodies. The first one I managed to break but the second one was retrieved intact. Jhiselle wanted to analyse the poison but managed to break the tooth while storing it in a specimen container.

Now we had to locate the missing key. It was deeply overcast at the moment but Suratt reckoned it would clear briefly at night. So we decided to camp nearby. As a safety precaution Stark and Bob reset the traps. That night the sky did clear. So I asked the question 'How may I find the last key in the set'. The answer I got was 'The House of the Crimson Panther holds what you seek.' That implied Baron Krell as there was a crimson panther on his coat of arms. I then asked Bob to memorise the keys for potential Locates.

30/10/95

We carried on up the path and soon came to the point where it rejoined the main path. Tracks indicated another person and a group of horses had been there until twelve hours ago before going south. I examined the aura of the two iron keys and determined they were exactly identical so got Bob to try a Locate for the third. The arrow pointed north - back towards the Baron's place. So that was where we decided to go.

Once we got there, Starflower did a MindSpeech and a Telepathy. This time she succeeded in getting Carruthers and got the impression he was multi-colleged and he had first hand knowledge of Penjarre - even though my DA indicated he was a 60 year old human male. Baron Krell didn't have the key but it was nearby. He also knew why we were here. Stark wanted to get on with business but Krell insisted we have lunch first which I agreed with. As I pointed out, the 214th Rule of Acquisition stated 'Never begin a negotiation on an empty stomach'. So we had lunch. Even the hobbit was full. And to my surprise, the wine was pleasant to the taste (I didn't want to insult the Baron by refusing the wine he offered). Also, after noticing the hobbit's stuffed condition, I mentally spoke to Starflower 'After dinner mint?'. To our surprise Krell spoke up saying 'So you know about that one too.' Didn't think it was possible to eavesdrop on a Mind Speech.

Finally we got down to business. It was relatively easy, even with my Merchant Prince background and my memories of my father doing 'business' dealings. Soon Baron Krell produced the key and I authenticated it against the other two. The others had failed to obey the 216th Rule of Acquisition. 'Always know what you are buying'. The bargaining was a little sticky at one point though as Bob insulted the Baron's integrity - the number one sin in negotiation. Fortunately we smoothed it over quickly and stuffed the hobbit with more cream buns. He fell asleep.

Krell wanted the money before he would hand over the key. Since we had been contracted to do that, I agreed. So, with the ninth key we left, with his assurance that none of his men would hassle us on the way back. Three days later we were back at Widdershin.

02/11/95

We reported to the Council. They told us that while the King's burial entourage was transporting the body over rapids, the wagon slipped and the chest containing the Regalia was swept

downstream and lost. The Regalia consisted of a crowned helm, a sceptre, and a baldric. Fifty years ago, an orc turned up with the sceptre and traded it for food for his tribe. No one recognised it until a sage saw it. Now we were asked to journey to the Caves of Berta and retrieve the other two items. A frontal assault was not recommended as there were too many orcs. Instead we had to do a quick in-out mission.

The items we brought back were divinated. The ring adds ten points to defense and resistance but renders any other similar item only half as effective. The sword added 2 to the base change and the armour was +1. Also all the scroll spells were written at Rank 12.

.7.

03/11/95

We examined the sceptre. It was decorated with the appropriate royal symbols and was magical, the nature of which was Leadership. There was quite a bit of discussion upon how we were going to acquire the other two items from the orcs. I was all for bargaining but the others didn't think that was going to work.

I was somehow hoping that the orcs would not know the true value of what they had but when I asked the stars that question, I got the reply 'The items you seek are their prize possessions'. So much for that idea. It looks like we were going to have to steal them. To assist in that, it was finally decided that Jhiselle, being a reasonably ranked Alchemist, would organise the making of a couple of DA potions, with the assistance of a local Namer who had it at Rank 16. At the same time Starflower began brewing a batch of herbalist wolf repellents - just in case. Both lots were going to take two days. Jhiselle's two mana tears were loaded with a ShadowWalking in one and a Wizard's Eye in the other. Bob created a series of marker stones for future Locates.

06/11/95

That morning we were finally ready to leave. The orc's area was further up the Damrosil River than the junction leading to Loring's Wood so we decided to go by boat. In case we ended up having to fly out we also hired someone to row the boat.

08/11/95

It had been a long trip upriver. That afternoon we spotted a cave in the slope above us. A path wound down to the river where we could see a landing area with boats. Starflower ranged around with Telepathy and detected an orc thinking 'putting out the garbage' thoughts.

After rounding a bend we spotted three more caves. The one we had seen previously looked unused but these ones more fortified and had lots of activity nearby. We estimated about seventy orcs so we went back to alongside the first cave and crossed the river there - out of their sight. Once we were ashore we could just see a faint trail leading off from the one to the first two caves. It headed off around the back of the hill and appeared to be very little used. Much of it was covered in underbrush. So Starflower and Bob scouted up it. From what they could tell, this trail hadn't been used in years. It finally led them to a pile of rocks by a rock wall. A pile of boulders hid the entrance to a fifth cave. Bob detected a trap rigged to the boulders to collapse them if someone tried to enter the cave. Between the two of them they were able to disarm it easily.

The rest of us joined them once it was safe so Stark and Starflower managed to get the boulder

out of the way of the cave entrance so we could squeeze in. Once inside it was clearly evident that no-one had been in here for a long time as there were no tracks in the soft dirt floor - apart from the ones we left. Jhiselle began smearing them as we proceeded. Also it was decided that Starflower would drink one of the DA potions so that there would be a backup to my DA.

Starflower was in the lead. A short while later her foot caught on something. At the same time a net, containing several rusty pieces of metal, fell on top of her making a very loud noise.

We waited nervously for the orc attack. I cast Witchsights on Jhiselle, Bob and myself while Starflower extricated herself from the pile. She reckoned the orcs had been alerted but it was more on the lines of 'What the heck was that?'. She soon came to the conclusion that they had forgotten about this trap, and cave, completely. We continued on.

A short while later, Bob spotted a pressure plate covering a pit so we went around it. Soon we noticed that the cave was getting damp. Rounding a bend our passage was blocked by a pool of water. Over the pool was a suspension bridge with at least thirty bells attached along the length. The bridge looked old and rickety but it could hold us - one at a time. Jhiselle, very carefully, removed each bell by burning it off with pyrokinesis. Once over the bridge we became aware of a dim light ahead.

Soon we reached a portcullis barring our way. Two ropes hung on either side but Bob reckoned they had nothing to do with the portcullis. The other side was a tunnel, continuing on to what we suspected was the main orc complex. Currently the tunnel was unoccupied but we could smell roasting meat. The portcullis was made out of ironwood so Jhiselle began heating it up so that it was easier for Starflower to cut through it with her Bound Air tulwar. Now the next trick was going to be sneaking through the orc complex.

.8.

Starflower was still sensing that the orcs were in a state of readiness so she suggested that we wait for four hours in the hope that they'd get bored. I put a Shadowform on Stark followed by Witchsights on Stark & Jhiselle. While we waited to regain our fatigue, Stark kept watch.

The four hours went past without incident. Bob dropped the first marker stone in the corridor between the portcullis and the passage coming in from Cave A. However the orcs up ahead, behind a pile of crates, were still on alert. Apparently they were all rather afraid of their boss's wrath. So we sneaked down the passage towards the room where the orcs were waiting.

We reached the entrance. Even though Starflower was Indetectable, she believed a couple of them had seen her. Stark was Indetectable as well but most of them still managed to see him. Also they were thinking about some sort of trap that 'was going to deal to us'. One of them then rushed off to tell 'da Boss' that there were intruders. Starflower tried to Mental Attack the messenger but failed.

In order to prevent any reinforcements from coming up a nearby side corridor and attacking from the rear, Jhiselle laid down a Wall of Fire. I put down a Wall of Starfire on our side. Jhiselle then fireballed the net trap in the ceiling ahead. The net caught on fire and fell between us and the orcs. As it hit the ground, Stark and Starflower rushed into the attack. Jhiselle and Bob were close behind. I hung back and started preparing another Wall of StarLight in case the orcs retreated or more turned up.

As Stark struck a mighty blow, Jhiselle attempted to throw a piece of burning net at the orcs but stumbled. Bob tried to get into combat as well by squeezing past Starflower.

After a short while, the orcs were being cut down. One turned and tried to run but I dropped a Wall of Starlight in front of him. He hit the Wall and bounced off - quivering. Starflower knocked him unconscious. Jhiselle charged the last orc with her sabre but managed to impale it in a crate. So it was left to Stark to finish it off.

Within minutes, all the orcs save one were dead. Starflower and Stark attempted to interrogate the remaining orc, but learned nothing. According to Starflower the creature was barely sentient. Stark dealt it a coup de grace and that was that. Nothing was found so we decided to carry on, after Bob left the second marker stone.

We carried Bob over and past the Wall of Starlight - I had only made it four foot high - and continued down the passage. Soon we reached a four way intersection. We left marker pebble #3 there.

Starflower still had the effects of the Detect Aura potion so she was in front, scanning for wards. She found one - nature of magic being Damage so I checked the area to find out what the spell was. The answer was Hellfire. I wanted Jhiselle to lay down a Fire Counter Special over the area, in case it was the Fire College version, but Stark decided to trigger it anyway, reasoning that our Protections from Magical Fire would protect us. Not quite as it turned out. I gave Bob one of my ten point Healing potions to Heal the accumulated damage he had taken. The rest of us were reasonably ok.

Starflower had previously done a Telepathy sweep in order to scan the complex for the general layout - as ascertained by the minds in the area. From that, we now concluded that we were near the centre of the complex and this seemed the ideal spot for someone to trigger the Wizard's Eye in the mana tear. Guess who? The female elf with the highest perception in the party, that's who.

She spotted the orc leader (who was larger than normal - apparently he was part ogre), the shaman, four orcs with crossbows and two more larger orcs (one of which was similar enough to the chief to be his twin, and was Death aspected), and four wolf like creatures (hyenadons we later found out) in a nearby room. More orcs and a large bear were clustered in a defensive position in a large room to the east. She found the treasury room and saw what might be the helm we sought. No sign of the baldric, but she then realised that might be just what the orc leader had been wearing. Also in the treasury were three fine looking swords and some armour.

She then tried to Mental Attack the shaman and the orc chief. No such luck though as both spells bounced. That led her to the conclusion that they were under the effect of Mind Cloak potions. So she cast a Control spell on one of the hyenadons.

Jhiselle ran a Wall of Fire diagonally down the corridor outside the room in order to block off any escape. At the sound of the Wall going up the shaman began hunting through his bag. Two of the orcs fired their crossbows which thudded against the opposite wall. Some black stuff dripped off the bolts. Meanwhile the shaman retrieved a bottle. Starflower got the hyenadon to attack the shaman at that point but the orc chief quickly dispatched it.

Starflower then triggered a Quickness. I flooded the room with Light in the hope that they would be dazzled. Jhiselle threw in a grenado, managing to burn an orc. Meanwhile the shaman threw

the bottle into the corridor. When it broke, thick smoke filled the corridor. Stark ducked and started rolling into the room just as the other two crossbows thudded into the opposite wall.

The shaman started chanting. In an attempt to distract him I fired in a Bolt of Starfire. Something was hit (turned out to be the chief) but the shaman continued chanting. As he finished his spell Starflower detected a demonic presence appearing.

Pandemonium broke out in that room. It took only a split second for the enraged demon to rend the orcs into several pieces and depart with their heads. It was fortunate that Stark hadn't got through the door yet. The whole room was a bloodbath. Bits of orc were all over the place. It was really, really messy. I let the others, with the stronger stomachs, go into the room. Guess that's the result when a Wiccan backfires a Call Master.

Soon the others return with the items in that room - a staff, the baldric and a girdle. We then moved to the treasure room and collected what was there i.e. a helm, armour and three fine swords. In the shaman's quarters was the royal helm, which had been being used as a goblet! Several empty potion bottles had held Mind Cloak potions.

We encountered no resistance on the way out and soon discovered the rest of the orcs had fled the complex in fear of the demon. Whether this was going to be a permanent or temporary condition, we didn't know but we weren't planning on hanging around to find out.

.9.

So we headed back to Widdershin, taking a day and a half to return.

10/11/95

The first thing we took care of was to get the treasure divinated. The staff had a gem on the end. When broken, it would summon a controlled earth elemental. The helm allowed the wearer to move freely underwater, see more clearly and allow you to breath. The girdle gave extra strength. The chain armour and the three swords were non-magical and the tulwar was the only one that was silvered.

The next thing we had to do was retrieve a special Elixir of Life to resurrect the dead king. Since he had been dead for over three hundred years, this stuff had to be rather potent. The clue to it's whereabouts was given in an old song which indicated it was in the 'Finger of the Good'. (The astrology reading I took that night gave me exactly the same answer). It also mentioned the powerful wizard who had created it, by the name of Caer. When last heard of he had been residing in a mountain called Dagdar's Thumb. To get there we would have to go up the river Lugh which went around the mountain. It was estimated that it would take three days by boat.

It was felt that we were running out of time as the conjunction of Bazel and the Seven Sisters would only last another week or so. So we prepared to leave as soon as we could. A Slowness was put in one mana tear while a Quickness was placed in the other.

11/11/95

We left early the next morning. Nothing unusual happened on the way up. I spent most of the trip sketching trees.

13/11/95

Finally we reached Caernstown for re-provisioning. A peddler there warned us that the stretch of river up-river alternated between rapids and calm patches. However he did reassure us that the rapids were navigatable. There was a portage track along the river but there was a good chance of hill giant attack if we took it. We decided to risk the river. I decided to rig a safety line to the boat just in case.

We got through the first set of rapids without a problem and reached a large, calm, pool. A large patch of weeds in the middle of the pool was just that - a patch of weeds.

Starflower detected minds in the pool. Just then I had a sudden compulsion to go for a swim. Starflower realised what was happening and sat on me. It was confirmed when a bunch of feminine heads broke the surface of the water. Nixies! I had heard stories of these creatures whose favourite pastime was to lure unsuspecting men to a watery death. But even armed with that knowledge I was still under some sort of compulsion. Surely some sort of magical charm.

A few of them swam closer to the boat and implored us to join them. Starflower directed her telepathy at their minds and concluded with some surprise that they had only wanted to play. Jhiselle was keen but told them that we were on an urgent mission but we were planning on coming back this way and could join them then. They were most enthusiastic about that and said that they would tell their friends.

We continued on up the river. Soon, at nightfall, we stopped and camped. Someone went fishing and caught quite a lot of trout. I suspect nixie involvement.

14/11/95

We continued up the river. Finally we reached the bottom of the mountain and found a beach to leave the boat. Then we roped ourselves together and started climbing. I was at the back. It took quite a while but soon we neared the top. Up here, it was icy cold. The rocks were slick with frost.

Near the top was a snow covered ledge. On this ledge, waiting for us were four dire-wolves. Behind them was a humanoid figure wearing an eye-patch. Further back was a cave entrance and we could see a flickering glow coming from within. They just stood there waiting as we climbed on to the ledge. Then the wolves attacked. Simultaneously the man lifted his eyepatch and, from that eye, blasted Stark with cold.

Starflower was savaged badly by a wolf, but that only seemed to anger her, and she returned the blow with interest. Stark managed to propel another one over the cliff. My Bolt of Starfire fizzled while Jhiselle was giving, and getting damage. Starflower was the next person to get hit by the ice-mage's cold spell but that didn't stop her from killing the wolf attacking her. Meanwhile Stark deftly slid another one over the edge. Bob tried throwing rocks at the icemage in order to distract him.

While Jhiselle and Starflower fought off the last wolf, Stark charged the icemage. Starflower joined him a bit later. Between the two of them he didn't stand a chance. Stark searched the icemage, but the only thing of interest was a curious map.

Apart from the burning fire, the two most prominent things in the cave was a full length mirror

and a hanging fur. Again it was Stark who found the map, similar to the first one, behind it - much to Bob's annoyance. He hadn't seen it there. Neither the mirror or the fur were magical but the mirror itself was a door behind which was a corridor where the floor, ceiling and walls were all made of continuous mirror surfaces. According to their aura they were enchanted with a permanent Unbreakability. Bob tried to hit one but his sword just bounced. Instead the shock of impact was transmitted back at him.

I examined the maps that Stark had found and concluded that they were part of the same map but one was a mirror image of the other. It was also evident, as we explored, that they mapped the mirror corridor maze that we were now in. As we traversed one passage, part of the mirror wall broke alongside and a gargoyle stepped out of the cavity revealed. Jhiselle gave it a mighty blow, stunning it, then Starflower finished it off.

Several gargoyles later, we finally reached the other end. This proved to be a room with a large boulder in the middle. It appeared to have facial features on it. As we got closer the eyes opened and it spoke to us.

It congratulated us for mastering the challenges of Caer and told us that we could get the life giving elixir we sought if we answered three riddles correctly. They were:

What is deaf, dumb, and blind and always tells the truth.

- A mirror (Easy. The room was full of them)

What is always in front of you but cannot be seen

- The future (unless you're a Mind Mage with precognition)

What does man love more than life, hate more than death or mortal strife, that which contented men desire, the poor have, the rich require, the miser spends, the spendthrift saves, and all men carry to their graves.

- Nothing (that one nearly had us stumped until Starflower mused aloud "what does a miser spend? Nothing..." and realised she had the answer.)

After answering the riddles correctly the rock told us to collect the sweat that was forming on it. I did so using the empty potion bottles. It then told us that we didn't need to make our way back but would send us directly back to where we had left the boats. Before anyone could protest, we were teleported back to the beach.

Once there we started making our way downriver.

A short while later we arrived at the pool with the nixies - and there were more of them this time and they all wanted to play. The party decided to join in.

.10.

17/11/95

Two days later we arrived at Widdershin. While we had gone, the sages had managed to obtain the Incants of Ishcabeble, contained on three scrolls. We would require these to get in the tomb. So our next stop was to be the tomb itself located in Dolmen Moor. To get there we were to journey up the Damrosil River until we reached the Fens of Tavoral. From there we would take the Kingsway (an old road) which would take us to the tombs. There were several burial mounds

there so we had to locate the one containing Llywelyn. The mana tears were recharged with a Quickness and a Slowness.

So we headed up in the boat. Bob was fishing over the side. Suddenly something jerked the line hard and pulled him over the side. Turned out to be the largest catfish any of us had seen. After we hauled him out he tried to spear the fish but it got away.

20/11/95

The river expanded into the fens and we made our way cautiously into it. A little while later we thought we could hear someone singing. It was a male voice. Bob remarked he was able to make out the name 'Llywelyn'. Starflower reached out with her telepathy and said the voice belonged to an ancient male human. As we rounded a knoll we saw the singer. It was a cleanshaven old man with threadbare purple clothing and long silvery unkempt hair. He was singing and playing a lute of exquisite tone and workmanship. A redskinned hand was sticking out of the water and shaking a tambourine. Nearby was floating a blue cap with a yellow feather.

We floated by as he sang the royal lineage. Bob and Jhiselle seemed mesmerised by the song. Then, as he started to repeat the song, imps started popping out of the water. We decided that now would be a good time to leave.

That night Starflower, with Jhiselle's help, recited the song while I wrote it down. It told of the entire lineage of the Kings of Pellham and their fates. The song also indicated that the singer was Loring himself, fated to recite the lineage forever.

It went as follows:

I sing for you now the lineage of kings,
Of Pellham's mighty and doddering
Fools that japed and when all were done
Proved worthless at best, all save one.

Alendus Crebus, first of all the kings,
First of nine by his conquerings.
Ciron the Hearty, lover of ale,
Son of Crebus, he drinks in death still.

Fenton the Foolish, moron well named,
Glutton of mutton, third fool of the famed.
Heimwell the Haughty, brother of Ciron,
The fourth he became by the slaying of Fenton.

Pelcob the Pious, bastard of Fenton,
First built the temple, fifth one gone in.
Voltar the Victorious, paver of Kingsway,
Grandson of Crebus, so they all say.

Royberno the Bloody, bastard of Voltar,
Grim destroyer of clansmen, seventh so far.
Tornum the Terrible, tormentor of souls,
Grim as his father, may eight bake in coals.

Lascron the Last, ninth of the nine,
Father to no man, last of the line.
Karnac the Cairnlord, usurper maligned,
Lascron's cousin, moved the first nine.

Agneus Expende, true lover of horses,
Sibling of Karnac, nine bairns were of course his.
Loring the Lost, foul slayer of eight,
Third of the kings but a victim of fate.

Loring the Lost, known for his songs,
Plays minstrel to devils, as cursed by his wrongs.
Marcus the Marshal, of this line is fourth,
Four stones mark is cairn, pink ones of course.

Suradel the Scholar, first of the Witchkings,
Son of the bard who foresaw many things.
Argunth Elf-friend, of this line is sixth,
Feared slayer of orc hosts whom none trifled with.

Rikar the Roarer, seventh of seven,
Slain young in battle, first one to heaven.
Lightmal the Dark, first of his line,
Cousin of Rikar, awake for all time.

Dalenial the Light, Black Lightmal's spawn,
Cursed by his father, he's withered and gone.
Llywelyn the Just, slain at his dinner,
Gem of all kings, he was no sinner.

Logar the Loved, a shepherd in youth,
Llywelyn's son grew ancient in truth.
Damocles the Wizard, grandson of Llywelyn,
Second Witchking, for whom time was the villain.

Rotkoddam the Strong, sixth of the line,
Lead his troops into battle, lead from behind.
Claudius the Cautious, Rot's son and heir,
Died in his sleep but none seemed to care.

Dacquiri the Witchking, eighth of the nine,
Slew Ishcabeble, died the same time.
Kolm the Quick, first of the four,
Fought without weapons, died at the door.

Cemor the Valiant, kept up the bard's quest,
Tried as he might, but came in second best.
Dwarven Blaine Shortshanks for Cemor went on,
Third quester and king was merely Time's pawn.

Alendus the Second, rogue liar and cheat,
Destroyed the kingdom that lies at our feet.
Two hundred years have passed us hence,
And foolish rhymes sometimes make sense.

That is the lineage of Pelham's kings,
Fools, knaves and charlatans, blackguards and thieves.
But the price of the telling's an awful demand.
Hark to the wage the fiddler commands!

For now it is finished, my song is complete,
Your binding has ended, but you must be fleet,
For the third time you hear the name of me,
The third time is when they will come for thee.

21/11/95

We finally reached the Kingsway and disembarked from the boat. We then proceeded down the road and reached Dolmen Moor about two/three hours before dusk. We could see the mounds ahead but there was no discernable pattern from ground level so I offered to do an aerial reconnaissance on StarWings. Jhiselle asked me to look for a good campsite as well. We had come to the conclusion that messing with burial mounds was one thing best left until the morning sun. I communicated the locations of each mound, via MindSpeech, to Starflower who drew the pattern. There seemed to be three roughly concentric rings, the inner of nine, the next of seven, and the outer of nine. In the centre was some sort of temple.

Soon we found a place to camp and settled down for the night. The mist settled down and it seemed a good night to tell tall tales and ghost stories.

22/11/95

It was still misty at sunrise and I was able to only get one hours purification. From the lineage we concluded that Llywelyn's tomb was one of the outer circle so we decided to check each one for clues. As the mist lifted we made our way to the mounds. When we got near we could see fresh tracks on the ground. They appeared to be skeletal hoofprints. I detected some residual archaic magic which seemed to be some sort of Undead Control.

We set off in a clockwise direction on Starflower's insistence, looking for a barrow bearing any symbol that appeared to represent justice. The first and second tombs weren't of interest but the third one had the door knocked down and contained a Rank 30 magical Darkness. The symbols around the doorway had worn off. The next mound also had the door knocked off but we could see a coffin inside.

As I examined the door for magic I suddenly got the feeling that throwing dust located in the coffin would destroy the spectre lurking in the previous tomb. I also got a feeling that the occupant of this tomb was strong in the Light side of magic. It had to be Dalenial's. We already knew from the Lineage that his father, Lightmal, was strong in the Dark. Probably the father was the spectre - and his son wanted justice beyond the grave, or revenge.

After ascertaining that the area in the tomb was safe, we entered and examined the coffin. All that was inside was a small amount of fine dust. I checked its aura and confirmed that it had anti-

spectre properties, so I gathered it up in a small bowl.

Starflower did a Limited Precognition to determine what would be the effect of throwing the dust into the Darkness. All she saw was a blinding flash of light. So I did a Resistance to Light on myself. While the others averted their eyes I threw the dust into the darkness. There was a brilliant flash of light, and I was blinded in spite of my spell.

When my vision cleared the darkness was gone. Instead the tomb was lit by a bright light and we could see that it was empty. I threw in a Light of my own just for good measure. There was no sign of the spectre causing Starflower to offer the comment, "Well, I suppose that's one way for a spectre to bite the dust".

From the Lineage, the next tomb over from the one with the dust logically had to be Llywelyn's. So we went over there. Sure enough there were symbols of justice on the door. Starflower detected something sentient within - something evil. One major undead mind with four more lesser minds linked to it. I tried to read the aura of the symbols, but it was too strong for my senses. Had to be some sort of warding magic. Then I looked at the Incants. Now they seemed to be more understandable. That indicated that now was the right time to use them.

While I studied them, Starflower made tea. Then I cast a Witchsight spell on Stark, Jhiselle, and myself before reading the Incants. It took ten minutes to recite all three scrolls but once it was done, the magical wards were down.

The next obstacle to deal with was a triangular pattern of holes and the following inscription:

These locks set by Ishcabeble for his friend,
To keep him out and the king from sin.
These doors will not bend, even demons cannot rend,
But with nine keys the entrance you can win.

Aufeag three times repeated to reach the end,
Down the edge of the inverse fin.
Along the line the nine expand,
The matrix is the key, the keys to win.

We soon figured out that it had to do with the keys we had obtained from Krell and we were to insert them into the nine holes on the triangle's hypotenuse working upwards, and turn each key from one to nine times. It took us a short time to get it open. The doors swung open to reveal a 20 foot wide square room. What was inside was what appeared to be a defaced portrait of Llywelyn and another kingly figure while the other wall had a stone throne and the remains of a shattered statue. A straw caricature had been placed in the throne instead. While Jhiselle destroyed the straw effigy by igniting it with her pyrogenesis, Bob drank the other detect aura potion.

We examined the painting. It showed two kings, one of which was Llywelyn, and they were joined at the heads by a white blob. The more we studied it the more it looked like that was what the painting was supposed to be. Then I remembered one of the astrology readings about Llywelyn about him being twinned, but not by blood or birth. Twinned souls maybe?

There were some doors at the other end of the chamber so we opened them. On the other side

was another chamber, this one was bare. Another set of doors were on the opposite wall. Then Starflower warned us she could sense those undead minds, and more besides, on the other side - waiting.

.11.

From what Starflower could figure out, there were two concentrations of undead, one behind each side door to the room beyond. Also two rows of pillars subdivided the room into quarters. So we prepared ourselves. Stark handed over his Protection from Undead amulet to help protect me as he intended going into combat. Jhiselle created Weapons of Flame for Starflower and Stark. Starflower's was the result of a double effect and would do double the additional damage. Against undead this would be formidable, I knew from my studies. Through all this preparation, Starflower and Stark were trying to bolster our confidence with heroic speeches.

We then did our spell preparations. Bob and I cast Walking Unseens on ourselves and Bob cast one on Jhiselle while I did a Witchsight on myself. Starflower went undetectable (or so she said, I could still see her). Finally we took up positions by the door, and I triggered the Quickness.

As Starflower and Stark opened the door, I flooded the immediate area with Light. Simultaneously Jhiselle made a Weapon of Flame sabre for herself. Starflower and Stark charged in, and were promptly struck by a necrosis spell. "The master mind is casting through the bloody ones," called Starflower. Bob followed, but as soon as he saw the Undead waiting he charged back out again, scared stiff. Jhiselle and I cast a Wall each starting at opposite ends of the room, going down the length of pillars on the right-hand side in order to block off one group of attackers. The Walls of Fire and Light just met in the middle.

Most of the Undead in the room were standard skeletons and zombies but the leader of each group was very unusual. They looked like skeletons, but they were red and dripped blood. Starflower charged into the one leading the first group and quickly destroyed it. At that moment I succeeded in tripping Bob on his way out.

Starflower went for the accompanying skeletons and slashed one in half in a single blow, while Stark swung around to intercept the other 'bloody bones' and its group of Undead that had charged straight through the Walls. I started a Soothe Pain on Bob in an effort to calm him down. Stark saw what was happening and managed to encourage Bob to have another go. Bob did so.

Just then I caught sight of the 'bloody bones' and went into near shock at the repulsive sight. The only thing that brought me out was Starflower's mental reassurance. Meanwhile Jhiselle was wading into the skeletons that had come through the Wall.

Stark intercepted the second 'bloody bones' and was struck by a Stream of Corruption, before he was able to finish it off. Just then Starflower spotted the other two 'bloody bones' approaching with more skeletons and zombies. Jhiselle panicked and dived behind the nearest pillar, before deciding to resume hitting skeletons. One of them was hit by a scintillating coloured Bolt of Starfire, before she finished it off.

Starflower intercepted one of the newcomers, but it dealt her a nasty blow. We could all feel and hear her anger as she demolished it. Meanwhile Stark had to rescue Bob from being in close combat with a zombie, by literally picking him up and tossing him aside. Then he turned to take

on the last 'bloody bones' and soon it too was shattered, leaving a pack of zombies and skeletons.

Finally we had dispatched the lot. The generic true name of the 'bloody bones' was exactly that. They were semi-greater Undead. On the other side of the room, we found some stairs going down. Starflower triggered one of her Invested Quicknesses.

What we saw there disgusted me. Such an offence against nature and the powers of light could not be allowed to continue to exist. I could not resist the urge to rush forward and demolish the obscenity. The Master 'Bloody Bones' sat idly on a throne, laughing in its evil arrogance. Ichor streamed redly from its every naked limb. Around it lay several bodies of other Undead which it had drained. Jhiselle nearly went hysterical and Stark nearly turned to run, but Starflower's anger turned cold and fearless, and she rallied both of them. As I charged forward, it leapt off the dais and attacked Stark. Bob threw a dagger at it but it bounced off.

I was hit by the foe's glaive and staggered. Bob pushed me out of the way. I felt a bit stunned, but quickly recovered and triggered the Slowness mana tear. Starflower pushed Bob out of the way as she evaded its next sweeping blow, and then Jhiselle fired a Bolt of Fire at it. To our surprise it exploded dousing us all with corrosive fluid. It completely ruined my robe and cloak and all of our armour was damaged. Jhiselle enveloped us all in a Ball of Fire to burn off the corrosive substance. She then handed me a Waters of Healing with a strict instruction to drink it all down. I used the gained energy to Heal and stabilise Stark, while Starflower worked on Bob. Both had nearly died, and I was glad of another Healer. Others of the party also consumed Healing Potions.

Behind where the Master Bloody Bones was sitting was a door which we went through. On the other side we found a stairwell which led us down to a 40 foot cubic chamber. Inside we found a marble coffin mounted on a rectangular wooden catafalque. Upon removing the coffin lid we discovered the ancient bones of the king, wrapped in a linen cloth and resting on purple silk conditions. A gold necklace was around the neck and a plain gold circlet was around the skull.

I took the Elixir of Life and administered it to the skeleton. The effect was immediate and the bones were immediately wrapped in flesh. I had an Empathy on at the time and I felt triumphant as I felt the life processes restart.

As the newly revived king sat up there came a thumping and cries for help from inside the catafalque Stark and Jhiselle quickly had it open. Inside is another recently revived body. Soon both men are standing next to the coffin. The one that was inside the catafalque identified himself as Llywelyn and the other as Grellyn. They weren't identical but were about the same age, 35 to 40 years, and both had reddish hair, blue eyes and a small mole on the right hand. Llywelyn had a bleeding wound on his left forearm which I decided to administer to.

Just then all the light sources in the place dimmed and a low rumbling sound emanated from the surrounding stone and earth. 'Diancecht ward us' exclaimed Llywelyn. 'He comes'.

Within seconds a tall humanoid, clad in black, coalesced from the stone floor. From what I had discovered in the Widdershin library, this had to be Arawn. Great! My first resurrection and the local Death Power decides to show up.

Then we could hear the tinkling of many bells, faint at first but it grew louder as a glow appeared near the ceiling. In the glow appeared a young man, his body glowing with perfect health. This

had to be Diancecht, the local Power of Healing. Diancecht floated to the ground to stand next to us as Arawn looked straight at me and demanded to know just why I had recalled Llywelyn's soul from his domain.

Hesitantly I explained that we had done it as he was needed by the people to rule again as they were leaderless. Starflower cut in and explained our mission then told the story of our quest. All through it Llywelyn stared in amazement then grabbed Arawn's club and struck Grellyn a mortal blow on the head. Then Llywelyn staggered and fell lifeless to the floor. Arawn laughed in triumph as he sank through the floor in departure. We just stared in dumbfoundment. Was all the effort in the quest just been futile?

Diancecht sighed and explained that since Grellyn's head was destroyed he was unable to resurrect either of them as they shared a split soul and the life of one depended on the other which is what the drawing in the outer chamber was attempting to depict. However he explained there was another way to complete our mission. There was a gap in the Lineage as Dacquiri was numbered as the eighth of nine but the next one was Kolm, the first of four. Dacquiri had no male heirs but he planned to put his daughter, Ardel, on the throne as the first queen of Pellham. Fearing for her life, he tried to use his magic to transport her to another plane for safekeeping until the time her succession would be allowed by law.

However Dacquiri made a mistake and he sent Ardel back in time. Also the magic backflowed through time and erupted at the instance of Llywelyn's and Grellyn's births causing the split soul effect. Dacquiri never saw Ardel again as his enmity with Ishcabeble led to their mutual deaths stranding Ardel in the past. Diancecht suggested that we go and find Ardel as she is still alive and has retained her youth and beauty. He would entrust us with a piece of rock before transporting us to the Pillars of Nimra. Throwing the rock between the pillars would activate the gate and key the destination to the origin of the rock. We would then have to quickly step through before the gate collapsed.

We decided to do it. Diancecht gave us a fist sized lump of pumice then muttered an arcane phrase. Everything around us blinked out then we found ourselves standing near two massive pillars. When the rock was tossed between them a shimmering curtain appeared and we stepped through.

We found ourselves on a forest path on the banks of a tropical jungle. The dense jungle growth made it difficult to see far. The weather was hot and very humid. While Bob climbed a tree I DAed some plants to find out where we were The answer I got was Elushia.Cretaceous.

It was impossible to cross the river here as it was 200 feet wide and crawling with piranha. However Bob reported he could see smoke rising from the west, further along the river. So, once he was down from the tree, we followed the path westwards along the river.

Soon we found a campfire in a clearing. A middle aged man, clad only in a loincloth in deference to the oppressive heat, stooped over a raft that was pulled up onto the bank. When he saw us, he bade us welcome and told us that he was willing to ferry us across the river. However he warned us that the other side was the war ground of amazons. There had been one tribe but it split, after the arrival of a new queen six months ago. The old queen had been here for over 200 years and was rumoured to have magical abilities. The new queen was rumoured to be only six months old but was a fully grown woman and lives in a rude stone tower to the west of the active volcano

to the north. The old tribe lives on the base of that same volcano. The two tribes can be told apart as the new one rides winged reptiles and wields metal weapons.

One of those queens had to be Ardel but which one? The story Diancecht told seemed to indicate that it was the old one. So we decided to cross the river and carry on down the trail towards the volcano. After several hours of walking we were suddenly confronted by twenty dark-haired young women, clad in nothing more than fur briefs and bodices, who stepped out in front of us, all brandishing wicked looking weapons. Starflower gave Stark a look to say "I'm in command here" and stepped to the front.

As Starflower stepped forward, a tall blond woman stepped into view. Her clothing did not distinguish her from the others but she carried herself as the leader. Starflower told her we were looking for Queen Ardel and she told us that was who she was and that she was leading a raiding party to the rebel village led by Marna. We were invited to join them.

Just then forty winged reptiles, each ridden by a warrior maiden, clad similarly to this group, glided into an attack. They were armed with metal short swords and wooden spears. We could see that the leader was a statuesque woman crowned with a headdress of bright feathers. I noticed a spot of fresh scar tissue on her left arm. Curiously enough it was in the same place as the one Llywelyn had. She was armed with a metal longsword. As the winged reptiles charged their riders threw their spears into the group we were with. One of the spears struck Ardel rendering her unconscious. Meanwhile Ardel's second in command signalled a retreat and we retreated into the vegetation. Starflower healed Ardel.

As we were about to leave Bob spotted a medallion on the ground and picked it up. On it was the symbol of two crossed spears with a winged reptile hovering over it. It looked very similar to Pellham's royal symbol of two crossed swords and an eagle. We passed it among ourselves then Starflower handed it to Ardel who identified it was Marna's symbol.

Once we got to Ardel's village, Starflower and Jhiselle explained why we were travellers from her own plane and had come to bring her home to rule from the throne of Pellham. Ardel agreed as she was tired of this conflict with Marna and was ready to go home. She suggested that we go to the local temple of Divot and ask for guidance. When we got there we found another prophecy carved on the wall:

From the fires of the past, a new queen shall be born,
from grave to grave in six months time. The new is older
than the old has been for time untold and sunders old, the
Mother rent in twain. The past shall be lost, but no future
gained, for He and She shall perish in Divot's hot embrace
as her wrath devours all.

Also in this room was a lava pit flanked by two pillars similar to the Pillars of Nimra. That had to be the way back.

Something was jogging at the back of my memory. I remembered reading something about a long lost ritual of regeneration, called cloning, that could recreate an entire body from a small tissue sample. The process was reputed to take six months. Could this had happened here and that mark on Llywelyn's arm been where the tissue sample had been taken. We couldn't do it but it should be well within the skills of a being such as Diancecht. That logically implied that Llywelyn had

been cloned, and that Marna was somehow the clone - even though she looked nothing like Llywelyn. That bit I could not explain unless powerful illusionary magic was also involved.

The others looked rather sceptical as I outlined that theory but the evidence of Marna's medallion looking like the symbol of the Kings of Pellham seemed to be more than a co-incidence. So we decided to go and confront Marna. Ardel decided to wait for us in the temple.

So we headed off in the direction of Marna's tower. As we got close we were accosted by a dozen of Marna's followers and escorted to the roughly circular stone tower located in the centre of the village. Inside was Marna, seated in a chair formed by the tusks of some great beast. She demanded to know what we were doing here. As Starflower explained our presence we noticed that she had reddish hair and blue eyes, similar to Llywelyn. She even had an identical mole on her right hand.

We were led up to the roof of the tower where a catapult had been placed. Several of the winged reptiles had been roosting in the trees nearby and some of them had taken to the air and was circling the tower. Stark was seized, tied and placed in the catapult bowl. If we weren't able to convince Marna of our sincerity, Stark was about to become reptile bait.

But the similarity of the seal plus the physical similarities if Marna and Llywelyn were enough to do the job. Marna ordered her guards to leave and then removed her headdress. As she did she immediately transformed into a man that we recognized as Llywelyn.

Marna/Llywelyn then replaced the headdress and led us out of the tower and into the forest. Once we were clear of the village, the headdress was removed and we made our way back to the temple where Ardel was waiting.

An Elushian copper piece served as the activating key for the gate and we all, including Ardel and Llywelyn, leapt over the lava pit and into the shimmering curtain. As we did the ground began to shake as the volcano erupted.

We found ourselves in Dolmen Moor again so we went down the Kingsway to the boat and made our way back to Widdershin.

Within a week Llywelyn and Ardel announced their marriage and their intention to rule jointly and found a new dynasty. Of course we were all invited to the wedding and celebrations.

Finally, after the celebrations were completed, we took ship back to Seagate arriving on the morning of the 12th of December. There we did the debriefing and had the treasure split before going our separate ways.

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