

Campaign Chronicles

Chronicles of the South - Part 1

1) Sea/Harmony/Clay 1614

Party: Barak Swift (Humakti priest)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Stephanie), Durnfal Slipspear (Yemalio farmer)(Gary), Broadbrow (Hunter)(Darryl), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.) and Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne).

Party hired by a dark troll named Bug and a great troll named Hug to act as bodyguards for their master Ragpicker who is travelling to Furthest in the Lunar Empire on a mission. On the road to Aldachur the party is attacked at night by Glutgrim's party of broo raiders. Attack results in the deaths of Hug and Broadbrow. Party rescued by the timely appearance of the eastern sorcerer Ragpicker. (Most of the broos are killed including Glutgrim who manages to successfully "d.i." himself back to Malia-Soul? What soul?). Gerhardt Frei catches a bad case of the Creeping Chills. Party returns to Pavis for healing. Party is given the equivalent of a week's wages and dismissed as being inadequate, Michio Mizoguchi aka Ragpicker and his trolls then hire a bunch of Zorak Zoranis to escort them to Aldachur and points beyond.

2) Fire/Disorder/Fire 1614 (Troubled Waters scenario)

Party: Barak Swift (Humakti priest)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Stephanie), Durnfal Slipspear (Yemalio farmer)(Gary), Dorian Tavish (Zola Fel fisher), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.) and Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne).

Party is hired by the Zola Fel temple in Pavis to take papers and minor artifacts to Corflu. Party being transported to Corflu in Dorian Tavish's boat is attacked by a monstrous gorp and saved by the intervention of Zola Fel. Party awake to find themselves on some mud flats near Corflu. A group of baboons finds them and starts looting what they think are corpses. The party begins to recover consciousness and manages to call a truce with the baboons. They discover strange runes on their palms with magical properties placed there by Zola Fel. Travelling south to Corflu the party meets a pair of fishermen. The fishermen are amazed by the marks of the God on their palms. Pair take group to Corflu where they are hidden among the fisherfolk. They meet a priest of Zola Fel there who tells them that they have been chosen by Zola Fel to be River Voices, a special status granted to land dwellers to act as ambassadors/emissaries between the river and the land. He asks them to fight mudsharks. Party succeeds and finds strange floating device (channel marker). Group heads north in Grandpa's boat. Barak and Dorian aid otter and boy, rewarded with silence and lantern matrices. Party involved in helping homesteaders who had been raided by broos. Group tracks broos back to their lair where a fierce battle ensues. Tamerlan, Greystone and Barak Swift are killed. Survivors head back with the corpses and run into group of mercenaries from Ronegarth. Corpses are raced to Horn Gate where the Chalana Arroy healers resurrect Tamerlan and Greystone. New member joins party at Ronegarth- Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior from Caladraland). Party heads north again meeting Agrimori who tells them of two newtlings lying by a pond. Party goes to pond and finds one unconscious

and one dead newtling. Party kills breeder gorp in pool, resurrects the dead newtling and heals the other. Both vow to serve the party for one year in re-payment of their debt. Party travels to Harpoon and helps the Yemalios orchestrate the killing of an enormous breeder gorp. Group also returns Lantern matrix to Alalis Eskolos, follower of Vega Goldbreath (leader of Sun County militia). Party returns to Pavis to discover that the big gorp was not the source of the contamination. Research at Lhankhor Mhy temple and questioning of locals turns up evidence pointing to Ogre Island geyser. Newtlings show up to begin their year of service. Channel marker is analyzed at Lhankhor Mhy ("It floats and it glows").

3) Fire/Disorder/Clay 1614

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Stephanie), Durnfal Slipspear (Yemalio farmer)(Gary), Dorian Tavish (Zola Fel fisher)(Darryl), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.) and Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne).

Exploration of Ogre island leads to premature entrance into underwater/underground complex. (Entrance was via swimming down with a strong current) Wait a minute, how the heck are we going to get out of here?) Group fights past a walktapi and a dragonsnail. Eventually after crawling through a long slimy cave system the group finds a big chamber with a pool at the bottom hollowed out in the rock. A running battle with masses of gorps leads to Tamerlan and Gerhardt Frei slipping on the ledge and entering water where the horribly mutated, immortal priest of Pocharngo lurks. Pair slain by priest. Dorian Tavish and Durnfal Slipspear enter water and slay priest. Dorian Tavish hit by chaos feature cast by priest (added extra leg). Dorian Tavish d.i's party out of grotto. Chalana Arroys remove extra limb and resurrect dead.

4) Fire/Disorder/Wind 1614

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Stephanie), Durnfal Slipspear (Yemalio farmer)(Gary), Dorian Tavish (Zola Fel fisher)(Darryl), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.) and Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne).

Party decides to go back the Grotto to look for loot. Meet and hire Asderand Quarrywalker (Dwarven Rubble veteran and legless victim of bone rot) who offers advice and equipment to facilitate removal of the goods. For either 2000L or 15% group can hire 10 dwarf crew of bodyguards including:

1) Foreman (Asderand)

2) 10 workers/soldiers

3) 1 detect gold, 1 detect magic, 1 detect silver and detects for diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and sapphires.

Excavations of the pool the priest was in takes 4 hours using pumps. Loot taken to Honest Kolli's store for selling at 5% commission. Training at Zola Fel temple scheduled to begin Earth/Harmony.

Party endeavour to sit around and wait for Zola Fel training to begin. (Everyone offered 16 weeks training and 4 points of battle magic.

5) Fire/Harmony/Clay

On her way home from Badside Lou is attacked by 5 bison rider tribesmen who want to rape her. She fights them off with the help of Morgeneth Rune Star (the pair slay two of the tribesmen). Rune Star subsequently hires her for 6 weeks to help guard the Yelornan temple while she and the other Rune levels and unicorn riders are elsewhere in Pavis on a mission.

6) Fire/Harmony/Fire

Gerhardt and Durnfal are hired by Constable Leach of Garhound to act as contestants/investigators in the Harvest Bride contest in Garhound. Each receives twelve weeks in lance, shield and ride training and free entry into the contest.

Chronicles of the South - Part 2

7) Fire/Harmony/Godday

Greystone and Tamerlan are approached by Zibdel Maxroth, impala rider who invites them to join the White Bulls. Trio travel into Vulture's Country where they find a Bison encampment led by Argarth Bisonrider (Prince of Sartar). The pair agree to join in on a raid on a Lunar military caravan. Receive free six weeks training. Caravan looted with no survivors. Greystone and Tamerlan receive enough loot to get barding for their beasts. Return to Pavis in time for Zola Fel training.

8) Fire/Death/Water

Dorian Tavis hired by Harnval Threefingers to help him and his four sons Davis, Davis, Artho and Septo smuggle dummy (illegal drug) into the Rubble past the Lunars. Dorian's attempts to snoop into what the five are smuggling results in his being rendered unconscious. When he regains consciousness he finds himself in the ogre's lair where he is invited to join them in their meal. Dorian refuses to partake and is rendered unconscious by drugs in his drink. While unconscious the entire surface of his body except for his hands and head is tattooed with Gbaji riddles.

9) Earth/Harmony/Freeze 1614

Zola Fel training begins.

10) Earth/Movement/Godday 1614 (Melisande's Hand)

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Stephanie), Durnfal Slipspear (Yemalio farmer)(Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.) and Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne).

Party hired by Constable Leach of Garhound on the behalf of Sir Davis Garhound to keep an eye on things at Harvest Bride Festival in Garhound (i.e. make sure the Lunars aren't up to anything). Travel there for beginning of contest on Earth/ Illusion/Godday. Gerhardt and Durnfal participate in contest.

Day	Contest	Winners
1) Illusion/Godday	Horse Race, climb tree, retrieve stormapple, race back to starting point and give apple to someone you favour.	1) Carylton Squally 2) Stikklebrixx 3) Promidius
2) Truth/Freezeday	Joust	1)Carylton Squally 2) Stikklebrixx 3) Myrrhyn Calmstorm
3) Truth/Waterday	Wrestling (fisticuffs)	1) Gerhardt Frei 2) Stikklebrixx 3) Carylton Squally
4) Truth/Clayday	Intelligence test (drinking contest)	1) Promidius 2) Carylton Squally 3) Jarst Daro
5) Truth/Windsday	Wall of Death (run along wall while 14 arrows are fired at you.	1) Vathmar 2) Carylton Squally, Promidius 3) Jarst, Durnfal, Myrrhyn
6) Truth/Fireday	Pain Test (see who can hold pots of boiling water the longest)	1) Carylton Squally 2) Stikklebrixx 3) Promidius
7) Truth/Wildday	Ladies' Choice (talent contest)	1) Durnfal Slipspear 2) Carylton Squally 3) Jarst Daro

Myrrhyn Calmstorm is exposed as a Lunar stooge and an attempt to rig the Ladies' Choice contest by means of magic is foiled. Jarst Daro is exposed as an ogre and sent "to sleep mit de fishes."

Party returns to Pavis to resume training.

11) Dark/Disorder/Waterday 1614

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Stephanie), Durnfal Slipspear (Yemalio farmer)(Gary), Dorian Tavish (Zola Fel fisher)(Darryl), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.) and Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne).

Training resumes at Zola Fel temple. Training runs until Storm/Fertility/Freeze for all of the party except Durnfal and Gerhardt. Their training lasts until Storm/Illusion/Freeze. Durnfal is falling behind in his cult responsibilities. Dorian Tavish (who hadn't gone to Garhound) goes to Lhankhor Mhys in order to determine what his tattoos are. They tell him that they are Gbaji Riddles after one of their initiates is entranced by them. They are not impressed. The Chalana Arroy temple offers to skin him for free in order to remove the tattoos but he seems reluctant to take this step. Dorian then takes a job in a textile

shop and takes a swim in a vat of bright red dye in order to hide the riddle tattoos but the dye eventually fades. This act of course costs him his job. Eventually he takes up the Chalana Arroy healers' offer. They hire a Xiola Umbar healer to skin him in the dark using her Dark Sense. Intensive healing replaces damaged skin. This procedure does work. (Dorian now called Pinky).

12) Sea/Harmony/Water 1615 (Ogre Bashing)

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Dorian Tavish (Zola Fel fisher)(Darryl), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.) and Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne).

Dorian Tavish approached by one Digger Davis, Pavis lowlife, who knows where in the Rubble Harnval Threefingers lives. Party agrees to hire Digger. Decide to meet with Digger the next day so he can lead them to the ogre's lair on Blind King's Hill. Party realizes from almost the start that this is a trap. Dorian Tavish hires Willem Noralar, Sword Lord of Humakt to cast Detect Truth spell on room so they can expose the lie. Visit to Storm Bull temple turns up the fact that the party of Storm Bulls led into the Rubble by Harnval never returned. Dorian also meets Sticklebrix (able yet very unlucky Storm Buller) whose brother was one of the Storm Bulls slain in the ambush. He insists on going along in order to avenge his brother. Party meets the next day with Digger who tries to make a break for it when Dorian asks Willem Noralar to cast his Detect Truth spell. Actions of Gerhardt, Hallelujah and Noralar, the Sword Lord result in the capture of Digger. Digger is eventually persuaded to betray Harnval and lead party to his hideout. At the ambush site the party discovers a group of Broos waiting to ambush them. A quick fight results in the death of all the Broos (and Digger! Hit in abdomen by a Broo javelin he lies in a lonely pool of his own blood bleeding to death). Greystone distinguishes himself in battle by dispatching two Broos quickly. Sticklebrix botches the job as usual getting knocked down early. He does manage to heal himself and cuts Glutgrim's head off from on the ground. Dorian Tavish is nearly slain when he tries to take on too many Broos. Quick action at a cost of grave personal danger by Gerhardt saves him. (Falls part way down a two story building to distract broos). Party proceeds to the lair of Harnval who catches them all in a net. Sticklebrix, Dorian and Hallelujah manage to escape the net and fight the ogres. Sticklebrix swings and breaks Hallelujah's arm and the pair are eventually knocked down. Dorian manages to kill one of the Davis's before being knocked down. Greystone is subdued in the net and Gerhardt is killed. The party regains consciousness hanging from meat hooks. Harnval tries to persuade Dorian to join him. Dorian refuses to do so. The ogres go into the next room to mull over what to do next. Septo, who had been sent outside to act as a guard runs back in and warns his father and brothers about an approaching group of skeletons and two trolls. Mistaking the group for Zorak Zoranis the ogres flee. The rescuers turn out to be Hug and Bug (flunkeys of the Eastern sorcerer Ragpicker from the first scenario)(and a bunch of skeletons). Among the papers left by the ogres is a document referring to a great treasure lost in the recent war. Gerhardt resurrected successfully. Lhankhor Mhy temple identifies most of the papers as drug inventories. One however (originally stolen from the Lhankhor Mhy temple) leads to Rabbit Hat Farm....

Chronicles of the South - Part 3

13) Sea/Harmony/Winds 1615 : There's a New Lord in Town...

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Dorian Tavish (Zola Fel fisher)(Darryl), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.) and Durnfal Slipspear (Yemalio farmer)(Gary).

Early on the morning of Sea/Harmony/Windsday a new Storm Kahn arrives in Pavis-Sax Bolderson (Hallelujah Harnsdottir's brother). He has come to Pavis along with a retinue consisting of a half-dozen initiates and a sorcerer. His intent is to gather what initiates he can and then get permission from the Lunars to set up a temple to Storm Bull in the Rubble. He's here because a vision from Storm Bull told him to come to Pavis to set up a new temple in the Rubble. He's not sure why but his is not to reason why, etc. The first step is to get official permission from the Lunar government. There are a lot of people in Pavis who would like to be in the room when that meeting takes place.

The party visits the solicitor of the Ingilli family to ask his advice about the document they found in the ogre's lair. His scribe makes a copy of the document for the party as they have decided to return it to the Lhankhor Mhy temple. Lou and Durnfal return the document to the temple and get offered 5 hours free research. Durnfal and Lou visit the Sun Dome temple in Pavis and Durnfal and a local initiate discover that the cryptic site mentioned in document refers to Rabbit Hat Farm in southern Sun County. The group decides to equip Dorian's boat and travel south to Rabbit Hat Farm. The trip is uneventful. After a unfriendly reception at Chomoro the party spends the night with the fisher folk who inform them that Rabbit Hat Farm was raided by Bison riders and then occupied by Broos half a season ago.

Sea/Harmony/Clay 1615

The party travels across country avoiding the two intervening hamlets. The party arrives at the Farm and discovers that the place seems deserted. A krshtid burrow is discovered beside the village wall. After inspecting roughly half of the fertility stones the group moves into the former headman's house. Here they are attacked by the ghosts of the former occupants who were bound into a room by a Broo shaman. The group manages to fight off the ghosts and decides to spend the night in the top floor of the building. They find a book (the local tax records) in the arms of one of the corpses. The party beds down for the night...

14) Sea/Harmony/Windsday 1615

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Stephanie), Durnfal Slipspear (Yemalio farmer)(Gary), Dorian Tavish (Zola Fel fisher)(Darryl), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne) and Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior)(Henry). Party also includes Zeena a Chalana Arroy High Healer married to Svart Ulfsson.

The four party members who had bedded down for the night continue the next day to excavate beneath the fertility stones after burying the corpses from the farm house. Around midday a lookout spots a four humans approaching. The group identifies themselves as the other two party members and Gerhardt Frei's cousin Svart Ulfsson (once removed on his mother's side) and his wife a Chalana Arroy High

Healer. After some discussion the original party decides to include the newcomers in on the action. The rest of the fertility stones are dug up and it is noted that five are missing. The party decides to investigate the krarshtid burrow. Descending by means of a rope down the deep (25 m) shaft the party arrives at the bottom. Investigation uncovers a natural cavern with a stream flowing down the middle. The stream widens in the middle into a large pool. While investigating Dorian falls into the pool where he is attacked by a dragonsnail and one of his legs is bitten off. In the ensuing fight Tamerlan also has his leg bitten off after he falls in. A doughty blow by Svart nearly finishes the dragonsnail and a disrupt from Lou and a spear blow from Durnfal finishes off the beast. While investigating a krarshtid tunnel the party discovers a jack-o-bear which manages to harmonize three of the group. Swift action by Greystone with his dispel magic manages to unharmonize enough of the party to enable Durnfal and Dorian to kill the beast. Investigation of the end of the tunnel uncovers the jack-o-bears lair where five dead Yemalio militiamen are found as well as the five missing fertility stones and the treasure. Taking the treasure the group decides to return to the surface in order to decide what to do next. After some discussion the group decides to give the Crown of Yamsur to the local Sun Dome temple in return for some good will. They decide to rest for the night before heading for Sun Dome. During the third watch that night the Krarsht acolyte sneaks up on the watchmen and befuddles the two of them. He gags Greystone and drags him off. When the befuddle wears off Tamerlan alerts the rest of the party and the chase is on. The group tracks the villain back to the underground lair and eventually finds the temple. He attacks the party by means of his net and crossbows. He manages to wound two party members (Lou and Gerhardt) and snare Durnfal in a pratzim smeared net while his familiar manages to wound the Chalana Arroy priestess. The familiar is killed and suppressing fire manages to keep his head down most of the time with the occasional shot wounding someone. Durnfal and Dorian race off to find another way up to the balcony and manage to find two krarshtids, one dead and one very much alive which manages to destroy Dorian's helmet and spear before being killed. By the time they return to the temple the acolyte has been knocked unconscious by an arrow to the head. Tamerlan throws his javelin up into the balcony and by means of a rope attached to the javelin clambers up over the balcony and finds Greystone bound and conscious. He tosses the still alive acolyte over the side and discovers some loot. Taking the items that they want the group returns to the surface where they are arrested by a patrol of Templars under the command of Vega Goldbreath.

15) Sea/Harmony/Fireday 1615 "You're in the army now." (January 29th, 1994)

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Stephanie), Durnfal Slipspear (Yemalio farmer)(Gary), Dorian Tavish (Zola Fel fisher)(Darryl), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne) and Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior)(Henry). Party also includes Zeena a Chalana Arroy High Healer married to Svart Ulfsson.

Party spends several days helping the Yemalios clean up Rabbit Hat Farm before being escorted to Sun Dome to face the judgment of Solanthos Ironpike, Count of Sun County. The Yemalios eventually decide to ignore any imagined misdeeds and even offer to hire the party as mercenaries. The party readily agrees (especially Durnfal Slipspear as he is 12 weeks behind in his cult service duties). Some of them are less than pleased however to find out that they are now going to be cavalry. Everyone is given a zebra to ride except Hallelujah who is presented with a alticamelus. They are accorded the status of

mercenary auxiliaries on detached duty to the 1st militia (the "Victors") under Vega Goldbreath. Their first mission is to ride to Pavis to retrieve the mounts of Greystone and Tamerlan. On the way there they meet up with Carylton Squally, Champion of Garhound and his wife the incredibly pregnant Melisande (the goddess had blessed their union!) The Orlanthi, the Chalana Arroy and the Humakti spend a night of drunken revelry with Carylton and the missus. The next day the party rides into Pavis. Dorian spots Harnval, his arch-nemesis leaving the city and has the Lunars arrest him. The next morning Dorian heads to the pokey where his inquiry about the ogre is greeted by, "Who?" This surprises no one. The group then heads back to Sun Dome via Garhound (and more drunken revelry) where they await their new orders.

16) Sea/Fertility/Windsday

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Stephanie), Durnfal Slipspear (Yemalio farmer)(Gary), Dorian Tavish (Zola Fel fisher)(Darryl), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne) and Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior)(Henry). Party also includes Zeena a Chalana Arroy High Healer married to Svart Ulfsson.

Group swears elaborate oath to Solanthos Ironpike-obedience unto death, etc as part of the "Solar Provincial Survey". Three weeks of training ensue for group-riding and lance attack for most and R/W Fire Speech for Durnfal. (Until Sea/Illusion/Windsday). A group of NPCs also swears obedience to Solanthos as the northern half of the Solar Provincial Survey. The group is then ordered to Chomorro to begin their patrolling. They uncover two farmers growing hazia and earn 100L as their share of the fines. (They patrol for 22 days). On Fire/Harmony/Fire the group travels to Chomorro so that Durnfal can attend the Yemalio Holy Day services. There they discover that the local contingent of Chalana Arroy healers have learned that a plague has broken out in the Grantlands (Duke Raus' domain) to the south. The healers have been forbidden by the local militia leader (Coriander) from leaving until the next day because he refuses to let them go unescorted and none of the militia can leave until after the holy day is over. The group volunteers their services as escorts (except Durnfal because he attends the service). They discover that the River Folk refuse to let them borrow any boats because of Coriander's orders. After the service ends and just before the big feast and booze up in the market place the group approaches Coriander for permission to escort the healers which he gives. Durnfal is sent along (much to his chagrin-missed another booze-up). The group sails down river all night and arrives in Ronegarth early in the morning (Fire/Harmony/Wildday) where they learn that the Duke's wife has died of the plague. After sitting around a while the group is asked by Daine, Duke Raus's chief of mercenaries to come and see the Duke. The Duke asks the group to travel up the Vilinar River to Weis and beyond to investigate reports of broos up there causing the disease outbreak. The group agrees and travels up the river with a group of newtling boatmen. At Weis they discover that most of the people have died. They find an old mad woman who tells them about Muriah and her vengeance on Weis. The group boats up river to the head waters where they discover the cave that the river flows out of. They enter the cave where they are ambushed by three broos who barrage them with some ineffective arrow fire. The group engages the broos and quickly kills one (Hallelujah and Svart engage it and Hallelujah chops it in half). Dorian and Durnfal engage another and flail ineffectually away at it until Durnfal manages to cripple it and render it incapable of defending itself. Tamerlan runs up and engages the third broo and swings at it ineffectually

before being run through the abdomen and killed. The broo is then engaged by Greystone and the two exchange ineffective blows before Greystone disengages and the broo flees. The party decides to retire from the cave with their slain comrade and the deathly ill Svart (who managed to catch the shakes from the broo he was fighting). The Shakes potion Daine gave them managed to heal him before too many DEX points were lost. Just before they leave Dorian manages to swim over to a nearby riverbank and fetch a weapon that had been buried in the sand there. He barely manages to swim across but avoids drinking any of the contaminated water fortunately. The group returns to Weis for the night...

17) Fire/Harmony/Godday 1615

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Stephanie), Durnfal Slipspear (Yemalio farmer)(Gary), Dorian Tavish (Zola Fel fisher)(Darryl), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne) and Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior)(Henry). Party also includes Zeena a Chalana Arroy High Healer married to Svart Ulfsson.

The party spends the night camped outside the village of Weis. During the last watch just before dawn, Daine-chief of Raus' mercenaries arrives and sneaks up on Greystone as a test of the party's alertness. He tells the group that he has arrived to find out what has been done about the broos. After hearing their account of the previous day's fight he offers his services to the group. Zeena says she'll be going along as well. Daine scouts out the trail to the cave and waits for the party there. The party cautiously enters the cave and finds four broos waiting there for them. After a short fight three of the broos are killed while the other broo (who had killed Tamerlan the previous day) escapes down a tunnel. The party proceeds along the tunnel avoiding the pit Daine spots. They come up to a narrow, slippery bridge across the warm branch of the river. On the other side wait four broos including the one from the first fight. Three of the broos have bows. Daine leads the charge across the slippery bridge and immediately falls in. Dorian who was standing right behind him drops his spear and jumps in after him. Durnfal then slips and falls in and Tamerlan decides to run across and attack the broos. He would have made it across except for the sneeze spell cast on him which causes him to fall in. The remaining party members begin to exchange archery fire with the broos. While crawling forward to get out of the way of the archers Greystone slides into the river as well. (No one in the river other than Dorian has a better than 5% chance of swimming because of their armour). A fairly lengthy exchange of bow fire results in the deaths of three of the broos while the fourth broo (a female flees back into the cave). Meanwhile, the group in the river manages to escape the river, mostly due to Dorian's skilful swimming as he manages to save the rest including the unconscious Tamerlan. Zeena and Hallelujah arrive back at the entrance and with a Heal Body spell manage to heal Tamerlan. Several members of the group have lost weapons but with some weapon redistribution they manage to rearm everybody. The party returns to the bridge which Svart has cleaned up a bit and they send Dorian on ahead to dispose of the broos. He casts a detect magic and the group acquires a crystal, a spear with a blades sharp two matrices, a salve and some potions. They proceed along and discover a locked box with a dagger inside. Farther along in the cavern they come across another bridge across the cold branch of the river. Dorian starts across and is met with a hail of arrows. He is dropped by two impales and lies in a slump at the end of the bridge. There are four broos at the end of the bridge-the female from the last fight, another female and a male and a Malia rune priest. They start exchanging arrows with the party, three of the broos using Speedart. Due

to the advantage of the rocks the broos manage to hold their own. Dorian yells for the party to cross over and help him. The broo priest calls forth his shade which moves forward and attacks Dorian demoralizing him and doing a point of damage to his head. Daine is hit by one impale and a critical and is badly wounded. Zeena begins moving towards him to help him remove the impale. As she gets there he is hit by another impale and killed. He successfully d.i.'s and decides to cross over and attack the broos in melee. The group follows. The shade meanwhile has crossed the bridge and attacked Gerhardt doing no damage. Gerhardt and Svart manage to easily kill the shade. (One of the broos has by this point succumbed to missile fire). Daine, Gerhardt, Hallelujah and Durnfal cross over followed by Svart, Tamerlan and Greystone. Daine and Hallelujah attack the female broo and Hallelujah kills her. The priest ignores Daine and Durnfal and attacks Hallelujah after his allied spirit has befuddled her knocking her down by reducing her head hit points to zero. His allied spirit casts a befuddle on Svart and Tamerlan keeping them out of the fight. Daine and Greystone kill the other broo (Greystone having clambered over a rock to attack the broos from behind). Tamerlan does the same and joins them soon after. Daine is knocked down by getting zeroed in the abdomen and Tamerlan is befuddled. Zeena dashes across and heals Hallelujah while Daine heals his abdomen. Greystone is knocked down and killed. The broos is eventually knocked while Daine is out of the fight and before Durnfal and the now healed Dorian can kill him his allied spirit heals him up again. He gets up again and manages to hold Daine, Dorian and Durnfal off (by this time Tamerlan and Svart are no longer befuddled, in fact Tamerlan spends some time trying to heal the dying Greystone who has been lying under the broo priest's feet). Hallelujah comes up behind Daine and tells him not to resist her spell. He doesn't hear her but she wins the power struggle anyways. The broo turns to run and Daine hits and kills it just before Dorian and Durnfal disrupt it. The broo does not d.i. The group returns to Ronegarth where Duke Raus rewards them with all the loot they have recovered. The group returns to Sun Dome (reaching it by Fire/Death/Waterday) where Solanthos rewards them with all the crystals and magic they recovered. They stay in Sun Dome for two weeks to rest and train. Dorian decides to try out the crystals. Despite vague feelings of unease (Are you sure you really want to do this Darryl?) he persists. The first one he attempts is a magic supporting crystal and nothing bad happens. He gets the same vague sense of unease after he says he wants to try another crystal. This crystal is a MP storage crystal with a twist. That night as he sleeps Dorian has bad dreams and he feels terrible when he wakes up. Durnfal who was in the next cot wakes up and sees a monster in Dorian's bed. Dorian has gained a random chaotic feature of 12 pt metallic scales! (In this case aluminum ones!) Durnfal calls for the guards and two templars arrive. The monster surrenders. The chaos tainted monster that was formerly Dorian is dragged before Solanthos Ironpike for judgement. The judgement is swift and merciless-death by immolation. Dorian tries to get his deity to intervene but the attempt is fruitless. Just before he is to be executed his old nemesis Harnval Threefingers and his two surviving sons show up under the escort of the Lunar Provincial Survey. He claims that Dorian is his son and that he will take him away. Harnval says that Dorian's mother successfully plead with her goddess to remove the taint of chaos from her new-born son after learning he was an ogre. Dorian is given a brief count of ten to make up his mind before Invictus sets his pyre alight. He hems and haws and Harnval "begs" him to come with him but eventually he decides he'd rather burn and burn he does. Durnfal attempts to d.i. for him but is not successful. Thus dies the man known as "Ogrebane". (On Fire/Death/Windsday).

18) Fire/Death/Fireday 1615

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Stephanie), Durnfal Slipspear (Yemalio farmer)(Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne) and Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior) (Henry). Party also includes Zeena a Chalana Arroy High Healer married to Svart Ulfsson. New members: Targan Bash (Storm Bull warrior from Sartar) (Darryl) and Peracles (Sorcerer from Ralios)(Jeff).

The party travels to Pavis to have the remaining three crystals identified at the Lhankhor Mhy temple. They report that one is a mp storage crystal, one is a variable spell enhancing and the third is a spirit protection crystal. Hallelujah travels into the Rubble to see her brother where she discovers preparations under way for an expedition. Her brother asks her to take a sorcerer's apprentice (Peracles) under her protection while he is gone. A Storm Bull initiate is also sent along to help protect the "sorcerer". The group returns to Sun Dome to train until Fire/Stasis/Clayday before heading back out on patrol. While back at Sun Dome Hector offers the group 2 points of spirit magic each plus 1750L worth of knowledge skill training total to the group for the scrolls found in the broo's lair at Weis. Group patrols until Fire/Movement/Windsday when they arrive in Chomorro to discover that Vega has ordered them to find out which village is mentioned in Gaumata's vision. Coriander suggests that the village must be Black Rock from the description. The group travels to Black Rock the next day arriving there by evening. The group soon suspects that something strange is going on there. (The children are extremely violent, there are very few adult males, too many pregnant women, the Earth priestess is mad, and none of the other elders are not senile). On top of this Targan Bash detects Chaos somewhere in the village. The party is treated to a pathetic welcoming feast before bedding down in Fethal the headman's hut. Targan, Svart and Gerhardt go out at night to snoop around. Gerhardt overhears a couple of the strangely violent kids talking about someone named "Granpa". The next day the group decides to go to the Old Sentinel in order to climb to the top to see whether they can spot a nearby lake. Thosah Strongspear, militia head suggests that the climb is beyond the group. They decide instead to check around and visit the Shaman. She is missing and no one seems to know where she is. All of the group except Hallelujah decide to go check out the crops. Everything seems normal except for the fact that the crops are not very well tended. The group then decides that they do want to go climb the Old Sentinel. Thosah is sent by Fethal to guide them to the Old Sentinel. The group arrives at the Sentinel and Peracles casts a projected vision that enables him to look around from the top. Thosah insists of leaving the group and after some reluctance on the part of the party he is allowed to leave with Gerhardt going along. Gerhardt follows Thosah to the village. On the way there Thosah tries to lose Gerhardt who notices that the militia has formed up. He turns to return the party and Thosah starts shooting arrows at him. He escapes with no problem. The sorcerer has noticed a huge field and pond about 8 km away from the Sentinel. They travel there reaching the field and a nearby barn before dusk. The fields are hazia and the barn is full of hazia (800,000L worth!) and some gruesomely mutilated and cannibalized corpses. The group decides to burn the crop and barn when they see lights off in the distance. The militia and the older ogre children arrive (plus the Mistress) too late to save the barn. A brief exchange of arrows ends quickly when both parties put out their torches. The group returns to the village by dawn where they try and find out what's going on from one of the small children. (Greystone, Zeena and Tamerlan keep a

look out for the returning militia). Hallelujah grabs one of the little boys who bites her and flees to one of the grain storage tunnels where six young lamia are hiding out. Hallelujah, Svart, Durnfal, Targan, and Gerhardt pursue. The lamia bewitch Durnfal and Gerhardt who attack Svart and Hallelujah. Svart's arm is cut off and he is down and out. Durnfal is unable to hurt Hallelujah who quickly kills two of the little lamia and is swarmed by the rest. Targan battles Durnfal and Gerhardt for a while with the help of the sorcerer who blinds Gerhardt. He shouts for the rest of the party to come help and they race over. The battle sways to and fro. Hallelujah knocks more of the lamias down with her fists while Gerhardt and Durnfal knock Targan down. The pair turn their attentions to Hallelujah but are unable to hurt her with their aimed blows. Tamerlan shows up and demoralizes Gerhardt while Zeena heals first Svart and then Targan. Svart kills Durnfal with a mighty blow. Gerhardt loses his compulsion when the lamia who bewitched him is slain. By this time the militia has returned and is approaching. The party exits the tunnel and starts shooting arrows and casting spells at the militia. They befuddle Fethal and demoralize Thosah and injure several of the militia. The loss of their leaders causes most of the militia to drop their weapons and flee. The few who stayed are no match for the group and they are knocked down. The group subdues Fethal and Thosah (fatally so). Thosah was attempting to flee but he is hit with a Sleep spell after which Hallelujah kills him!

Chronicles of the South - Part 4

19) Fire/Death/Fireday 1615

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Stephanie), Durnfal Slipspear (Yemalio farmer)(Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior) (Henry) Targan Bash (Storm Bull warrior)(Darryl) and Peracles (sorcerer) (Jeff). Party also includes Zeena a Chalana Arroy High Healer married to Svart Ulfsson.

The party is aghast at the death of Thosah and Zeena immediately goes into mourning to atone for his death. The villagers gather around the bodies of the slain lamia, Fethal and Thosah. The villagers stand quietly doing nothing until one of the ogre children dips his finger in Fethal's blood and licks the blood off. This inflames the villagers who begin to tear the ogre children to pieces hunting down those that escape with the aid of the party. Near the end of the hunt Penliss the village shaman returns from her exile. She tells the party about the succubus and tells them that she can see the succubus in her spirit form. The group unsuccessfully searches the village for the succubus. While the rest of the group searches Zeena and Peracles manage to resurrect Durnfal. The group discovers that their mounts had been slain. They decide to spend the night in the Yemalio shrine since it has only the one entrance. The villagers are placed in the granaries, watches are set and everyone beds down for the night. During Svart, Gerhardt and Greystone's watch the succubus sneaks up and begins to befuddle them. She befuddles first Svart and then Gerhardt. Gerhardt manages to fire an arrow at her before being befuddled so the Greystone is warned. The succubus is forced to entrance him and forces him to attack her enemies. He turns and hits Targan a mighty blow to the chest which almost slays him. The shaman awakes and begins to wake others. Hallelujah Harnsdottir grabs her axe and runs out to attack the enemy. She does not spot the succubus who attempts to sneak in and attack the group after Hallelujah

runs out but is spotted by Svart who has just come out of his befuddlement. He cuts her leg off. She attempts to stab Svart with her dagger but misses and loses her next attack. Gerhardt comes out of his befuddlement believing he is on the wrong side and decides to run away when he realizes that his side is out numbered. He sneaks out and runs off. The succubus rolls out of the door and lands on the ground. Svart jumps after her and falls on top of her. Greystone follows thinking to save the succubus. Hallelujah runs up to attack the succubus and finishes her off. Greystone comes out of his charmed state and eventually Gerhardt returns. Targan meanwhile has been saved by Zeena. The group rests for the remainder of the night. The next day they decide to track down the ogre children. The sorcerer summons an air elemental to take a message to the militia at Queenscliff (carrying a message written by Durnfal). The group marches out to the drying barn and Hallelujah and Greystone pick up the trail. The trail leads south into the Lunar Grantlands. As they head south in the general direction of Ronegarth a strange wind picks up and the locals quickly realize that something is wrong. The Eternal Battle was coming! They manage to cast their battle and rune magic and prepare themselves for battle! Nine skeletons and the Avatar of Chaos appear and the party prepares to die. The skeletons rush up and prove to be a pathetic threat. Svart and Hallelujah disable a dragon skeleton. The Avatar then spits acid and hits Svart in the leg knocking him to the ground as his leg dissolves. The skeletons and the Avatar ignore Targan who rushes up to attack the Avatar. He swings ineffectively at the Avatar who then punts him across the battlefield. Durnfal sneaks up behind the Avatar and critically impales him in the chest! Hallelujah rushes up to help attack the Avatar to keep him down. While the skeletons keep the rest of the party busy Hallelujah and Durnfal keep causing minor wounds to the Avatar. The Avatar spits acid at Hallelujah and misses, then spits acid at Durnfal and melts all the armour off of his left leg. Only his protection four saves him from actual physical damage. The Avatar d.i.'s for healing and attacks Hallelujah tearing her arm off. He then kicks Durnfal's head off. The Eternal Battle is soon to depart Prax taking Durnfal with them so everyone tries to d.i. for him. Hallelujah manages to do so. The Battle departs. The group beds down for the night. The next day the group tracks the ogre children almost all the way to the Pola Stead. The homesteader Nanni Pola leads the group to a nearby sinkhole where he had tracked the children. The group debates following the children down the sinkhole but decides not to and returns to Black Rock where they discover that the militia has impaled all the male villagers and senile elders save the priestess. The group then returns to Sun Dome..

20) Fire/Fertility/Waterday 1615

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Stephanie), Durnfal Slipspear (Yemalio farmer)(Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior) (Henry) Targan Bash (Storm Bull warrior)(Darryl) and Peracles (sorcerer) (Jeff). Party also includes Zeena a Chalana Arroy High Healer married to Svart Ulfsson.

Group receives reward for events at Black Rock. Hallelujah Harnsdottir is offered a chance to atone for her killing of Thosah Strongsphear. She has to dedicate a year of service to Chalana Arroy. This involves her swearing to forego violence (unless ordered otherwise by a healer) for a one year period during which she will have to tend the sick and serve the healers. Because she is responsible for the well being of the sorcerer Peracles the healers at Sun Dome send her to Horn Gate where hopefully the sorcerer

will receive a better reception (especially if no one discovers he's a sorcerer while he's there). (The Sun Domers refuse to have a soul-less, soul sucking sorcerer at Sun Dome for any length of time). The rest of the party hangs around waiting for their next orders. Targan and Svart are angered by the fact that the Sun Domers refuse to replace their lost mounts claiming that since they weren't lost in an actual battle their mercenary contract doesn't require their replacement. On Fire/Movement/Clayday the group is sent to Pavis with Thandren Clubfoot, Priest of Lokarnos to purchase some building materials and hire some craftsmen. The trip to Pavis takes twice as long because of the ox carts but they arrive there unscathed. The group is put up in the barracks at the Pavis Sun Dome temple until the supplies are purchased. On the next day of the dying moon (Fire/Illusion/Waterday) a red glow is seen in the mountains of Dragon's Pass. Fear sweeps the city as even the Lunars fear the possible presence of the Crimson Bat. People flee the city in droves by all exits until Sor-Eel has the gates sealed. A group of Storm Bulls race out of the Rubble to do battle with Chaos. By noon a powerful City Harmony spell calms the city and everyone learns that it is not the Bat that is coming but a magical Moon Boat. The boat arrives amid much speculation as to who is on it. Many speculate that it is either a Lunar tax collector (maybe even Ivex Devouring Dog) or a replacement for Sor-Eel. It turns out the boat holds the Lunar Coders, special agents of the Red Emperor. A day later Gerhardt Frei is asked by Krogar Wolfhelm to find a Tarshite Orlanthi named Alcibades a job. They try him out for their unit by having him fist fight Svart who is almost killed in the ensuing fight by two lucky shots to the head. Fortunately Gerhardt and Greystone have heals ready and one of them manages to heal him in time. A few days later the group begins the long trek to Chomorro. The caravan's journey is uneventful until just outside of Chomorro where they are attacked by a dozen Tusk Riders. Several of the oxen are slain in the battle but the group survives due to the timely intervention of the Lunar Provincial Survey. The Survey drops a scroll tube as they race by which Targan Bash discovers. Eventually the party arrives at Chomorro where the job of guarding the caravan falls to the Boatmen militia under Coriander. They return to Sun Dome where they discover two days later that Count Solanthos has decided not to renew their mercenary contracts. They are given their pay and a pay off for the training that Hector the Sun Dome librarian promised them in exchange for the scrolls in Auld Wyrnish they discovered in the caves at Weis Gap. They also learn that Durnfal Slipspear is now known as Strongsphear and has been made Lord of the Golden Ears fief which includes Rabbit Hat Farm and that all the building materials they had been guarding were for repairs at the farm. After some unsubtle hints the group decides to travel to Pavis. While passing through Garhound the babies of Carylton and Melisande are born. A enormous storm whips up keeping everyone except Orlanthi's and Ernalda worshippers inside. That night three baby boys are born. All the babies were born able to walk and one was born holding a silver ball, one a silver comb and one a silver mirror. The party stays in Garhound for the celebration that follows the birth. The day after they head on to Pavis where they take up various residences. Tamerlan, Targan and Greystone stay in Badside where they throw some parties in the Waha temple. Alcibades, Svart and Gerhardt stay at Geo's. The three arrange for the scrolls they got from the Lunar Provincial Survey to be translated at the Lhankhor Mhy temple. One night after Alcibades has gone to sleep Svart and Gerhardt notice a man sitting in the corner wearing and displaying troll runes. As he leaves the inn four men slink out after him. The pair pursue and come upon the four and two others assaulting the man from the inn. They cast their spells and leap into combat managing to knock down three of the assailants who are armed with fighting claws. The assailants are part of a group known as White Hoods who are rapid xenophobes hating all

nonhumans and any who willing associate with nonhumans. They have been engaged in a series of escalating attacks on nonhumans and nonhuman sympathizers. The stranger, (one Jurgen Trollbrother) was assaulted because he is a worshipper of Argan Argar. The White Hoods only manage to mildly wound him before most of them are knocked out of the fight by Svart and Gerhardt and the night patrol of trollkin show up and chase off the only assailant who managed to escape. The rest are taken into custody and the next day those without connections are crucified. The group learns that the scrolls refer to a cave complex in which hundreds of crystals can be found. They decide to investigate further...

21) Earth/Disorder/Clayday 1615

Party: Alcibades (Orlanth warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Neil), Jurgen Trollbrother (Argan Argar trader)(Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior) (Henry) and Targan Bash (Storm Bull warrior)(Darryl). Party also includes Zeena, a Chalana Arroy High Healer married to Svart Ulfsson.

The party is in Pavis trying to get as much free information and equipment (which would be nice if it was free too but...) as they can. Svart discovers that he is wearing far too much armour and trades his plate limb armour for lamellar limb armour, a suit of ringmail for Alcibades and a mule. This deal involves Svart and Greystone going to Zebraside to check out the mule. The trip proves to be uneventful. That night as Svart opens his trunk to put his clothes away a rubble runner leaps out at him. He casts bladesnap on his dagger and manages to slay the rubble runner with the aid of the clothes chest. He takes the corpse to the management to complain and is told by one of the maids that Geo's doesn't allow pets. He eventually gets to stay the night free as well as a free dinner. Svart finds a threatening note in his clothes chest that he gets the manager to read for him. The note is from the Whitehoods and it threatens him with unspecified injury if he continues interfering in their business. Meanwhile Gerhardt has had a crossbow quarrel fired at him in the street outside. He ducks for cover and once he decides the coast is clear he looks around trying to see the assassin(s). By this time they've bolted and he sees nothing. Jurgen Trollbrother overhears the group discussing spelunking and he tells them that he saw a sign in the troll temple advertising the services of a troll caver named Bugstump Grubeater. He offers to arrange a meeting between the group and the troll for a fee. Svart and Gerhardt are quick to remind him that he owes them his life. His memory suddenly improved Jurgen rushes off to arrange the meeting after he arranges to borrow some money to buy some rotten meat. The two nomads have meanwhile decided to travel out into the Wastes on borrowed mounts to pay a Daka Fal shaman to teach Tamerlan the light spell. This trip takes two and a half days round trip and results in the pair meeting Krabble Impala friend at his hut. After some negotiations as to price the shaman enters the spirit plane and finds a spell spirit so Tamerlan can learn the spell. The pair then return to Pavis. Meanwhile the rest of the group has met Bugstump Grubeater an aspiring Karrg's Son who is looking for interesting adventures he can go on to get the experience he need to make rune lord. The troll agrees to go along if offered an equal share in loot obtained. Jurgen asks to go along as translator and is also promised a fair share. The troll suggests that the group ask the Lhankor Mhy's for more information. They agree to do so and get the scroll interpreted by a priest. The priest suggests that there are references in the scroll to shrines of Thanatar, Vivamort and Primal Chaos being present in the caves. This information causes the group to rush out and buy leather collars as protection. After some considerations the group decides to travel

through the Long Dry south to Weis Gap in order to avoid Sun County and its troll haters. They make preparations to depart...

22) Earth/Harmony/Windsday 1615

Party: Alcibades (Orlanth warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Neil), Jurgen Trollbrother (Argan Argar trader)(Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior) (Henry) and Targan Bash (Storm Bull warrior)(Darryl). Party also includes Bugstump Grubeater (Kyger Litor initiate) and Fisher and Spider two value trollkin.

Party leaves Pavis. They travel half a day west of Pavis towards Aldachur in order to fool any potential pursuers. After half a day they head south into the Long Dry. They continue marching into the night and from then on march at night in order to minimize the possibility of being seen by Praxians. On the second night they march one of the trollkin stumbles across a sleeping Dinonychus. This wakes up the whole pack of seven who attack the party. A brief battle ensues in which no one is seriously injured. The two Praxians try and butcher the animals but only manage to successfully butcher one of them. The next night the group spots a banked campfire. Greystone and Bugstump sneak up and discover a group of sleeping Agrimori. They ignore the Agrimori and proceed on. The next night they spot another campfire and the pair are less successful at sneaking up. They discover a pair of Praxians who are camping out and who offer to share their campfire. Their offer is turned down and the party proceeds on. The next evening during the last watch the two Praxians and four morocanths sneak up on the party and try to capture them for slaves. Tamerlan spots two of the group sneaking up on them and shouts in order to wake up the party. Party members begin to wake up and Greystone begins to dispel the befuddles. A fierce fight breaks out and the party manages to hold their own. Bugstump casts a vigour and a strength and attacks one of the two humans biting off his leg. He charges one of the morocanths and goes into close combat with him. The other morocanth on that side of the battle fires his heavy crossbow at the troll but misses. He then charges in and attacks Greystone in order to save the man the troll attacked. He and Tamerlan exchange blows ineffectively. Alcibades joins in with his sling. Svart attacks the other human with his greatsword and cripples his shield arm. The morocanth Waha shaman moves in on Svart but is demoralized by Greystone. Svart has cast a Shield and a Truesword and turns to attack the shaman after he cuts the human's head off. The other morocanth on that side of the battle casts a conceal on the shaman and he disappears from view. Svart moves up against the morocanth who cast the conceal. That morocanth calls for an end to the fighting, they'll go their way and the humans would go their way. The party is divided on this, some wanting to stop the fighting (Greystone, Alcibades, Gerhardt and Bugstump), some wanting to continue it (Tamerlan and Targan) and others undecided (Svart). In fact when Targan tries to attack one of the morocanths Alcibades tries to stop him with his rapier. Targan parries the attack but does stop his advance. After some heated argument with some of the group demanding recompense in the form of looting the dead human which the morocanths refuse to allow the group decides to accept the morocanths offer in order to prevent further bloodshed. The party heals their wounds and marches on. That night they are followed by a pack of hyaenas but don't antagonize them. The next day as they sleep a group of bison riders slowly approaches and speaks to Greystone. They are in this part of Prax to see what's up. They have no hostile intentions towards the party and after speaking together for a while and exchanging foodstuffs they go their separate ways.

The next morning the group finally arrives at the Pola homestead where they are put up for the rest of that day and the following night after they clean themselves up a bit. The Polas feed and (in Jurgen's case) futter them. The next morning they descend into the cave...

23) Earth/Death/Fireday 1615

Party: Alcibades (Orlanth warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Neil), Jurgen Trollbrother (Argan Argar trader)(Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior) (Henry) and Targan Bash (Storm Bull warrior)(Darryl). Party also includes Bugstump Grubeater (Kyger Litor initiate) and Fisher and Spider two value trollkin.

The party accompanied by Nanni Pola treks over to the sinkhole where they fasten a rope to a cottonwood and descend into the depths. This descent is greatly aided by the strength of the troll Bugstump. The party manages to descend to the bottom without incident. They proceed into the cave complex where a few chambers on they run into a trio of dragonsnails and a walktapi left there by Nanni to harass them. The walktapi poisons Targan and Bugstump but they manage to knock it down and other party members keep it down. The dragonsnails pose little problem to the party (other than the one that spit acid which destroyed the troll's leg armour). The party marches onward and discovers the Garden. They proceed along the eastern edge of the Garden and had just decided to descend down into the Dark City when the ambush set by Drueke strikes! Three medium crossbow bolts fly out and strike Gerhardt Frei killing him! He successfully d.i.'s unfortunately using up all but one of his POW points in doing so. The party heads back in the direction the assassin's bolts had come from and a running battle begins. Ruventan, Rahmaso and Aven run ahead of the party (taking advantage of their ability to see the Dark Light) firing crossbow bolts when they are reloaded. This fire is ineffectual and the troll surprises the party by casting Dark Sight spells on four of the group (Targan, Svart, Alcibades and Tamerlan). Eventually the group catches up with the assassins and dispatches them with ease. The priest Drueke attempts to help his henchmen but is forced to flee into the morass of the Garden to escape his pursuers. Only a risky casting of mobility allows him to escape. This is at the cost of five of his heads that Rahmaso was carrying. The party decides to exit the caverns but when they return to the bottom of the sinkhole they discover that the rope has gone! They decide to look for another exit. The party continues to explore the maze. They discover the Thanatar temple complex and wreck havoc there. They also come across Mogo the scorpionman and easily slay him. They also come across a hidden niche of money and crystals. Although they have discovered the exit to the caverns that leads from the temple they decide to stay underground since they haven't found any great hoard of crystals (other than the few they recovered from the dead Thanatari). They wander around the cavern complex running across the Vivamort shrine which they decide not to investigate more closely. They find a relatively dry spot to camp "overnight" and await the morning...

24) Earth/Death/Wildday? 1615

Party: Alcibades (Orlanth warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(Neil), Jurgen Trollbrother (Argan Argar trader)(Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior) (Henry) and Targan Bash (Storm Bull warrior)(Darryl). Brief appearance by

Silverstone (Waha herder) (Cam E.). Party also includes Bugstump Grubeater (Kyger Litor initiate) and Fisher and Spider two value trollkin.

After a good night's rest the party continues to explore the caverns. They discover a sump in the Dark City and Fisher the trollkin is sent in to investigate. He returns with a bag full of crystals (15 in total). After some more marching around in the dark they see a light in the distance. Approaching the room (the Stone Court) they cautiously enter. After a brief battle with a pair of dragonsnails the group is ambushed by Nanni and Hadani Pola and Druke the Thanatari priest. They are assisted by the services of the 25 ogre children from Black Rock. A furious battle occurs in which slowly but surely the three priests are defeated. The children are run off after taking severe casualties. Their disrupts were quite effective for a while as were the angry head spirits loosed after the priest dies. Tamerlan manages to release all the spirits with the aid of his spirit strengthening crystal. The party pursues the children and discovers the Temple Hall. After precursory examination of the hall which endangers party members they manage to find the exit the ogres used. They discover a trap door which leads into a cellar filled with butchered human bodies! This room has another exit a trap door in the ceiling. Bugstump forces this open setting off the trap the ogres set! (The room had been soaked in oil and other flammables and a lit brazier set on top of the trap door). The party manages to escape the burning house and discovers the outbuildings burning as well. Svart attempts to free the slaves chained in the outbuildings and manages to free two before the buildings burn down. The group manages to contain the fire long enough to allow all of the party to escape. After they've all escaped and are standing around deciding what to do the Lunar Provincial Survey rides up and its leader Dalamides has a brief discussion with Svart. He asks Svart what happened down below and after hearing about the slain Thanatari priest feels that he owes Svart and the party a favour. He tells Svart that his men want all the mundane loot or they will attack the party. They can keep all the crystals and magical loot they recovered. Svart tells the party to do this and (being outnumbered and outgunned) they do this. After the Survey leaves in pursuit of the ogres the party is approached by Silverstone, a young Bison rider who offers the services of his bison as a beast of burden to carry all their loot. They recover all the odds and ends Mogo had gathered and prepare to head to Pavis. They are "apprehended" by representatives of Duke Raus. The party is persuaded to travel to Ronegarth to explain what had happened to the Pola Stead. They agreed to do so and after spending a comfortable evening Duke Raus hears their story and rewards them each with 100L for their services (including the impressed young Bison rider). (Dalamides supports their account and informs them that the Survey lost track of the ogres in the North Bog). The rescued slaves remain with Duke Raus as freedmen at his insistence. An uneventful trip back to Pavis occurs except that the party comes across a strange set of tracks which turn out to be those of a Chaos Gaggle. They spot the Gaggle and wisely decide not to engage it. (Targan does save a Chaos Goat dropping as evidence). They enter Pavis and proceed to the Lhankhor Mhy temple where they quickly get to see a priest due to the dropping Targan bears. They make arrangements to get the crystals and items identified by the priests. That evening the Lunar Coders approach the party and ask if they will guide the Coders back to the site where they saw the Gaggle. They agree to do so. The next day most of the party excepting Gerhardt and Tamerlan lead the Coders back to where they last saw the Gaggle. The Coders track the Gaggle and wait until the next day (that of the full moon) to attack. A brief battle ensues in which the Gaggle is fairly easily slain with the aid of all the party members. The party members who helped each get 100L for

their trouble. A few weeks later the group meets to pick up their now identified crystals and magic items. Everyone gets 5000L as their share. The troll takes one of the Martyr rubies as his share and insists that Gerhardt receive the iron broadsword. Gerhardt surprises the party by telling them that he is retiring and buying a farm in Garhound county with his share...

(At this point the party goes their separate ways. Alcibades returns to Lunar Tarsh and Jurgen Trollbrother returns to the Holy Country. Svart Ulfsson after an unsuccessful attempt at reconciliation with Zeena disappears into the stews of Pavis. Durnfal Slip, err Strongsphear is busy with his noblesse obligations, Targan the Bash is shovelling it at the Storm Bull in the Rubble temple, Gerhardt Frei is zapping rats in Garhound and Greystone and Tamerlan return to the bosoms of their tribes. Hallelujah Harnsdottir returns to Pavis from Horn Gate and takes up residence at the aforementioned Storm Bull temple. Time goes by...)

Chronicles of the South - Part 5

25) RuneQuest the Continuation... Fire/Disorder/Freezeday 1617

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(NPC), Durnfal Strongsphear, Baron of Golden Ears (Yemalio former farmer)(Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior) (Henry) and Targan the Bash (Storm Bull warrior)(Darryl).

After just over a year and a half apart the party members are all disturbed by the same dream...

In the dream the character stands beneath a tall column of rock on the edge of the Zola Fel. Below them the water runs pure and undisturbed. Riverfolk, animals and Praxians alike all use and benefit from the river. Then the character feels a sense of growing unease and notices that a tiny shadow is spreading from the base of the column. It looks like a horned skull and it slowly grows until it overshadows the whole river and people, plants and animals start dying of disease and famine. Then the character awakes.

This dream leads each of them to try and find the other members. Hallelujah and Targan are together at the Storm Bull temple when Tamerlan and Greystone find them on the last day of Sea Season. They all mention the fact that they have had the same dream and Greystone and Tamerlan tell Hallelujah and Targan that they have purchased a scroll from Treasure Trove Hurbi that suggests a possible weakness for Muriah the Broo Witch Queen. The four hear a rumour that Svart Ulfsson is working as a bouncer at Dirty Dick's Dumpside Dive and go there the next day. They arrive at the dive just in time to see a female warrior forcibly evicted. Hallelujah helps her to her feet and she rushes back inside drawing her scimitar. Inside the party sees the woman attacking their friend Svart. The woman is aided by her friends and the group rushes to Svart's aid. In the close quarters bastard swords are the biggest weapons people can draw and a quick and bloody fight ensues. After the off duty soldiers charge Svart and Hallelujah a cloaked stranger in the corner draws an iron broadsword and enters the fray. The fight is quickly over with only one fatality (a soldier is cut in two by Hallelujah's battle axe). The soldiers are allowed to flee

with their fallen and the mysterious stranger turns out to be Gerhardt Frei! He tells the group that he too has had the strange dream and since he's tired of farming...

The group decides to repair to the Storm Bull in the Rubble Temple in case any more Lunar soldiers show up. Svart quits and collects his two silvers in back pay (as well as the serving sloven's wages since Tod the owner has decided to quit the premises as well). As the group heads back to the Temple they spot a glowing golden figure in the prow of a boat being rowed up the river towards Pavis. Farsees and searches quickly identify the figure as being none other than that of Baron Durnfal Strongspear of Goldenears! The noble figure of the Baron makes quite a sight even when he is pelted with sling stones by trollkin when he passes some troll ruins. Only getting hit in the head ruins the picture. The party continues on to the Temple to await the Baron's arrival. He shows up later after running a dung gauntlet at the Temple from the local Storm Bull riff-raff. The party compares notes and Durnfal tells them some dire news-a delirious, nearly dead Storm Bull was delivered to his estate by some nomads. Between his ravings he told the Baron that he was the only survivor of a mission against Muriah and that the healer with the party, one Zeena, had been taken prisoner. Durnfal also tells the party of another dream he has been having:

In the dream Durnfal approached an abyss. A figure, his back to the Durnfal, stood at the abyss looking down. Durnfal approached the abyss and found it filled with numberless heads, all screaming soundlessly. Many of the faces seemed familiar to him, but he could not place or recognize them. Then the figure turned to him and Durnfal saw that it was a Light Son. The figure smiled, reached up with one hand removed his head and handed it to Durnfal. He automatically reached for the head. Suddenly, the figure whipped a garrotte from his robes and deftly slipped it over Durnfal's head. The line of the wire lay cold as death on the skin of his neck. He screamed and awoke...

The party agreed that they should try and find the mysterious shrine of Thanatar mentioned in the scroll purchased from Treasure Trove Hurbi. They decided to go to the Lhankhor Mhy temple the next day and see what information they could get on Senna's past actions, Senna being the individual who had originally owned the scroll and who had disappeared into Vulture's Country over a year ago. The group went to the temple the next day and over the course of two long days waiting for information at the temple discover that yes, Senna had been there but no, he hadn't gotten much information from them. Like Senna, the party was referred to Hector the Librarian at the Sun Dome Temple for more information. They received a letter of introduction to Hector and set off the next day. (Hallelujah spent most of the two days waiting at the temple in her tight leather tunic trying to distract the initiates so much that someone higher up would kick her out so some work could get done. No such luck, they all enjoyed a good leer like the next man-they're scholars, not eunuchs for crying out loud!)

After an overnight (read drunken free for all) at Geo's in Garhound where the party made the acquaintance of Carylton Squally, Melisande and their three sons the party arrived at the Sun Dome. As guests of the Baron the group is put up in the visitor quarters and their letter of introduction is carried to Hector. He discovers the location of the tower mentioned in the scroll and asks if he can have a copy made. This takes three days or so and the party regales the local militia with tales of their (and Baron Golden Ears') exploits. Some illusions are shattered but the shine on the Baron is little diminished.

Hector gives the party an invitation to the Magnus Pike the militia leader in Arrowsands (where the tower is located) and the party heads down there. They arrive and head out to the tower where they discover the weird rune markings that give directions to the Thanatar shrine. They decipher them with some difficulty and realize that they must travel into the Wastes. With a stop at Rabbit Hat Farm for supplies the group travels first south to Condor Crag and they west into the Wastes. The trip takes twenty days...

26) RuneQuest the Continuation... Fire/Stasis/Wildday 1617

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(NPC), Durnfal Strongsphear, Baron of Golden Ears (Yemalio former farmer)(Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior) (Henry) and Targan the Bash (Storm Bull warrior)(Darryl).

After a brutal journey of just over two weeks duration over the broken terrain and through the searing heat of Fire Season the party arrived at their destination, the great stone skeleton of a demibird partially encased in solid rock. There they found that the canyon forked to the northwest and to the south. The northwest fork was the continuation up the relatively broad Canyon of the Serpent of Dusk while the other narrower canyon turned towards the ominously named Devil's Knob and was known as Noway Canyon. Greystone noted that there were a lot of human, herdbeast and predator tracks (including broos) in the Canyon of the Dusk Serpent while there was naught but broo tracks in Noway Canyon. The party resolved to spend the night at the fork and leave the next day. That night they spotted a fire to the southwest along the canyon and the next day they went to investigate. They found a well-ordered camp site with sable tracks. (Could it be their old friends the Lunar Provincial Survey?) They decided to track the sable riders as Dalamides the sorcerer leader of the Survey had also been making inquiries into Seena's activities. Greystone tracked the sables up onto the plateau where they headed northwestward roughly in the direction of Devil's Knob. There he lost the trail. The party then decided to follow Noway Canyon along the top towards Devil's Knob. There they spotted a party of broos camping in shallow caves beneath Devil's Knob. There seemed to be only a dozen or so broos so they decided to lure the broos into an ambush. Durnfal Strongsphear volunteered to ride his mule up towards the broos and taunt them into attacking. He donned his plate armour and tilting his plate helm backwards at a jaunty angle he trotted off. The broos took awhile to spot him but when they did he taunted them again. Half again as many broos popped up and prepared slings while two prepared bows (including a giant four armed specimen). Durnfal got his mule turned around and the broos let fly. All the stones and arrows bounced off of Durnfal's magically augmented armour (the spirit inhabiting Durnfal's spear had cast protection four on him). The next round they smartened up and aimed for the mule which dropped in its tracks. Durnfal managed to land on his feet and he ran like all the trolls in the Rubble where chasing him. As the pursuing broos approached the rock the party had agreed to as the point when they would let fly with their missiles they did so. A brief fight ensued which led to the extinction of all but two or three broos. Several members of the party contracted diseases but no one had a serious case. The party decided to descend into the cave. There they encountered the mad ghost guards who were easily dispatched to the other world, discovered (and looted) the bodies of Senna and his nomad guides and found the inner shrine where Ormelius Dragonchilde was imprisoned. With the aid of a Spirit Screen 6 Hallelujah

battered his MPs down after which Gerhardt went in and freed his spirit. The party destroyed Muriah's enchantments and decided to take the altar stone to the surface in order to douse the dark light flame. They carried the stone to the surface and discovered that another party of broos had arrived and were waiting outside. They put up their spells and charged out but Thed was with the broos that day and several critical sling shots later the Storm Bull was dead and several others had been badly wounded. The party was unable to recover Targan's body and the broos dragged it off to loot and eat (Storm Bulls? Them's good eatin'). The party regrouped in the cave to regain MPs and rest. That night after dark they decide to send Tamerlan and Graystone out to determine where the broos were. The two sneak out and climbing one of the slopes Graystone manages to trip over a broo waking the lot up. Tamerlan and Graystone have to duke it out with half the broos by themselves until the rest of the party shows up. They mop up the broos and then the broos from the other side of the canyon show up. They're mopped up too and only the broo shaman escapes. The party stops for some much needed rest. They gather up what remains of Targan and sleep for the rest of the night.

27) RuneQuest the Continuation... Fire/Stasis/Godday 1617

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(NPC), Durnfal Strongsphear, Baron of Golden Ears (Yemalio former farmer)(Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne) and Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior) (Henry).

Lunars: Hazphar Pharates (Unaligned sorcerer)(NPC), Dalamides Aveticus, Decurio and Sword of Yanafal Tarnils (NPC), Reskil Taranus, Priest of the Seven Mothers (NPC) and Antonia Blackhock (Seven Mothers/Daka Fal initiate)(NPC)

Rescuer: Zeena Duran (NPC) High Healer of Chalana Arroy

The next morning the party heads out after the fleeing broo shaman. As they proceed overland towards the Bleak Hills they come across the remains of the Lunar Provincial Survey which had been overrun by broos the previous night. The two groups realising they are after the same thing agree to team up swearing by their gods not to betray each other until after they arrive back at Ronegarth to collect the reward. They agree to split any loot and the reward 60/40 with the Lunars getting first pick of any choice loot. The party helps to bury the Lunar dead, rest a while and then the set off after the broos. They reach the High Holes site several hours later. Greystone is sent off to scout the area but he discovers nothing. They enter one entrance which doesn't lead them anywhere the larger party members can go. They discover the main entrance and force their way in. Hard fighting leads them farther into the cave complex. Eventually they meet the main body of the broos and a bitter fight breaks out. Muriah's excellent broos put up a good fight but they're no match for Hallelujah's pole ax and Greystone's Befuddle. Durnfal and Svart also do their gods proud and the party presses forward. The Sword and Kirin the eastern broo duke it out toe to toe with huge Bladesharpes and Protections and neither gets anywhere. Eventually the Sword is killed only to D.I. himself back to life. (None of the Lunars other than the Sword are particularly effective in the battle. Though the priest does manage to Heal up the fallen). Kirin is slain by the Sword and Svart. The shaman Behlok also uses Befuddle to good purpose until he is felled. Muriah appears ineffectually casting Cause Disease spells at people. Then she runs over to her

escape route slits Zeena's throat and escapes up the tunnel leaving the last few broos to be slaughtered. The party heals up Zeena and races after Muriah. Greystone and Antonia manage to track her down and corner her. Muriah sends her fetch to possess Dalamides and the possessed Dalamides trades blows with the party. Durnfal and others race towards Muriah who Greystone manages to Befuddle. Durnfal reaches her first and critically impales her in the head killing her. He manages to avoid catching most of the diseases she carried and they burn the body. The party makes camp for a week to allow Zeena to treat their diseases.

28) RuneQuest the Continuation... Fire/Illusion/Freezeday 1617

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(NPC), Durnfal Strongsphear, Baron of Golden Ears (Yemalio former farmer)(Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne) and Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior) (Henry).

Lunars: Hazphar Pharates (Unaligned sorcerer)(NPC), Dalamides Aveticus, Decurio and Sword of Yanafal Tarnils (NPC), Reskil Taranus, Priest of the Seven Mothers (NPC) and Antonia Blackhock (Seven Mothers/Daka Fal initiate)(NPC)

Rescued: Zeena Duran (NPC) High Healer of Chalana Arroy

After Zeena has finished helping the party cure their diseases (as well as purifying what little loot of the broos they could) the party sets off once again towards Condor Crag. Again the trip is long and uneventful. Twenty days pass and once again the party is back on the Plains of Prax. On the way to Ronegarth to collect their reward the party comes across one of the Duke's men who has been horribly mutilated by Impala Riders. The body is still warm and they discover a note in his belt pouch that agrees to the pay the ransom the Tusk Riders are demanding for the Duke's daughter, Jezra. The note goes on to say that the ransom will be brought to the old stone tower in a few days. The party decides to rescue Jezra and set off for the old tower. (Hallelujah having formerly worked for the Duke knows where the tower is roughly). They find the tower and send Tamerlan and Greystone to sneak up and scout it out. Greystone manages to climb to the top and is forced to do battle with a pair of strange winged creatures by himself. He manages to kill the two by himself and the rest of party climbs up a rope he lets down. They proceed down into the tower killing all opposition they meet (not much of a challenge) and are proceeding without any problems until Gerhardt and Tamerlan fall into a trap on the steps. The two plummet into a deep pond and Gerhardt manages to easily get out while Tamerlan just barely manages to drag himself out. The two explore for a way out in the dimly lit space and manage to stumble onto six skeletons which the poorly armed pair manage to defeat. Finding some coins and an iron spear point the two find the exit and head up. Meanwhile the rest of the party manages to find and free Jezra. They leave the tuskens to starve, loot the tower and head off to Ronegarth.

On the way they encounter a sombre party of the Duke's mercenaries bearing the body of Daine his chief of mercenaries. Daine had been treacherously slain by the self-styled mayor of Weis Gap, Tarnak after he had laughed at him when he said that he was going to marry Jezra. Daine's last act was to activate his Death Sword which slew Tarnak.

The party arrives at the sombre Ronegarth and is put up until after Daine's funeral. Four days later, after the funeral the party is received into Duke Raus' presence. His priest has cast a divination that confirms that Muriah is dead. The priest acting as the Duke's intermediary pays them their reward and offers the Duke's thanks for rescuing Jezra and killing Muriah. He ups the reward to 300 Wheels! Then the priest offers to trade the party Daine's iron armour in exchange for all loot they had retrieved from the Tusk Riders. The party agrees and splits the prize with the Lunars.

The next day (Earth/Harmony/Wildday) the party sets off for Horn Gate to seek some healing for their afflictions. They meet a large party of Storm Bulls there who treat them to a three day drunken bash and orgy to celebrate their victory over Muriah. The party spends a week in Horn Gate before heading back to Pavis. They spend most of their money and trade some minor magic items for healing and everyone is healed back to full health. They arrive back in Pavis Earth/Fertility/Windsday and are overwhelmed by the welcome. The Lunars had arrived before them and spread the news. Their money isn't good in this town for drinks and they spend a week telling and re-telling the tale of Muriah's death. At the end of the next week they are approached by one Amur An Zed, Priest of Dormal with a job offer. He will pay the equivalent of 5000 Lunars for each giant boot tree they can bring to Corflu. The party investigates the economics of this offer...

29) Balastor's Barracks (the scenario that was almost forgotten!) ???

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(NPC), Durnfal Strongsphear, Baron of Golden Ears (Yemalio former farmer)(Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne) and Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior) (Henry).

This is the scenario I forgot to write an account of. Svart had a dream about a temple of Humakt hidden in the Rubble. The party explored it and managed to retrieve the cult sword and some other treasures which they turned over to the temple of Humakt for a reward.

30) The Return of Dorian Tavish...Terrier Earth/Stasis/Windsday 1617 (Feb. 03/1996)

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Barbeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Tamerlan (Waha noble)(NPC), Durnfal Strongsphear, Baron of Golden Ears (Yemalio former farmer)(Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne) and Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior) (Henry).

Special Guest Appearance by: Peracles (Sorcerer from Ralios) Jeff

This is the point where these "objective" campaign accounts are replaced by the various Tales from Grandpa which follow in chronological order.

Tales from Grandpa - Chapter 1

--Grandpa, grandpa wake up and tell us a story!

--Huh, what? What is it broos, Lunars, slarges? What, what? Oh. It's you damn kids again. You almost sent me on to Waha early. I swore after the last time that seven deaths was enough, next time I'm not coming back.

--We're sorry grandpa.

-- Well what do you little buggers want this time as if I didn't know.

--We want a story!

--Oh, not again.

--Please grandpa, please?

--All right. Well...have I told about the time we were swallowed by the giant eel?

--Yes!

--Oh, well how about the time we killed the giant gorp.

--Oh, not that one again.

--Well, how about the giant priest of Pocharngo?

--Was that the one where you were killed right at the beginning of the fight or near the end?

--Oh, so you've heard that one before. Hmmm, a new story. Well did I ever tell you about the time we rescued the dog from the ogres?

--A dog!?!?!?

--Good, let's see it happened like this...

It was during Storm Season in Pavis, it'd been raining for days and it almost made a body long for Fire Season. Just almost mind you. I was with the usual bunch of weirdos I hung around with then, the Humakti, the Bison Rider, the Yemalio, the Axe Maiden and that Orlanthi who managed to die more often than I did.

The season before three of us, I think it was the Yemalio and the Bison Rider and me'd (or was it the Orlanthi who was with us?), anyways we'd been hanging out in Gimpy's when we spotted that stinkin' ogre, Harnval Threefingers and his sons. He'd somehow hooked up with the survivors of that bunch of ogres we'd almost wiped out the previous year. Wasn't much we could do about 'em in Gimpy's so we tried to ignore them. They looked as obnoxious and mean as always except they had this little yappy dog with them on a chain leash. Well that mutt freaked out when he spotted us and started yapping up a storm. Harnval cuffed the dog and said "Shut up Ratbane."

Damn dog hardly looked big enough to kill rats. Then that bloody dog cast a disruption at Durnfal the Yemalio. (Guess it wasn't the Orlanthi after all). Surprised the hell out of us-I'll tell you. Never heard of a dog familiar before, especially such an unobedient one. Well, the cursed ogres left soon after that and we sat there and tried to figure out what the hell had happened. Durnfal was scared for a bit when he remembered his "moment of weakness" with that good- looking ogress the year before. He was worried for a bit there that he might be a doggy daddy. Had him scared shitless mind you. Eventually we figured that it seemed unlikely that the dog was an ogre itself.

Then we figured, that dog can't be the late lamented Dorian Tavish could it?

--I ever tell you kids about Dorian Tavish? Called himself OGREbane? He was a kind of reckless fisherfolk who tried to attune one crystal too many and ended up covered with sea metal scales. Too bad it happened in the guest quarters of the main Sun Dome Temple. Old Solanthos Ironpike was mighty quick to pass judgement on poor old Dorian. Them thar Yemalios were mighty quick to fry ol' Dorian. High noon, swoosh! A couple of my buds tried to beg their gods to remove his Chaos taint but nobody was listening to our prayers that day. Harnval even showed up under Lunar escort and offered to take Dorian with him. Damn ogre always did claim that Dorian was his son. Got to hand it to ol' Dor though. He refused to go with the ogre and choose to fry instead. Almost brought a tear to my eye. 'Course he was chaos and he had to die. Least it was quick.

Now where was I? Anyways, Dorian was dead but here was that tricky ogre with some small yappy dog who seemed to be trying to get our attention.

We decided that we'd get Gerhardt the Orlanthi to pick up a Mindspeech spell so we could talk with this mutt the next time we saw it. Since we was paying he didn't mind much. All we had to do once he had the spell was stake out Gimpy's until the ogres came back. Sigh, those were good times, especially since we were working off a pre-paid bar tab for that troll beer we'd given Gimpy's. I think I ended up drinking most of it. Those were the days...

--Grandpa!!

--Huh, oh sorry kids. Where was I?

Eventually the ogres came back when Gerhardt, Svart the Humakti, Greystone the Bison Rider and I were in Gimpy's. Think this was about half a season or more later. Gerhardt managed to cast the spell on the mutt and sure enough that damn dog was Dorian! Claimed he'd had to haunt the Sun Dome Temple 'cause of the way he'd died. Apparently Harnval and some broo shaman had snuck up to the barbecue site and caught his ghost. (How the hell they'd snuck so far into Sun County without being spotted I'll never know). They'd taken the ghost and bound it into a little mutt that they'd just killed and damned if they didn't have a mutt with a human spirit. (Again why they'd bother I don't know).

Well, the dog, Ratbane talked to Gerhardt and told him about his life with them there ogres. He was just freakin' out and begging us to save him. He told us where the ogres lived as best he could and we said we'd save him. Ratbane told us that the ogres lived in a small fort near the Wyvern gate. They climbed over the wall 'cause there was no gate and lived in a big house guarded by eight big dogs. He told us roughly the path the ogres followed to get home from Gimpy's and said he'd take a dump at the spot where the ogres left the main road leading to Wyvern Gate. While Gerhardt and the dog was yappin' those buggers sent a drink over to us. Well, to show my contempt I dropped my loincloth and pissed in it (the beer, not the loincloth) and sent it back. (Almost got us kicked out of Gimpy's that did). Harnval put the beer down on the floor for that poor little mutt to drink but I guess he was too smart for that. Gerhardt ended up telling ol' Ratbane we'd rescue him as soon as we could

We went on a little scouting trip into the Rubble and managed to find the compound. It was a rough square with the walls made up of a mix of rubble and wood posts stretching between these ruined buildings that had been filled in. We couldn't get a clear view inside the fort but we could hear the dogs. We didn't feel like jumping seven ogres and their guard dogs by ourselves so we decided to invite some Storm Bulls to go with us. We got Sticklebrix that stinkin' Pol Joni Storm Buller to approach the local Kahn about taking the ogres out. We had to get him to ask 'cause the Kahn was mad at Gerhardt for suggesting he take over the Temple to Storm Bull in the Rubble that the Axe Maiden's Storm Kahn brother had left empty when he went on another one of his missions. Seems Sax Bolderson, (the Axe Maiden's brother) was a might ticked when he got back to find another bunch of Uroxi in his temple. But that's another story.

So Sticklebrix asked the Kahn and he agreed to bring seven of his followers along with him to help off the ogres. (We didn't bother mentioning the dog). He was mad when we met on the morning of the attack but decided that he'd killed Gerhardt after the ogres were dead. "Business before pleasure", he said. First thing he did was ask us what the plan was. Well we couldn't tell him the real plan which was to use the Bullers to soak up casualties so less of us would die or be hurt. We realized that we didn't have a ladder and there was no way that we could get one on such short notice. We also wondered how we'd get rid of the dogs. Someone mentioned poison but there was no way we could get a hold of any. We thought about distracting the dogs maybe by throwing some meat over the wall. Then some genius suggested throwing an animal over the wall, maybe a cat or a rabbit. The Kahn sent Sticklebrix with some money into town to buy some rabbits. He came back a half hour or so later with two sacks with a cat in each sack. Bastard said something about "Hope these aren't anyone's familiar." We decided to ignore that last comment. Can't say that the Kahn was too impressed by our planning abilities.

On our way through the Rubble we met up with this party of Zorak Zorani trolls. Stinkin' little trollkin with them screams, "That's them, those murderers there!" In Tradetalk no less. Crazy bastards accused us of having something we didn't. "Where are they", this big pisser in lead armour screams at us. We can't think of what the hell he's talking about since we've never stolen nuthin' from Zorak Zorani trolls before. (Now Kyger Litor trolls, that's a different story. In fact this bunch had that two-timing trollkin whose kin we'd slaughtered in Darkness Season with them. We should of killed him then when we had the chance. Remember kids the only good troll is a dead troll).

Anyway, we told the trolls we didn't know what the hell it is they thought we had so they could just piss off. Fortunately it was daylight and with the Storm Bulls we had 'em outnumbered two to one. I'll bet the iron axes the Kahn and the Axe Maiden were carrying didn't hurt either. So they left leaving us wondering what the hell it was they thought we had and making us realize that we'd probably find out soon enough and we'd probably wouldn't like it when we did. We spotted trollkin shadowing us the whole time we were in the Rubble that day. But we kept to the business at hand and kept on heading to the ogre's fort. We got close to the compound and they decided that I'd sneak up on the other side of the compound and toss the cats over the wall distracting the dogs so the rest could go over the other wall. Sure enough with the help of silence magic I managed to sneak up to the base of the wall. The wind was in my favour so I didn't have to worry about the dogs. Then I thought to myself, "How the hell am I going to chuck a cat up over a ten foot wall?" Well I tried to heave the first cat up and over and missed.

Bloody cat scratched the hell out of my face when it fell back against me. I did manage to heave the second cat up to the top of the wall but the damn thing just clung there. Fortunately that was enough to distract the dogs and bring them running to this side of the fort.

I missed most of the fight but what follows is what I was told about later. They said their prayers and called up their spirit magic and then went the wall. Well, most of them went over the wall in the first wave just by clambering over (except for that damn, prissy Bison rider who threw a knotted rope up to catch between two of the stakes. Well, la de da). Soon as they dropped down the dogs spotted them and raced over barking their fool heads off. Well the Kahn lets a javelin loose and drops the first mutt. One of the ogres sticks his head out and says, "What's with you damn dogs." When he spotted us he ducked back inside yelling for help. The wave of dogs swept forward and hit the Storm Bulls. Poor mutts didn't last too long. Sticklebrix tried to head around back and enter the rear door. Showing his usual luck he found the first of the pits that Ratbane had mentioned. Did I forget to mention the pits? Well there were some. Bugger fell straight down and landed on a stake. Hallelujah the Axe Maiden went to help him but he decided to climb up the other side and go in the back door. Greystone, Hallelujah and Svart the Humakti decided to climb up the wall of the house and drop down on the other side.

Meanwhile the dogs had all been chopped up except the last one that buggered off with its tale between its legs. One of the Bullers ran up to the front door and been hit with a couple of crossbow quarrels. He went down and then the Kahn went through followed by most of his flunkies. He attacked the ogre in armour with another Buller while another one and the Yemalio went to enter the backroom. Durnfal was the first to the door and saw Harnval just as he drove this dagger into the breast of the young female ogre. Bastard was just finishing up some kind of spell. Then all hell broke loose.

There was this huge cracking sound and this enormous scaly arm ripped up through the floor. This big fucker of a monster with wings and a long whip like tail crawled out of the hole it'd made in the floor and stood up. This was bad news for the people on the roof because the monster was over 4 metres tall! The whole damn roof caved in and everybody was dumped into the room. Svart ended up next to Durnfal and Hallelujah ended up on top of Harnval. The old ogre female had her skull cracked and one of the old ogre's sons buggered off through the far door.

This critter had everybody's attention but that only lasted for a few seconds. With one swipe the monster tore one of the Bullers in half! Meanwhile the Kahn chopped an arm off of the ogre he was fighting and decided to leave him to Gerhardt and one of the Bulls. He wanted to get at the thing but there were too many of his followers in the way for him to get free. The creature was attacking Durnfal, Greystone and Svart at the same time! The worst thing was he had this long dick with poisoned teeth!

--Grandpa!

--Well he did. Do you want to hear this story or not?

--Sorry.

Where was I? Oh yeah, the monster was fighting three of us and only their skills and heavy armour was keeping them alive. They were slowly chopping the creature apart. Meanwhile Sticklebrix had poked his sword in through the room's window and had pinked one of the ogres. Well that ogre turned and ran for

it (did I say he'd buggered off earlier? Well he hadn't). Hallelujah was standing on top of the ogre priest and tried to kill the bastard with her pole axe. She had to shorten up her grip a bit and the scum managed to spit acid on her destroying her abdomen armour and chewing a big hole in her gut. She was still standing and even though the prick parried her next blow he didn't parry her last blow.

--Grandpa where were you when all this was happening?

--Err, well I'm a llama rider not a mountain goat so it took me a while to get up and over the wall. When I did manage to get over the wall I got closer and hit the monster with a javelin. Then I went in through the back door and found Ratbane cowering under a cot. I took him out 'round back and went to go through the front door.

Well the Yemalio got knocked down. His armour and his spear saved his life and this gave the Kahn a chance to step in. Finally after less than a minute the big monster was dead. I think the Kahn dealt the death blow. We ransacked the place finding piss all in the way of loot and let the Bulls take any thing we found to keep them happy. When they realized that we'd attacked this place to rescue a dog they weren't none happy. Fuckin' Kahn was upset that he hardly got to kill anything-don't get me wrong, he was pleased that we'd offed what ogres we did (though the ceiling falling in almost killed as many as we did, not to mention their butchering each other) he just hated losing a man and not killing much. (Turns out the tight bastard was mostly upset about having to pay to get his boy raised. Gerhardt made things between him and the Kahn nice somewhat by offering to pay for the healers). Still, all in all the Bulls weren't too happy about that mission. We ended up sending a few kegs of beer to their temple to make 'em happier.

--But grandpa what about the dog?

--Oh yeah, the dog well that's another story kids. Now piss off and let an old man get some rest.

Tales from Grandpa - Chapter 2

--Grandpa, grandpa tell us another story, puhleeze.

--Oh all right. What'll I tell you little buggers about this time.

--Tell us what happened to the dog that wasn't a dog!

--Oh him, well that's a long story kids and it's getting kind of late and....

--Puhleeze?

--Oh okay, but like I said it's a long story and I'll have to tell you what happened after we'd rescued him from the ogres. You see, it happened something like this...

We'd fought them ogres and their fiend and managed to survive relatively unscathed...well except for that Storm Bull that got ripped in half by the fiend that is, and Sticklebrix's leg wound and...oh, nevermind.

Well we'd survived and managed to keep the Storm Bulls from getting too pissed off at us over the lack of loot by paying to resurrect their boy and buying em a lot of beer.

The next day we made our way into the Rubble to the place where we were to meet Sax Bolderson and pick up the package we said we'd deliver for him. It was Storm Season so the sky was pissing away as usual. The plan as Hallelujah'd told us was that Sax would have three separate parties delivering identical packages for him to reduce the chance of the package being intercepted. When we got to the meeting place who did we see but that bugger Sticklebrix and a bunch of stinkin' Pol Joni waitin' there on their stinkin' taboo horses lookin' as cocky and self-satisfied as a Lunar tax collector backed up by a Tax Demon and a coupla units of Lunar hoplites. Sax hisself was there with these horrible claw marks on his face that kept slowly oozing blood. (He'd told his sister Hallelujah

Harnsdottir, the Barbeester Gor, that they'd been made by a troll. All I knew was that I didn't want to meet the troll that done that).

There was a third party there as well, a little spook covered from head to toe, all dressed in grey with even his or her face covered. Hallelujah, Sticklebrix and the spook went over to talk to Sax.

He was sitting on that thing he rode-(meanest critter I ever seen anyone ride. It looked mostly like a taboo horse when you looked at it dead on but if you looked at it out of the corner of your eye sometimes you'd get a different view of it. I heard that a Lhankhor Mhy looked at it once with shaman's vision and fainted dead away. All I know is that anything that was as fond of eatin' human flesh as that thing wasn't a horse and wasn't anything I wanted to either snuggle up to or try and ride. The general consensus among the local kahns and shamans was that this critter wasn't a horse (no matter what it looked like) so it wasn't taboo to ride.

Anyway, Sax told the three of them where the packages were to be delivered to, who to and by when. Lou, err Hallelujah took one, Sticklebrix took another and the spook took the third. Stix tied his to his horse while the spook hefted its box, sort of turned sideways and disappeared!

Lou came back to our group with her box which was about the size of a human torso. The box had been covered by green hides stitched together which were then left to dry so the box couldn't be opened without cutting the hides off. It was real heavy about the weight of all the junk those Sun Dome templar wimps regularly schelp around. She stashed the box on the back of Greystone's bison and we got ready to leave. She was just about to quietly tell us where we was to go when that idiot Stix makes his horse rear up and shouts, "Off to Corflu!" Then the whole bunch of Pol Joni tear off towards Yelm's breakfast nook whooping their fool heads off, yippin' and waving their weapons about. Morons. Kids, let me tell ya the only good horse rider is a dead one. Na, forget that there ain't no good horse riders!

We got ready to go and quietly headed off towards Garhound. We had enough grub for a week which we figured would get us to Rabbit Hat Farm where we could replenish our supplies. Lou told us that we were supposed to travel to Corflu before Sacred Time and deliver this box to some priest there. We figured this would be pretty much a cake walk. Ha!

The trip to Garhound was quiet and we had a nice reunion with Caryllon Squally and his wife Melisande and the triplets. Damn kids were as big as five year olds even though they were only two or so. Weird kids. We spent a nice evening sitting around drinking and swappin' lies. We were just getting ready to

sing "Cold Wind over Sartar" when we heard the drums. Bloody Zorak Zorani war drums. Guess the trip wasn't going to be as much a cake walk as expected. Since we were planning on travelling right through Sun County we didn't think we'd have too much trouble.

The next day we travelled down to Harpoon where we were going to spend the night. This is where the first real snag occurred. They (meaning the sun lover in charge, some old geezer by the name of Valdus Creakylimbs or something like that) wanted the box opened so they could inspect it for contrabrand. And us travelling with a Sun County noble, (Baron Durnfal Strongspear of the Five Ears Fief), and having faithfully performed services for the son! We didn't know what to do. Sax hadn't said that we couldn't open the box but we was reluctant to. Valdus, the old priest who'd been left in charge in Harpoon (the rest of the chief stick-up-the-butt types were at the main temple for some big meeting) said that he'd perform a divination the next day to get an idea whether the box contained anything of interest to the cult. This wasn't good. We didn't know what the hell was in the box nor whether it was something the Yemalio cult would value. If it was something they wanted would they grab it? You bet your llama they would. The bastards.

We all met in the "baron's" room to talk about it. Graystone cast a detect magic and discovered that the box was a very powerful magic source. I cast a detect gold and found out that the box was full of gold. This was looking worse and worse and those damn drums throbbing away in the swamp down river weren't helping much.

We didn't want to turn the box over or let them open it so we decided to bug out. Only one obstacle. The "baron" refused to leave and was threatening to call the militia to keep us from leaving. What could we do? Talk hadn't worked so we jumped him. Unfortunately it was kind of a half-assed effort at jumping. I befuddled him but he shook it off right away. Then Lou jumped him. (A scary sight, a Barbeester Gor almost two metres tall jumpin' you). Unfortunately Lou only had her fist and Durnfal had his iron kukri (sort of a crooked little sword kids). He parried her first blow and then chopped her in the leg which knocked her down since she still hadn't recovered from the acid burns the Cacodemon priest had given her. The Baron said he'd kill her and anyone else if anyone tried any thing fishy. He said that we could go and that he'd give us till dawn before he'd raise the alarm.

We healed Lou up, gathered up our gear and headed down to the river. We managed to persuade a boat man to take us as far as Chomorro where we could get off and head overland to Rabbit Hat farm. Had to pay the bugger 2 wheels to get him to do it. We took off and headed down the river.

Well we'd got away from Harpoon and headed down the river towards Helmbold. We travelled all night (sleeping all the way while the poor boatman had to stay awake to steer) and hid out in the swamp just north of Helmbold. Meanwhile, in Harpoon Durnfal waited all night like he promised and at the crack of dawn he went to the old priest and spilled the beans.

The old priest sent a vrok hawk carrying a message about us to Sun Dome and cast his divination. He discovered that the box did contain something important to the cult. Durnfal said he would head to Chomorro and try and head the party off. He went down to the water front and used his status as a River Voice and his meager oratory skills to persuade the boat people to help get him to Chomorro. They

believed his spiel and agreed to help him. Relay teams of riverfolk sped him down river to Chomorro and the bugger even beat us there. When he got there he was told that Belvani, the Light Son's Lieutenant and 18 templars would be force marching down to Chomorro to "apprehend the miscreants. "

We got off the boat and marched around Helmbold. The boatman headed past Helmbold, picked us up down river and then we decided that we would spend the day hiding and then travel to just before Chomorro, get off the boat and head cross country to throw off the pursuit.

We slogged cross country to the edge of Vulture Country. Quite a change from the last time we'd been in this area back in Fire Season. The dash across country was pretty uneventful and once we hit the edge we turned south and skirting the edge of Vulture Country avoiding Lunar homesteaders. It took us about five days to hit the edge of the river delta and the marsh along the shores of the Rogazzi Sea. Then, like the bunch of geniuses we was we finally remembered that Corflu was on an island! We decided that we'd wander along the edge of the delta, through the marsh and then turn west along the beach until we reached a point south of Corflu and then head north somehow.

I never want to see that damn marsh or delta ever again. It was a nightmare. Picture it key mile after key mile of water and mud, mosquitos as big as tick birds, leeches as long as your leg, and every other kind of stinkin' bug you never want to see. Thank Waha it was winter or it'd been worse. I still shudder to think what worse would be like. Nowhere solid to rest your butt and walking like a slave. Stupid little islands that look solid enough until you try and walk on em. We was down to short rations since we'd been planning on stopping at Rabbit Hat Farm to resupply. Nothing to eat unless you like cattails or leeches. Nobody in our bunch could catch a fish to save their life. It took us two days to wade through the muck. Worse two days of my life. Well almost. I was so happy to see the dunes along the Rogazzi that I lay down and kissed the sand. We headed along the beach eating raw crabs and sleeping in the rain. At least we was out of the marsh.

At the end of our second day on the beach we was hailed by some burke in fisher folk garb. We told him we was looking for Corflu and he said that maybe his folk could help us. He was cautious around us until we indicated that we was River Voices. Then he said (cheeky bugger) that for 2 wheels he'd head back to his village and bring enough coracles to take us there. We waited another day until six fisherfolk in coracles returned. As usual that bloody Humakt Svart Ulfsson was suspicious of an ambush but these simple buggers weren't any threat to us. (Sigh, back into the damn marsh). We paddled away in these tubs and towards nightfall we reached this village of stilt huts. That bloody Humakti was nervous again but the chief greeted us and offered us salt and fish. We settled down for a welcoming feast. I was never so happy to eat cooked fish as I was that night.

The next day we talked to the headman and asked him how far we was from Corflu. He told us we was all the way on the other side of the delta from it. We asked whether he would send someone to Corflu to check whether Amur An Zed was there or not. He agreed to send somebody and we asked him to take Ratbane with him to scope the place out. It took him a week to travel there and back and when he got back he told us that there was no sign of the priest and that his ship wasn't in the harbour. There was however definite signs of the bloody sunny spear holders. About twenty of them including that

bugger Durnfal. Livin' high on the hog at the one inn in town, dining on fish eggs, newtling tails and diddling serving wenches (devout follower of Yemalio my ass!) We decided to wait a week and then the lot of us would head to Corflu. We spent the next week helping out as best we could with the day to day life in the stilt village, eating fish and cattail biscuits, cattail stew, cattail stir fry, etc., bloody, etc.

We headed off after the week in six coracles (one for each of us and an extra for the package). It must have took us a couple of days to reach Corflu. We sent one of the coracles on ahead and he came back and told us the priest's ship was in looking rather the worse for wear. He also told us that a squad of Lunar marines was guarding the ship and that there was a couple of boat loads of Lunars rowing about with torches. We decided that Greystone and Gerhardt would "sneak" up towards the ship at night in coracles and Gerhardt would try and mindspeak someone on deck to see where the priest was at. The rest of us held back in our coracles just within his spell range near this little island that the boatpeople told us was the site for a Magasta shrine. We could see the Lunars in their boats and the Churner (that was the name of the priest's ship-not that it was his ship mind you) tied up at one of the deep sea docks.

The two coracles (no wait it was three, the package went as well!) got within range and Gerhardt cast his spell at a bloke on deck. Well, who should he mindspeak but the captain of the ship some bugger named Barran the Monster-slayer. Barran told Gerhardt that the priest was on board and that he'd make arrangements to pick up the package. He went down into the boat and after a little while he and these two other burkes came up and one of them slid into the water. A little while later a merman stuck his head out of the water and asked for the package. They handed it to him and turned to leave. Just about then the Lunars spotted them and all hell broke loose.

They started rowing over shouting "Surrender in the name of Moonson!" Us lot in the back couldn't really tell what was going on but later on Greystone and Gerhardt told us that they both decided to try the water at the same time. Good thing they were both River Voices. They cast their spells and slipped into the water. Literally. Daft buggers couldn't swim to save their lives. Literally. There they was, able to breathe water and see perfectly, slowly sinkin' into the 12 metres of muck at the bottom of the Delta.

Gerhardt told me he actually managed to swim a bit but it wasn't good enough.

Fortunately for them the merman or another merman from the ship came and saved both of them. (It's a good thing they was already in the water. Probably made cleaning their britches a sight easier. I would have had to change mine alrighty).

Meanwhile the rest of us was sitting tight as our coracle boys paddled off. That is until they realized that the Lunars was gonna catch us and one of em took a crossbow quarrel in the side. That reduced their enthusiasm somewhat. The lot of them dropped their oars and surrendered right then and there. The Lunars rowed up all cool and collected and demanded that we throw our weapons into their boat. That fool Humakti refused to do so saying he'd be on his honor not to put up a fight. Well, them Lunars weren't buying this and told him he had two choices do as they says or they'd run over his leather washtub and send him to the bottom. He changed his tune but he wasn't none too happy about it I'll tell ya.

The next thing we know the three of us (Lou, Svart and me) was tossed in jail. The red cloaks was pretty nice I must say-for red cloaked, chaos loving scum. Just cuffed us a bit if we was sassy, made some crude remarks about Lou and then left us alone. They left us to rot in jail all night not knowing what had happened to Gerhardt or Greystone. We were separated from the boatpeople and later we heard that when Durnfal and Belvani went to talk with them (intending to play good town guard/bad town guard) they sang like tick birds spilling all the water in the bag to the last drop.

Meanwhile Gerhardt and Greystone was taken to the Churner by the merman and helped aboard. Barran the Monsterslayer had em dragged below and locked in a cabin until morning. He met with Belvani and Durnfal the next morning and told em and the Lunar authorities that he only needed what was in the box for one short trip and then he'd return em. Them being these three torches of everburning that Cragspider crafted from the living blood of the god Yemalio hisself shed at the Hill of Gold! Didn't our jaws drop when we heard that. The reaction of the Yemalio Belvani and the Lunars puzzled the lot of us cause they seemed reluctant to do anything about Barran having the torches. Durnfal explained it to us later in that snotty tone of his. He said that we (meaning the Yemalians) had just as much power in Corflu as the Lunars were prepared to give us (meaning none) while the Lunars weren't ready to rile any deep sea captain in case the rest of them started staying away from Corflu. Besides, Barran paid his taxes on the torches and that was that, no Lunar laws had been broken after all. So the trade was on, Barran got to use the torches for one trip, with Durnfal going along to make sure he returned em (seems Belvani didn't care for sea voyages) while Barran kept his two guests and got the use of the three prisoners the Lunars had. (They'd let all the boat people go after warning em not to do it again and chopping the little finger off of all their left hands to mark em as troublemakers).

So there we was, on this damn boat with our buddy Durnfal agin wondering what some crazy burke nicknamed the "monster killer" wanted with us and three torches that kept burning no matter what.

Now piss off and let me sleep!

Tales from Grandpa - Chapter 3 (Into the Belly of the Eel)

---Grandpa, would you wake up damn it!

---Uh, what? What was that? What did you say, you little bugger? Come here. (Grabs child by ear and cuffs her upside the head). You watch your dirty little mouth you bugger. What the hell do you lot want?

---(Wah, wah, wah.)

---We want a story Grandpa. Tell us what happened to the dog.

---That damn dog again? What about my great deeds? What about your old grandpa?

---Tell us about your great deeds Grandpa...and the dog.

---Ah, you shifty little buggers. I should feed you to some broos.

(Gasps of horror)

---Anyway I'll tell you what happened to us after we found ourselves trapped on that damn boat, err ship.

May all the gods damn me to hell if I ever get myself into another situation like the one we found ourselves in Corflu that Sacred Time. There we was sworn to serve this crazed madman named Barran

Monsterslayer on his leaky boat on one trip. Good thing we didn't know what the trip was going to involve or we might have killed ourselves on dry land.

Nobody was too happy about helping this nutter but we didn't have much choice in the matter. This nut wouldn't explain what we was goin' to be doing but he insisted that we learn how to handle a small boat so that's what we did for the next four weeks. Up at dawn, eat fish, row all morning, eat fish again, and then row all afternoon, eat fish AGAIN and then collapse into our hammocks (a horrible baglike thing sailors have come up with to sleep in-I fell out every damn night). Hallelujah the Babeester Gor hated every minute of it. She hated fish, she hated boats and she HATED water most of all. I don't even think she bathed much come to think of it. She tried to learn as little about boats as possible and dreaded every day.

We spent four weeks rowing back and forth in a small boat near Corflu while Barran's shipwright (the burke who builds and repairs ships) made some repairs to the Churner. Even though we was a bunch of ignorant landlubbers we still thought it was kind of strange to see that they'd cut the mast off at waist level. Not that we spent a lot of time worrying about what they was doing to the boat, err ship since there was too many weird things going on in Corflu. First of all it rained all the damn time. We soon found out that this was not normal even for Corflu. Sometimes the rain tasted salty and the Lunar commander was worried about the water supply. The Lunars tasted every bit they let into the cisterns.

Other weird stuff happened like something you'd be drinking would suddenly taste like salt water. Other times you'd see weird stuff out of the corner of your eyes like fish swimming around in the air like they was in water or some merman peeking at you. And the damned dreams. Almost everyone (except me) had this nightmare where'd they'd dream they was drowning and would wake up just before they drowned. The Babeester Gor was so rattled by this that only her oath to Barran kept her on the water. She kept muttering to herself about not wanting her corpse to rot underwater. Oh yeah, I almost forgot people kept smelling stuff like rotting fish and things long dead and soggy when none of those things was about. Then there was these giant tentacles and spirirt attacks. It was all pretty weird stuff and everyone left in Corflu (a lot of folks bugged out as soon as the weird stuff began) was as jumpy as a jackrabbit in a pack of sleepin' plains wolves.

The whole business was bad enough but it was made even worst by the spooky things that kept happening. First of all it never stopped raining. Then people started seeing things out of the corners of their eyes. Fish, mermen, monsters, you name it. Then water started tasting like salt. This freaked the Lunars out and they started runnin' around panicing about their water supply. It didn't freak them out as much as the giant ghost tentacles. Damn things slithered about ruining food and tryin' to squish folks. Finally there was the last straw-we saw this huge monster in the water around Corflu! Damn thing was big enough to circle the entire island! We sure wished we had some choice about what we was up to but we didn't.

When Sacred Time rolled around this damn critter rises up out of the water before dawn. Fuckin' Lunars running around freakin' out and blowin' on them damn bugles. What a racket. The Watchdog attacks the critter. What a joke. Damn things whips around, grabs the Watchdog and chucks it off into the swamp.

This causes even more of an uproar. Then what happens but Barran Monsterslayer stumps up and announces that he wuz gonna slay this critter to prove his worth to Magasta. Ye can believe yer boots that we weren't none too crazy about this but I asks ya again, what choice did we have?

We and our supplies get into Barran's sawed-off boat. We start rowing the damn thing toward this giant fish. Closer and closer we gets. I asks Barran, "What are we gonna do to the outside of that thing." He turns to me and smiles, "Oh, we're not doing nuthin' to its outside." Before you can say "Bugger me for a Storm Bull" the damn fish whips around, opens its mouth and swallows us whole, boat and all. Damn me if I didn't soil meself then and there.

It'd have been dark inside except for them everburning torches. We clammers out on deck from below (where we'd hidden ourselves while we was being swallowed) and gets attacked by this big lizard critters. I lets fly with one of me javelins and hits one right in the eye. The rest of 'em weren't much more difficult to kill. Once we finished off the critters we uses this funny hooked oars to pull the boat into the next stomach.

There we fights this giant critter that looks like the head from a walktapus. It had some sort of underwater ally but we fought it off too. In the next stomach we fights off these wraiths that tried to suck our brains out. Unfortunately for them our brains were too much for them. Lou's special spirit magic helped too of course. As we floats along we hears this giant thump, thump like some kind of giant drum. Barran tells us this is the critters heart which he means to touch with one of the torches to kill it.

In the last stomach we expects the worst because this is where the heart is and sure enough this giant sea lizard rises out of the water and wraps itself around our boat. Barran screams "Hold it off!" while he prepares hisself to chop a hole through this things side to get at the heart. Well I'm telling you that critter was big and scary looking and I was sure we were in over our heads. (Geddit, in over our heads?) Anyway, we sucks in our breaths, casts our magic and jumps this thing. I'm telling you kids never underestimate the power of luck. That lucky, err lucky warrior Hallelujah Harnsdottir just lets that damn thing have it with a mighty blow of her pole axe that nearly cuts that damn thing in two. Never seen such a thing before. Kind of an anti-climax if you know what I mean.

Well Barran manages to cut through the inside hide of this critter and yells, "Hold on to something solid", just before he touches the torch to the heart. I grabs something solid, Hallelujah I think, Barran torches the critter and all hell breaks loose. The damn thing starts writhin' and buckin' and we get tossed about. The water rushes around and the boat is tossed and turned like mad. We hears a rushing noise and eventually everything goes black...

---And that's all for that story.

---But Grandpa what happened next?

---That? Well that's another story for another time, now piss off and let an old man sleep!

Tales from Grandpa - Chapter 4 (Out of the Belly of the Eel)

--[sweet voices] Grandpa, oh grandpa dearest.

--Huh? What's this, sweet talk? Decided that you can catch more flies with honey, huh?

--[angelic chorus] Oh no Grandpa, we're just offering you the respect your years deserve.

--Bulls balls. You little buggers want something. Oh, let me guess-you want another story about my great deeds.

--[sweetly] Who us?

--Yeah, right. Okay I'll tell you the story of what happened to me and the woman mountain after we were spit out of the monstrous eel...

When I awoke after being vomited from that damn eel I found myself lying on a shale beach. Pretty much immediately I realized that I wasn't in Prax anymore. I felt like a whole temple of Storm Bullers had beaten me with sticks over every inch of my body and then beaten me all over again from head to toe. I stank and I realized that if I noticed the smell then the reek must be reaching Waha's nostrils up in paradise. I slowly and painfully sat up and looked around. I was stark naked and none too pleased about that. About a llama's length away was Hallelujah Harnsdottir garbed like Ernalda made her. The others I hung around with where a little farther along the beach. Hallelujah still looked unconscious so I crawled over and carefully poked her. Big mistake. She lashed out like a snake and grabbed me by the windpipe. She had me half-way choked to death before she realized who I was. If I remember correctly our conversation went as follows.

"What by Asrelia's teats do you think you're doing you stinking sheep riding moron?"

"Hey, what do you mean sheep riding?"

"On sorry, STINKING-LLAMA-RIDING-MORON!!"

"That's better. Sorry I was just checking to see whether you were okay."

"I'm okay-I hurt like hell but I'm still alive. Where the hell's my weapons!?! Where's my armour!?! [sniff, sniff] What's that smell?"

She was pretty disgusted when she realised it was her that smelled so bad. She wasn't going to go anywhere near the water though so we walked away from the beach towards some nearby trees. By this time the others were all conscious as well. None of us had any gear, clothes or weapons. Did I mention that the beach was on some big body of water? We could see trees like the kind that grow near Dragon's Pass and mountains off in the distance. It was raining and cold and we couldn't see the sun. When we reached the trees Hallelujah dug up some handfuls of soil and rubbed most of the gunk off herself. From the smell most of it must have been fish guts. Hallelujah glared at me when she noticed I was watching (and I do mean watching) and told me to turn my back or she'd, "rip out my intestines and slowly strangle me with them." As I stood there thinking about plunging into cold water I asked her what she thought had happened to the others. "How the hell should I know?" she said. "Maybe they're further along up the beach." After she finished cleaning herself up she glared at me and asked in what she...

---No wait a minute that's not what happened at all. (Now why would I tell the story that way? Must be wishful thinkin' on account of my wanting to get that close to Lou. Wonder why I want her to beat me up?) What actually happened was this...

While we wuz lying unconscious a crow decided to eat Greystone's eyeball. It gave him a good peck but missed taking the eye out 'cause some kid slung a rock at it. Greystone slowly stands up and spots the kid standing off in the bushes. He notices he's naked and has no gear and decides to wake the rest of us. He carefully prods Hallelujah in the foot and she wakes up. She groans and notices that she's as naked as a drunken shaman and takes off for the bushes. Kid thinks he's gonna be the target of her haste and he puts some distance between hisself and Lou. Greystone wakes the rest of us and we take inventory of our gear. Diddly squat. I used a sharp rock to offer some blood to Waha. I figured I owed him a hell of a lot more than that but that was the best I could do under the circumstances.

Someone, Durnfal I think, starts to head for the water to wash up but the kid rushes forward and makes these gestures that gives us the idea this ain't such a good idea. We moves away from the water. It was a shale beach on a big body of water. Hilly terrain with fair sized trees all around. It's cloudy, cool and raining. Lou is trying to fashion something to protect her modesty but fails miserable since the trees are just starting to sprout leaves. We do the best we can to clean up and expect the rain to help.

After some discussion we decides to follow this kid home since we didn't have any idea where the hell we were or any equipment. The kid doesn't seem to make any effort to lose us so we follow him along this game trail real easy. As we're walking along we notice that our bellies are fish white. (We especially notice this about Lou). Someone notices that Durnfal has all these red highlights in his skin and hair and if you look real deep into his eyes you can see red spots. Bizarre. In my case I notice that walking with bare feet doesn't hurt at all. I even try and poke sharp sticks into my palm and have a hell of a time doin' it. Doubly bizarre. We also notice that everyone has a water rune on the palm of their hands. In most of our cases an additional rune but in Lou and Svart's case just the one.

We followed along behind the kid and everybody but me has trouble walking in bare feet (ha ha). As we follow along we spots some guys following us. Since we doesn't have any weapons we decides to ignore them. After a while we starts to sees these stakes with dead crows dangling from 'em. Couldn't figure out what they was for so we's ignored 'em. Soon after we saw these posts we comes into a big clearing ringed by these stakes. In the centre of the clearing are a bunch of skin tents and other side of the clearing is a bunch of nervous looking guys wearing skins holding javelins with stone points on these little sticks.

The kid keeps on marching across the clearing and part way across this old geezer shaking this staff with feathers and baubles dangling from it walks over and whallops the kid upside the head. The kid buggers off across the clearing and disappears into some bushes. This other burke wearing buckskins comes up and starts yammering at us in New Pelorian like we wuz Lunars or something. Greystone starts talking to him when this uproar starts on the other side of the clearing. This young, flaky lookin' babe wafts over followed by a whole bunch of other women who are trailed by a bunch of brats. The stick holders rush forward as well and everyone braces themselves for a fight.

This babe points her finger at Lou and spouts the following gibberish:

There she stands, the naked one
Battle-scarred, grim warrior of Earth,
Within her shes bears the soul
Of the promised one, the dog boy,
He who will lead us
Back to the promised land.

(We's gets this translated for us later by the guy who speaks New Pelorian as well as Trade Talk). After spouting this rubbish the flaky babe collapses and a whole bunch of matriarchal looking types runs over and fusses over her. After they makes her comfortable a bunch of them runs over to Lou grabs her arm and drags her off. A big argument breaks out among the peoples in charge (turns out the guy in buckskins is one of the blokes in charge) and we quickly figures out its over what they's gonna do with us. Most of them seem to want to let us live except this loud mouthed thug who seems to take a personal dislike to us. The argument ends abruptly with loud mouth stomping off in a fit of pique. (We learn later that the thug's name is Catches-Eagles-with-his-Bare-Hands). Then someone takes us over to a fire where they feed us some slop, (damn good tasting slop though!) and outfit us with loincloths.

The guy in buckskins (whose name turns out to be Tadpole) follows along with us and tells us we's in the land of the Crow Eaters and after playing Twenty Questions we figures out we's north of Dragon Pass and east of the Lunars. The big lake to the south is called the Elf Sea. Guy's never heard of Prax or Sartar and he tells us that Yemalio's a prohibited god amongst his folks. Go figure, guess no ones all bad. That night we bunked down around this campfire and I for one was damn glad for the chance of a rest.

The next day we sees Lou again and we can tell she's none too happy about being the mother of the messiah. (Though she did get to sleep inside a tent and she's wearing more clothes than the rest of us put together). Seems like these folk wants to keep her close until their messiah's born. After talking about it for a while we decides (with a sickening feeling mind you) that this prophesized "dog boy" is probably none other than our old bud Dorian Tavish, aka Crispy Critters, aka Ratsbane, aka (it seems) Dog Boy. Sigh. Some folks have all the dumbass luck.

The next day we discover where they got the clothes to fit Lou as most of their folks are runty little buggers. That day a hunting party comes back and with them is this babe who is a tall as Lou and even better looking. She had this gorgeous head of red hair and white skin and we learn her name's Burning Willow. We quickly discover that she's in Catches-Chickens err Eagles bad books too so we make chums with her.

Well these Crow Eaters didn't treat us none too shabbily but we quickly learned from Tadpole that they have so many restrictions and taboos on whats they can and can't do that they have to ask their elders the proper way to take a dump depending on what day of the year it is. What a bunch. We quickly learned what we could do for them which is diddly squat since everything we were good at or like was against their laws. Tadpole tells us that his folk fear and hate outlanders because of our foreign, contaminating ways. Despite this Gerhardt tried for the longest time to make some stuff to trade them

for weapons (not that they used anything bigger than javelins and knives, mind you), unfortunately his ambitions exceeded his abilities somewhat. But finally he comes up with this technique to make join two poles together to make longer tent poles that the elders don't immediately pooh pooh. This makes 'em happy.

Like I said everybody there didn't use anything other than stone javelins, axes and knives as tools (they refused to consider any of them weapons) except that that bugger Tadpole is always whittling somethin' with this bronze dagger. Durnfal asks him where he got it from and he says, "Off of an outlander." Then Durnfal asks him, "Is the outlander still alive." and all he gets for a reply is a smile. Creepy guy that Tadpole.

So there we was bored out of our minds, Svart snaps and sits around all day, rain or shine meditating and praying to Humakt. Poor dumb, bastard. You'd have to be half crazy to start with to worship Humakt if you ask me. Gerhardt spent all his time trying to make stuff (and failing) until he comes up with his two part pole schtick. Lou's spending all her time learning the local plant lore from one of the old ladies and the rest of us is bored, bored, bored.

Then our buddy, Catches-Eagles asks us whether we wants to go on an egg collecting trip with him and some of his buddies. Well, we was so bored by that point that we said yes. (Without asking what kind of eggs we was goin' to gather). Everyone decides to go except Svart who's too depressed to move. (Poor, dumb bastard). Burning Willow and Tadpole decide to tag along (which gets them a glare from Catches-Eagles). Catches-Eagles and his buds are kind enough to lend us each a javelin which except for Greystone and me none of us can use. (Two of the guys hand us their javelins since they was useless to them). So off we troops back to the beach were we woke up and head off down the beach a ways. We stops in this spot where there's some sands which is all disturbed. I asks, "What kind of birds are these anyway?" "Who said anything about birds was the reply." Catches-Eagles tells us to start digging and we do. Well, Greystone and I had just uncovered this whopping big egg the size of my torso when we notices out of the corner of our eyes that Catches-Eagles and his buddies are pulling back up the beach away from the water.

We looks toward the water and just as we do there's this big splash of water and we see two of the same snaky-necked water dragons that we had fought inside the eel. Boy were they pissed we was messing with their eggs. Eveyone but me pulls back. I shout out my "Waha!" and let my javelin fly. What a shot! Waha certainly guided my shot because it took one of them damn critters out of the fight right away. Unfortunately that still left one mighty pissed off critter. Greystone threw his javelin but it barely scratched the thing. Burning Willow missed altogether and nobody else with a javelin even bothered to huck one. Bastards. The thing lunged at me and I managed to dodge out of the way. Tadpole unwraps this bundle he'd been carrying and rushes forward swinging this short sword. (So much for swords being forbidden!) He wades in and slashes at the critter and does squat to it. Another couple of javelins bounce offa its hide. I tried to dodge another bite but the damn thing crippled my leg. Then Greystone and Burning Willow both manage to stick it to the critter with their next javelins. Burning Willow's javelin takes the damn thing out and I was saved.

When they saw this Catches-Eagles and his buds bugger off leaving us the victors. We cuts off the heads and carries as many eggs as we could back to the Crow Eaters. They was plum happy to see us with all those eggs and that unexpected meat as well. They was damned please to have all that meat. They sent a party out to collect as much as they could for smokin'. They throws a big feast that night and I got lucky! (Almost had my way with Burning Willow!)

--What do you mean, you got lucky Grandpa? What does "have my way with Burning Willow" mean?

--Err, I mean I won at dice that night and err, I almost beat Burning Willow at dice but she won. Stop interrupting me.

Anyway, they was damned please to have all that meat. They sent a party out to collect as much as they could for smokin'. They were a sight happier with us after that. Almost the best part was the fact that Catches-Eagles and his cronies didn't return for a while. We started planning how we would get away to more civilized turf when something horrible happened.

A coupla days after the big feast we learned that a young woman and her baby had disappeared. Seems this woman had gone to fetch some water from a creek and hadn't returned. The hunters made some half-assed attempt to track 'em but gave up after they'd found some tracks. We couldn't figger out what was with this lot but they wasn't gonna lift a finger to save the woman and her kid. We asked Tadpole what was the hell was up and he told us that his folk didn't make war. Well, this made Lou right pissed and she asked us whether we wanted to track whoever had taken the woman and her baby and we all said yes. (Even Svart managed to drag hisself out of his apathy to help). Burning Willow said she'd go too. Lou got some supplies from one of the hearth mothers and off we set.

We managed to find some tracks, two barefooted men dragging the woman off. We travelled fast and managed to follow them for most of a day. Near the end of the day we came across this fire pit where they'd had a barbecue. The Waha-cursed scum had cooked and eaten that baby. Well this made us really mad and Lou prayed to her dark goddess for aid. And she got it.

--Well, that's all for now.

--What! You can't leave us hanging like that!!!!

--Can't I now. Bugger off and let an old man sleep. I'll finish the tale another time.

--Aw! Promise?

--I promise, now piss off!

Chronicles of the North - Part 1

1) Sea Season 1618 (A Questin' we will go...)(October 25th, 1997)

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Babeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Durnfal Strongsphear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior)(Henry), Burning Willow (Votanki hunter) (Neil)

NPCs: Tamerlan (Waha Noble), Tadpole (Votanki Elder), Blueface (Balazaring/Votanki shaman)

The party had been in hot pursuit of two members of the Cannibal tribe who had abducted a young woman and her baby from the Crow Eaters tribe. They had found what was left of the baby at a campsite but had then lost the tracks. Earlier in their pursuit Hallelujah had uttered a prayer to Babeester Gor for assistance in getting vengeance on these foul abductors of women and children. Unbeknownst to the party Babeester Gor had intervened by obscuring the tracks of the murderers and cannibals so she could lead them to the shaman Blueface. She did this because the party required his assistance without which the party would never defeat the Cannibals.

Babeester Gor led them to a clearing where Blueface had left his body while on the Spirit Plane. His body was being guarded by Greyrunner Runefang and his fetch. Tadpole and Burning Willow recognized Blueface immediately and explained who he was. The party decided to wait for Blueface to return to his body and the Votanki and Greystone explained the proper etiquette for waiting for a shaman to return to his body. They settled down as close to Blueface as they could or as close as Greyrunner Runefang would allow them to and waited. After a few hours Blueface returned to his body with a lurch. His return to consciousness was quick but while still under the influence of the Other World he looked at the party and made the following pronouncements to each of them:

Hallelujah

"Hail mother of the Dog Boy you shall find greatness through the axe."

Gerhardt

"If you seek the sword on high you shall come to it".

Durnfal

"Your fire burns at the bottom of the lake and the spirits cry."

Greystone

"A white bison looms in your future."

Svart

"A sword is calling your name but not every path is the right path."

Tadpole

"You I do not see at all."

Burning Willow

"What you most desire and fear are the same thing."

Tamerlan

"You will live long and attain a strange fame."

The party found these pronouncements somewhat cryptic for the most part. However Gerhardt feared that the message about Tadpole meant he was illuminated. Durnfal realized that the pronouncement about him referred to the sacred torches of Ever Burning.

The party explained to Blueface what they doing and he explained to them that the captors of the woman and baby were members of a degenerate tribe called Cannibals. He told them that they were led by an evil spirit called Granny Keeneyes. He told them that they would die if they attempted to approach the tribe because the crows acted as Granny Keeneyes eyes and ears. Blueface told them that he could help them to learn a special magic that would render them invisible to crows. They agreed to do this and he told them they would have to fast for a day and a night and then he would lead them on a heroquest.

The party sat around the campfire with Blueface and he and Durnfal beat on some drums. Blueface also passed around some mushroom to eat and after a day and a night had passed the party felt their ties to their bodies loosen. Blueface told them all to grab his hands and he led them out of their bodies onto the spirit plane. With their new senses the party saw all sorts of bizarre things they'd never seen before. They saw Blueface's fetch which was the largest spirit they'd ever seen. Looking at each other they saw strange things. Looking at:

Hallelujah:

...they saw a little spirit within her that seemed to be both a baby and a puppy.

Gerhardt:

...the "winds in his soul."

Greystone:

...the spirit of a scholar trying to escape.

Tamerlan:

...a crotchety old man.

Svart:

...a dark shadow on his soul.

Tadpole:

...no one could see anything.

Durnfal:

...a fire burning within him.

And suspicions arose about Tadpole's possible illuminated condition. The Spirit Plane proved to be very confusing and disorientating.

Blueface reminded the party not to wander off or let his hand go. From the Spirit Plane they passed through to the Hero's Plane which was much easier to comprehend. Blueface led them by the hand again and told them not to pick anything up. The party passed through an enormous battlefield.

After leaving the Hero Plane the party was led onto the Gods Plane. The Gods Plane was almost overwhelming to their senses but eventually they realized they stood in a beautiful wooded area. Blueface let go of their hands and told them that the quest would begin and they were on their own...

(Each stage of the quest jumped precipitously into the next)

Each party member found themselves within a confined, dark space. Each one had to try and break free. Only Hallelujah and Gerhardt managed to break free by themselves and they found themselves in a large nest in a tree surrounded by huge eggs. They broke the other eggs and freed their friends.

Then the party had to "fly" down from the nest. Most of them managed to do this and all found themselves on the ground. (Gerhardt actually climbed back up the tree and flew down again). They then felt a strong urge to find food for themselves and spent some time looking for food.

As they searched for food they were attacked by a giant hawk. The hawk stooped at Burning Willow and missed. Greystone cast a multimissile on a javelin and threw it at the hawk. He made an amazing roll and the real missile criticaled while the magical missile impaled. Both legs were destroyed and the hawk fell down dead.

The party then found themselves at a moonlit festival (a sock hop actually). Their objective was to impress a mate using some social interaction skill. They heard a strange tune playing (Stairway to Heaven) and felt strongly that they needed to find a mate before the song was over (and the principal sent them all home). Everyone managed to find a mate except Hallelujah and Durnfal who decided to pair off! (After this stage Tamerlan and Tadpole disappeared).

After their successful mating the heroquesters found themselves nesting and raising their hatchlings in nests on the edge of a cliff. As they reared their young two giant cliff toads attacked! One toad attacked Svart, Durnfal and Hallelujah while the other attacked Greystone, Burning Willow and Gerhardt. The first toad hit Durnfal in the head with his tongue and killed him! The second hit Burning Willow in the right leg and knocked her down. Hallelujah and Svart managed to kill their toad but the second toad swallowed Burning Willow and fled.

The party then found themselves (all alive and whole) on the edge of a clearing. Across the clearing from them was a pitch black man with a crow's head. He was dressed in a funny suit of clothing (a two piece suit that appeared to be of 1950's vintage). He wore strange headgear (a fedora) and wielded a light mace (a cane). Hallelujah was uncertain about what the party should do attack or parlay? But the individual (Mr. Crow) cast a befuddle at Durnfal and the battle was on. Greystone cast a befuddle on Mr. Crow and the party raced forward. Someone or something cast a dispell magic on Mr. Crow (his fetch) and Greystone cast a dispell magic on Durnfal. The fight between the party lasted quite a while with Mr. Crow's fetch healing him, befuddling party members or dispelling spells on Mr. Crow. Eventually

Greystone ran out of magic points and party members had to get out of their befuddles themselves (Gerhardt was befuddled for quite a while). (Mr. Crow spent quite a bit of time pulling impaled javelins out of his legs). The fetch cast a bludgeon on Mr. Crow's cane, protection and shimmers and strength and dexterity on him and he would have wailed on the party except Svart was distracting him by grappling him. Lou grabbed his cane and tried to wrestle it away. Mr. Crow made a big mistake and let the cane go. Lou started running away (to try and get the spirit away from Mr. Crow) but decided instead to use the cane on Mr. Crow. She ran back and started beating on Mr. Crow. Eventually his fetch ran out of power and Mr. Crow was killed.

Blueface told the party to cut Mr. Crow's breastbone out. Greystone did so and Blueface passed his hand over it and made foci for everyone. As they left the clearing they looked back and saw Mr. Crow standing there again.

Blueface then led the party back to the material world. The party found themselves back in their bodies with the knowledge of the Guise of the Crow spell and the foci. Svart however was holding an iron bastard sword.

2) Sea Season 1618 (Death to Cannibals!)(November 1997)

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Babeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior)(Henry), Burning Willow (Votanki hunter) (Neil)

NPCs: Tamerlan (Waha Noble), Tadpole (Votanki Elder), Blueface (Balazaring/Votanki shaman)

Now that the party had the Guise of the Crow spell they felt confident in their ability to assault the Cannibals despite their sorry lack of equipment. (Basically all they had were their fists and a bunch of javelins. Durnfal had a longer pointed stick as well). Blueface said he would show them where the Cannibals were camped and provide some magical support-especially against Granny Keen-eyes. When the party got closer to the Cannibals "fort" it was decided that the Praxians and Burning Willow would approach closer using stealth in order to get some better idea of what forces would oppose them.

The three of them ran into two separate parties of Cannibals who they managed to dispatch with minimal damage taken on their side. (Burning Willow had no compunctions about killing the Cannibals despite her pacifistic upbringing). Tamerlan managed to get into a sticky situation but with the help of a lucky dodge roll and Greystone's javelin got away with his skin (mostly intact). Both parties consisted of five Cannibals with the first party encountered being the weaker of the two. It was quickly dispatched but the second was stronger and better armed and armoured so it posed more of a problem but they were overcome as well. All the bodies were hidden and any useful armour and weapons was taken back to the main party. Newly equipped the party proceeded towards the Cannibal's camp. As they got closer they encountered a large group of Cannibals out on patrol. The party attacked them and quickly slaughtered most of them. A few managed to get away so the party decided to hurry towards the Cannibal's camp so they would have some benefit of surprise.

When they got to the camp (an earthen berm) they saw a large group of poorly armed and armoured Cannibals blocking the main entrance. It was decided that Svart and Lou (as the mightiest fighters) would charge this group and try and force their way in with the rest of the party acting as support. They charged forward and engaged the group and quickly got mired in a hand to hand struggle as the Cannibals showed no concern for their own persons. Svart and Lou ended up having to resort to using their fists and feet to battle these Cannibals when the scrum precluded weapons. The pair did very well just using their hands and feet to battle the Cannibals.

Meanwhile the rest of the party was attacked by a group of ten doughtier Cannibal warriors who had circled around the outside of the berm and attacked their flanks. This group proved to be more of a challenge than their kin inside the berm. Fortunately some god-blessed javelin casting and judicious spell use helped the party to prevail. Particular high points: Gerhardt using a stone dagger to disable two warriors with criticals and impales. Burning Willow throwing a javelin with multimissile six (courtesy of Blueface) on it a warrior and watching him disintegrate as she rolls a critical and a special. Tadpole, Greystone and Tamerlan also managed to do well.

Finally the scrum ended as most of the grot Cannibals fled. A huge Cannibal warrior approached promising to wreak havoc on the party with his poleaxe. He swung and knocked Lou down and was preparing to cleave her in two when Burning Willow hit him in the arm with an impaled javelin. Sometime during all this Svart apparently changed places with some spirit that had been imprisoned in his new iron bastardsword. He switched from two handed to one handed use and easily killed the giant. At this point the fight was mostly over.

Blueface, Tadpole and Hallelujah decided to search the hut in the centre of the berm and see if the missing woman was in there. They found her cowering in the back of the hut next to a withered, monstrous, sanity-loss inducing body which Blueface identified as Granny Keen-eyes. As Lou asked the woman if she was all right Blueface called out a warning. The woman breathed out a cloud of poison gas which Blueface and Lou managed to avoid breathing in. Tadpole, unfortunately got a lung full and only the immediate treat poison skill (a critical) by Lou saved him. Blueface told the party to let Granny Keen-eyes go as she was beyond their abilities to harm.

The party became aware that Svart was gone from his body and they opened tentative negotiations with whoever was in his body. With Tadpole translating (the only language which the new owner of Svart's body spoke that they recognized was Votanki) they discovered that the new inhabitant was named Naul Aur and he was a Carmanian hazar (warrior) who had last lived on the physical plane in the time of Balazar!

(At this point the session was ended and we called it a night).

3) Sea Season 1618 (You should have seen the one that got away...)(February 21st, 1998)

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Babeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio

ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne), Naul Aur (Old Carmanian Sword of Humakt)(Henry)

NPCs: Tamerlan (Waha Noble), Tadpole (Votanki Elder), Blueface (Balazaring/Votanki shaman)

Missing: Burning Willow (Votanki hunter) (Neil)

"Not one of our finer moments, we killed a bunch of women and children and cleaned a fish."

Doug Sh.

As the party stood around deciding what to do next Naul and Svart switched places. After switching Svart cast the iron bastardsword down. Svart then explained to the party what had happened to him. He tells them about Naul and the fact that the sword he bears acts as a Lead Cross. He also tells them that whoever is in the sword cannot experience the world unless the sword is being held by someone. He tells them that Naul is sorry about taking his body without the benefit of a proper Humakti duel and that he will be trying to help Svart find a new body. All the Cannibals are rejected out of hand as being unsuitable. Svart tells the party he is honour bound to return to the sword and that he has only changed places so he could tell the party what had happened. He had been thinking about entering an animal's body but decided this was a bad idea. (No sabertoothed Rune Lords of Humakt). Svart told them that Naul would be on the lookout for a human who had just been killed or was near death to put Svart's soul into. At this point Svart and Naul change places. Naul beheaded all the corpses. He tried to get Gerhardt (especially) and the others to collect some wood for a bonfire which he could stack the heads on for burning but Gerhardt (and the rest) refused to fetch and carry for him.

Party decides to hunt down remaining cannibals (women and children) and manage to catch half or so. After this they trash the fort and take away all the good stuff. After they hunted down the women and children the party collected some wood and burnt the heads of the dead. Then they decided to bugger off for civilized turf using the equipment (armour and weapons) the Cannibal's camp has provided. Blueface tells Hallelujah that he will come and help her give birth when it is her time. (One of her major concerns is to be somewhere civilized when she is due to give birth). Blueface gives her his Eubuck staff so she can call him. The party heads south to the Elf Sea with the vague idea of trying to retrieve their possessions somehow (now that Lou realizes she can hold her breath longer than normal they have some vague plan of using a detect magic to find their possessions).

When they reached the camp of the Crow Eaters they found it mostly deserted. An old man tells them that the rest of the tribe is at the sea side looking at something amazing. The wind shifts then so it's blowing from the Elf Sea and they all smell something horrible and vaguely reminiscent of Corflu. Proceeding to the coast they find the tribe (who are not happy to see all these murderers in their presence) and their dogs gathered around an enormous, dead fish on the beach. They are happy to see Blueface and make a big fuss about him. The party gets closer to the fish (Naul shows his true colours by elbowing people aside) and notices that there are a series of water spouts (in the water) and giant puddles (on the land) around the fish. One of the spouts sprouts a beautiful naiad who starts speaking to the party in Balazaring. Blueface translates and the party learns that the fish is dead because of

something it swallowed off of the sea floor-something that burns. (Casting a detect magic causes the fish to light up). Some of the party shows the naiad the runes on their palms and she is mollified a bit. They offer to take their stuff out of the fish. The naiad isn't impressed as this doesn't replace their fish. Lou asks what they can do for the naiad and she is taken aback as she cannot think of anything they could do for her. Lou offers to trade her the things they took from Mister Crow for the fish and she agrees. All the elementals and naiads depart. Lou cuts the fish open (getting covered in guts and blood and losing her stomach contents in the process-so who'd notice). They fish around inside and find some of their equipment, mostly metal stuff and crystals, though Strongspear had survived as well. Hilts and leather straps were all gone so the party fashioned travois to carry the stuff they'd recovered (plus a lot of metal lumps they didn't recognize, though they left half the lead and copper behind).

Tadpole is invited along but he refuses claiming he's had enough of their so called civilization. Burning Willow says she'll come. Naul approaches the Crow Eaters and asks whether any of the young men are interested in adventure. They all reject him and he turns his back on them proclaiming them all cowards. Naul is a bit taken aback by the news that Carmania is part of the Lunar Empire and that there are three citadels, not two. The sight of the Red Goddess in the sky is new for him too.

After resting for a week they follow the instructions given by Tadpole and head for Dykene. Before they leave Naul spends some time trying to find something metal of the right size and shape so he can brand a death rune on his face. He gives up after a while and resorts to using wood ash and charcoal instead. They voyage half way there with no dangerous encounters. They do encounter a party of aldryami scouts who allow them to travel through their woods and provide an escort (though only Durnfal and Greystone ever see them). The party gives them some of the copper they'd found as tribute. Once back onto the plains they come across a Great Troll mummy (not undead) standing propped up on the edge of the woods. Against the protests of the others Naul chops the troll's legs off and topples it.

4) Sea Season 1618 (Excuse me, but can you point out the quickest route to Prax?)(April 25, 1998)

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Babeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne), Naul Aur (Old Carmanian Sword of Humakt)(Henry), Burning Willow (Votanki hunter)(Neil)

NPCs: Tamerlan (Waha Noble)

A few days after desecrating the troll corpse the party spots a group of five riders on horseback. The other party spots them pretty much simultaneously. They approach making no hostile overtures. The leader addresses them in the time honored Orlanthi greeting.

"Hail, Stranger! Who comes this way? Do you come in friendship, or as a foe?"

Gerhardt answers him properly and the party learns this the party is a group of Orlanthis from Trilus led by Torath Manover, Wind Lord of Orlanth. His party also includes a Storm Voice. The two parties have lunch together and trade news. Hallelujah Harnsdottir ask where the nearest healer or individual

experienced with child delivery is and Torath suggest Dushi Sone the Chalana Arroy at Trilus. The party enquires about the possibilities of purchasing mounts or arms and armour and the Orlanthis tell them it's pretty unlikely they'll get anything made of metal and that the citadel kings control the supply of mounts in the region. After a pleasant lunch the two parties go their separate ways. The Orlanthis told the party they were heading into the Elder Wilds in search of the legendary Windsword of Orlanth.

After quite a bit of discussion the party decides to travel to Dykene anyway as it is closer and their food supply is running out. They travel a few more days and arrive at the citadel after passing through the Dog Hills. The citadel impresses no one but Burning Willow who has never seen the like before. As they approach the citadel every dog in sight begins howling a welcome. (For the duration of her stay Hallelujah always has at least a dozen dogs hanging around her). The group sees an enormous red boar in an enclosure guarded by some citadel warriors. The guards wear cuirboilli armour and boar's tusk helmets. As they approach the citadel's gate they see a group of warriors become more alert. Their leader, one Boldoni Boldface approaches the party and welcomes them to the citadel in King Skilfil's name. He tells the party that they have been expected and the king would like to meet them the following day. They are to be put up in the local inn, the Stabbing Cat lodge at the King's expense. Boldoni shows them to the inn where the innkeep, welcomes them and provides rooms and a bath for those so inclined. He tells the party a little about the citadel and provides a hearty meal to the party (lots of really good pork products). Hallelujah is pleased to learn he's a fellow Esrolian since it's been so long since she'd spoken her native tongue to anyone. Naul Aur asks whether there is a shrine to Humakt in the citadel but the innkeep is unable to tell him. Burning Willow tours the inn and is impressed by the basement and the second floor. Gerhardt spots an enormous hawk from his bedroom window with a human rider on it's back which answers the party's question as to how they were spotted. (Their previous guess had been that a mounted patrol had seen them). An uneventful night passes.

After a hearty breakfast the next morning (best bacon and ham the party has ever eaten!) Boldoni Boldface shows up to guide the party to the palace. He points out the sights on the way and shows them into the throne room. After a brief wait Skilfil Heartpiercer appears and welcomes the party to the citadel. The party introduces themselves and Naul Aur claims to have known Balazar personally. The king doesn't believe this at first and almost starts a fight by questioning Naul's sanity. Gerhardt explains the situation and the king appears to accept the explanation. Skilfil makes polite conversation and eventually asks the group whether they would be interested in joining his guard to make up for the numerical imbalance he has compared to Yalaring Monsterslayer. He offers arms and armour and the use of a mount for the duration of their membership in his guard. Having heard that the leather hide of the offspring of the divine boar outside the citadel makes superior armour at least Hallelujah is a bit interested in his offer but they ask to be given time to think about it. Skilfil graciously agrees to give them until the next day after which they will have to pay their own inn bills. Boldoni shows the party the temple to Yemalio. On the way to the temple they meet Starnia Stormrender, Light Son of Yemalio and daughter of Skilfil and her guard. She makes polite conversation and later watches Naul Aur sparring with some of the guard and trouncing them utterly. At the temple they meet Sylvanthi Brighteyes, priest of Yemalio and rune lord of Balazar. He shows them the temple and also seems to have trouble accepting Naul's claims to having known Balazar. Naul tells the Yemalians that their depiction of Balazar

is all wrong. (For some reason they don't seem awed by his claim. They are awed by his prowess though). Durnfal tells Starnia that he has something she must see. She goes to his room with him and they get the lead chest containing the everburning torches of Yemalio and bring them back to the temple. There Durnfal shows them to Boldoni and the temple elite.

Meanwhile Hallelujah has found someone who lets her test his leather armour. She discovers that the claims are true! Gerhardt finds a local who sells him some material for fixing his sword...

5) Sea Season - Beginning of Fire Season 1618 (Give me my torches back damn it!)(May 30, 1998)

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Babeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Durnfal Strongsphear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Naul Aur (Old Carmanian Sword of Humakt)(Henry)

Present in Body if Not Spirit: Burning Willow (Votanki hunter)(Neil), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne)

NPCs: Tamerlan (Waha Noble)

Naul Aur had been trouncing Dykenean guardsmen, Gerhardt was trying to fix his sword, Hallelujah was looking for someone to let her test how strong their armour was, Durnfal was showing off the torches of Ever-burning, Greystone and Tamerlan were just hanging around, and Burning Willow was being bedazzled by the bright lights and the big city. Everyone was invited to attend a big party that evening at the palace. While they waited for evening Gerhardt told the party that he had found a Lunar prospector named Eagle Eye G'jorni who could probably fix all their weapons and armour for a price. The party had decided to leave the next day but decided to stick around and see how much Eagle Eye would charge them.

When evening came they followed a guardsman to the palace for the banquet. All the notables of Dykene were there-all the priests and rune lords from the Yemalio temple, as well as the heads of the Hearth Mother, Votank, Foundchild and Rigtaina cults. The banquet was a fun enough event. Everyone was seated on a two person couch for dining. Most party members ended up seated with another party member (except Durnfal who was seated with an Yemalian acolyte who impressed him as a complete prudish, stick-in-the mud, waste of time). Everyone had the chance to make small talk with the locals (except Naul Aur who was making a bad reputation for himself in Dykene as being a little too preoccupied with death). Half way into the evening the characters noticed that King Skilfil and Burning Willow were both missing.

Hallelujah tried to engage Praxenia the king's currently favoured concubine in conversation (to help Burning Willow) but she seemed a bit too distracted by Skilfil's absence to want to make small talk. After a while she left to go look for Skilfil. Naul Aur decided to follow her and caught up with her as she stood outside an alcove listening to the noises of lovemaking. After a while King Skilfil stuck his head out of the alcove and spotted Praxenia and Naul Aur. He spotted the pair and Praxenia engaged Naul in a long kiss that turned passionate. Skilfil pulled his head back into the alcove and Praxenia pushed Naul into

another alcove and the pair engaged in “hand to hand combat”. Eventually all parties concerned returned to the banquet looking a little disheveled. Praxenia and King Skilfil exchanged venomous glances (which Naul Aur and Burning Willow got to experience as well). Everyone returned to the inn (some the worse for wear than others, Burning Willow and Tamerlan for example. The former because of her lack of experience with alcohol and the latter because of a willingness to overindulge).

The next day Hallelujah finalized arrangements to purchase some supplies from Ostakkar Three-Scar and when Eagle Eye showed up later that day the party arranged to have all their weapons and armour repaired as well. He told them this would take him about a week to complete and charged them an encumbrance of tin a day for the work. That day Durnfal went to the outer (public) temple to offer his suit of ringmail he no longer needed to the cult. While he was there he noticed that the torches of Everburning were gone. The acolyte he had been seated with at the banquet told him that the torches had been moved to the inner temple for safekeeping and that he should talk to the king about donating the armour. Durnfal was irritated about the torches being moved but went to speak with the king anyway. As he made his way into the palace one of the king’s concubines Chana Greeneyes accosted him and asked whether he would like to “spend some time with her”. He told her he was too busy right then and there but maybe later. She offered to send a slave to fetch him that evening and he agreed. He got in to see the king who seemed to be in a very good mood. The king asked about Burning Willow and asked Durnfal to bring a present (of a gold necklace) to her. The king was happy to accept the suit of ringmail and offered to trade two suits of soft leather and one suit of cuirboilli for it. (The suit of soft leather and cuirboilli were for Burning Willow of course!) Durnfal returned to the inn and gave the necklace to Burning Willow. She didn’t have the faintest idea of what it was for so Durnfal had to show her. That evening Burning Willow, Durnfal and Hallelujah were all away from the inn. Burning Willow and Durnfal’s absences were for obvious reasons but no one learned where Hallelujah had gone. She returned the next morning and spent the rest of the week studying with the head priestess of the Hearth Mother cult. Greystone spent a fair bit of time with the head of the Votank cult which he found to be a lot like Daka Fal. He and Tamerlan also spent some time helping out with the slaughtering of pigs. Gerhardt just hung out and relaxed and Naul Aur spent a lot of time at the guard’s training ground. He tried to persuade them to let him train them in the “modern” art of warfare. They were quite reluctant to learn anything from him and after a few days they shunned him completely. They couldn’t embrace his philosophy of total warfare and killing for killing’s sake (as they saw it) and he rejected their approach to warfare as being amateurish and weak. His reputation in Dykene got steadily worse and people started avoiding him. Towards the end of the week small children had started throwing dung at him. Every night of that week Burning Willow and Durnfal disappeared at night only to reappear in the morning. Once the armour and weapons were finished the party paid Eagle Eye G’jorni off and the following morning went to the palace to tell Skilfil they had decided not to join his guard. He was disappointed but thought it might be just as well that Naul Aur left since he was thought so poorly of. He wished them all godspeed and the group left to get the torches.

The party went to the inner temple and asked to speak to the rune lord Sylvanthi Brighteyes. The runelord was summoned and Durnfal and Naul Aur went into the temple. (The guards at the door didn’t try and stop Naul Aur but they did keep the rest of the party out). Durnfal demanded the torches back

but Sylvanthi didn't want to hand them over. He told them that he had divined from the god that the torches should be in a temple to Yemalio. (He assumed this meant his temple, of course!) When he continuously refused to turn the torches over Naul Aur attacked him. Sylvanthi backed off and retreated before the pair. They followed up and he managed to keep alive long enough to duck out into an open courtyard. There Starnia Stormrender threw a javelin with Multimissile 3 at Naul. Two of the missiles hit Naul damaging his legs. The following round Starnia called the power of Yelm down on Naul and this killed him. Meanwhile Hallelujah and Tamerlan had attacked the two guards at the temple entrance when they realized the fight had started and quickly knocked them down. The party had followed up and Gerhardt reached Durnfal and Naul just as the latter was struck down. (Naul was unable to D.I. because he was in an enemy temple). He ran forward and tried to heal Naul. Durnfal followed Sylvanthi up and was hit by two Sunspears in subsequent rounds (which didn't kill him because of his heavy armour). Sylvanthi and Durnfal traded blows. (Durnfal was so angry that he unleashed the special power he had gained inside the eel and managed to fanaticize himself). Gerhardt healed Naul up but Svart was the person who regained consciousness! Durnfal got his spear stuck in Sylvanthi's shield and then Svart engaged Sylvanthi and knocked him down. Then Sylvanthi's giant hawk familiar attacked and knocked Svart unconscious again. The hawk's leg was wounded and it took off the following round. Gerhardt hit it and stuck his sword in its wing. Burning Willow tried to hit the hawk with a javelin but missed. Meanwhile Hallelujah and Tamerlan had charged Starnia. Tamerlan swung and was parried while Hallelujah cut her arm so severely that it was unusable. Stania then stepped back into the interior of the shrine. Tamerlan followed up and was knocked down by a warding. Hallelujah was wounded by the warding but was still standing. (Starnia used her D.I. to repair the damage). Neither was keen on the fight and at this point King Skilfil and some guardsmen showed up and stopped the fight. After an exchange of recriminations during which Svart was healed again it was decided that ownership/final disposition of the torches would be decided by Tagalog Woodheart, High Priest of Yemalio in Balazar. The party and Sylvanthi would travel to Elkoi to petition Tagalog for a ruling as to what would become of the torches...

Chronicles of the North - Part 2

6) Fire Season 1618 (What do we have to do to get out of this burg?)(July 4th, 1998)

Party: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Babeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior)(Henry), Burning Willow (Votanki hunter) (Neil)

Surprise Appearances by: Peracles (Journeyman Rokari sorcerer from Heortland)(Jeff N.), Hooman (Pentan warrior)(Darryl A.)

After the fight at the temple was over the party healed themselves up. (This involved Svart and Durnfal invoking divine magic to heal their Sun Spear wounds. Yemalio himself must have intervened to spare Durnfal excess damage as he should have been slain by the two Sun Spears he was hit by). They were prepared to leave right away but Sylvanthi Brighteyes couldn't leave that day so the party agreed to spend one more night and depart the following morning. They spent the night at the inn, avoiding the

locals. Bright and early the next morning Sylvanthi and his three initiates showed up and the group prepared to depart. As they were heading to the main gate (Svart having dung thrown at him by children along the way) they heard screams and sounds of general carnage coming from the area of the pig pens. When they reached the pens they discovered that one of the pens had been smashed and a boar had escaped, apparently killing two men in the process. Sylvanthi directed his initiates to start making some order from the chaos and the party wondered if it had been the Red Boar that had escaped but before they could determine that fact the escaping boar attacked them! Durnfal was the first person attacked but the rest of the party and Sylvanthi quickly got involved. They quickly discovered that the boar was resistant to their weapons and had a fairly thick skin. As they were battling the boar two men (a Pentan and a sorcerer) on horseback rode up. (Some party members immediately divvied up the Pentan's possession as he had a composite bow and a horse! After the battle the sorcerer gave his self bow to Gerhardt). The sorcerer seemed to be in charge and instructed the Pentan to move closer. He then greeted the party and the Pentan lowered his lance and charged the boar doing some damage to it. The boar turned to run taking Sylvanthi's short spear with it. The Pentan pursued the boar a ways but the sorcerer ordered him to stop. The boar hadn't managed to hurt anyone.

Sylvanthi wanted to immediately form a party in order to track the boar down so it wouldn't kill anyone in its wounded state. Durnfal and Svart were against joining in but Hallelujah saw it as her duty to track the boar down to prevent it hurting any innocent women and children. She started tracking the boar and the rest of the party, the four Dykeneans and the Pentan and the sorcerer joined in. Peracles the sorcerer renewed his acquaintance with the group and gave them a brief recounting of his activities since he'd last seen them. As they tracked the boar they noticed that the trail of blood was diminishing. They wondered whether it was because the boar was running out of blood or regenerating. The boar quickly answered that question by charging at them from behind some bushes. It charged at the Pentan's horse but missed its first attack. The party surrounded it again and began to attack it. The horse wanted to back away from the boar but the Pentan kept it in place with a Riding roll. The horse wasn't so lucky with the boar's second blow and had its chest ripped open. The sorcerer fell off while the Pentan managed to land on his feet. Hallelujah chopped one of the boar's back legs off and others managed to wound it as well. The boar gored the horse again and Burning Willow and the Yemalio initiates tried to hit the boar with javelins. Unfortunately all they succeeded in doing was killing the horse as all four of the javelins they threw struck the horse instead. This really angered the Pentan who had been trying to heal his horse and he started demanding recompense. (He even tried calling on East King Wind to bring his horse back to life. This attempt failed). Burning Willow refused any claims of recompense as she didn't recognize his claims of ownership. The boar was killed and the group waited to see whether it would begin regenerating again. It did not. Tamerlan and Greystone butchered the beast and Sylvanthi wanted to return the meat, skin and tusks to Dykene. Durnfal didn't want to do this but the rest of party agreed to do so he was forced to go along. When they reached Dykene they discovered King Skilfil and the major priests, priestesses and shamans of Dykene surveying the damage the boar had done. The group were hailed with a cheer when they saw the boar's head decorating the top of Hooman's lance. Skilfil gifted them with the boar's hide and tusks as a reward for slaying the beast and as recompense for Hooman's slain horse. Peracles asked how they could get the hides turned into armour and Burning Willow told him she could tan the hide. When asked how long this would take she

said four or five days. The party entered the citadel to make inquiries about getting the hides tanned or about how they could exchange their leather for some finished leather. The tanners didn't understand the concept of trading some of the king's leather for these outlander's leather so that went nowhere fast. Peracles also asked whether they'd trade for some metal weapons but the locals had too much metal of their own to agree to this. Then they asked some of the outlanders who live in Dykene whether they'd be willing to take the leather off their hands or not. Eagle Eye G'jorni wouldn't do it but Ostakkar Three Scar agreed to for 200 pennies and 500 pennies worth of furs. The party agreed to this and gave the Pentan all 200 of the pennies.

The party then proceeded to the gate intending to leave but were turned back when they discovered that the guardsman found in the escaped boar's pen had been murdered and that King Skilfil had ordered that no one leave (especially foreigners, the only people capable of such a heinous act as stabbing someone in the back). They headed to the citadel for an audience with Skilfil and discovered him in chamber with the priests, priestesses and shamans examining the bodies. Skilfil told them that the guardsman, an outlander had been slain and his body dumped in the pig pen the previous night. They were told the guardsman was a Lunar named Rufus from Raibanth. Some sort of bladed weapon had slain or badly wounded him before he was dumped into the pen. The boar had either finished him off or had gored him badly enough to obscure any evidence. Hallelujah started talking to the party in Sunspeech so the Balazarings wouldn't understand and immediately speculated that he had been slain either at the hands of or at the instigation of Praxenia, the king's concubine which she suspected of being a Lunar spy. (She had suspected her of being a spy ever since Greystone had told her about the lost pigeon incident. She was familiar with the concept of carrier pigeons whereas Greystone was not. She also felt that they needed to get moving quickly as the Lunars undoubtedly knew of their presence in Dykene due to Praxenia's pigeons. Hallelujah theorized that Rufus had threatened to expose Praxenia or was a rival spy. The party also theorized that someone had realized that the boars became enraged when they drank human blood and had thrown Rufus' body in there on purpose to do just that). The party was told that the head priestess of Grandmother Earth would be attempting to contact Rufus' spirit that evening. Hallelujah, Peracles, Svart, Hooman and Greystone searched Rufus' quarters which were pretty much empty except for a book of New Pelorian pornography. They gave the book to Eagle Eye G'jorni to see if the text contained any modifications. (Peracles remained behind to try and use his Project Vision spell to find evidence in the palace. Hooman remained behind to guard him). Meanwhile Gerhardt and Tamerlan hung around the palace to try and keep an eye on Praxenia. The group discovered that Rufus had not been on duty that night and that his closest friend was one Cletus, another Lunar outlander who was presently on guard duty. Durnfal, Svart and Hallelujah went to question him and discovered he was a complete jerk who tried to hit on Lou, (Lou offered to hit back and he retracted his advance). Cletus told them that he and Rufus had gambled with the other guardsmen but this had been rather good natured so it was unlikely any of them had killed him. Besides which they'd have been more likely to fight him face to face than stab him in the back. After a while they decided questioning this jerk was a waste of time and they returned to the palace where Lou decided she would guard the Grandmother Earth priestess from any potential attacks. Gerhardt and Tamerlan noticed a short figure in a cloak and a guardsman leaving the palace. They followed them out of the palace, past the warrior's barracks and all the way to the main gate where the horses were kept. The

pair entered the stables and Gerhardt and Tamerlan got closer to try and hear what was being said. The pair soon exited the stables leading horses and after saddling up rode out of the gate, almost riding down the gate guards in the process. Gerhardt pulled out his bow and Tamerlan grabbed a javelin. Tamerlan hit Cletus (who had been identified by the gate guards) in the leg and Gerhardt hit the cloaked figure with an arrow. Tamerlan's second javelin missed as did Gerhardt's arrow but his third arrow hit the figure in the head and it slumped in the saddle and fell off. (By this time Cletus was out of javelin range). Gerhardt and Tamerlan ran up to the figure and discovered that it was Praxenia (surprise, surprise). They healed her up and dragged her before the king. She confessed all her crimes and admitted to getting Cletus to kill Rufus who had attempted to blackmail her because he recognized her as someone he had seen in Elkoi in the company of the Lunar spymaster there. She denied knowing Rufus' blood would turn the boar savage and refused to tell who the Lunar spymaster in Elkoi was. Skilfil judged her and sentenced her to exile. King Skilfil declared Cletus an exile as well and told the party they could keep all of his possessions and the horse, arms and armour he has as well if they can catch him.

7) Earth Season 1618 (Why did the Tusk Rider cross the road?)(August 8th, 1998)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior)(Henry), Hooman (Pentan warrior)(Darryl A.)

Party: Present in Spirit if not Person: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Babeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), Burning Willow (Votanki hunter) (Neil); Peracles (Journeyman Rokari sorcerer from Heortland)(Jeff N.)

The Regular NPC: Tamerlan (Waha noble)

Irregular NPCs: Sylvanthi Brighteyes (Balazaring Runelord/Rune Priest of Yemalio and Balazar); Primus, Secundus and Tertius aka Larry, Moe and Curly (Balazaring Yemalio initiates)

The party was present when King Skilfil announced sentence on Praxenia, the Lunar spy. Svart Ulfsson tried to convince Skilfil that he should exile her without any possessions other than the clothes on her back (and without any boots) as this was how he would treat a Balazaring who had committed the same crimes. Skilfil was reluctant to do this as Praxenia would not survive long in the wilderness without any assistance. He would not exile her like this and cause her death. Svart also argued that they did not need her fleeing to Elkoi and giving the Lunars any more information than she already had. Skilfil decided that he would keep Praxenia here in the citadel under guard on reduced rations until a Lunar merchant caravan appeared and then sell her to them (to recoup his losses). Svart thought this was a good compromise and thus it transpired.

The party set off early the next morning. It was a large group consisting of the regular party (Svart, Gerhardt, Durnfal, Tamerlan, Greystone, Hallelujah and Burning Willow) plus two new members (Peracles and Hooman) and Sylvanthi Brighteyes and his three initiates, Primus, Secundus and Tertius (more commonly referred to as Larry, Moe and Curly for some arcane reason). Sylvanthi and his initiates were mounted on horses while the rest of the party walked. Sylvanthi was also accompanied by his giant

hawk familiar Highflyer. The party made good progress following the caravan route from Dykene to Elko. They had met and peacefully visited with two different bands of hunters when they came across the tracks of a large number of giant pigs. At first they speculated that these may be the tracks of escaped progeny of the two god boars but Greystone quickly identified the tracks as those of tuskers, the giant swine Tusk Riders ride. He guessed there were in the area of a hundred tuskers in all with an unknown number of Tusk Riders in attendance. Sylvanthi had never heard of Tusk Riders and the group quickly filled him in on their nature. Svart speculated that the Tusk Riders had somehow heard of the god boars and were in Balazar in order to steal them. Sylvanthi decided he would mount Highflyer and see whether he could track these Tusk Riders. He followed their trail to a forest to the north and returned and told the party of this. He then decided to ride Highflyer back to Dykene in order to warn King Skilfil of this possible threat. While he was gone Hooman got to ride his horse which made him very happy. The party traveled on a ways further meeting and warning another band of hunters about the Tusk Riders before passing over the High Bridge, scene of the famous defeat of a Pentan horde generations before. After the party passed over the bridge (spending the night camped on the bridge itself as a defensive measure) Tertius asked whether they wanted to keep to the caravan trail or set off cross country since the caravan trail wasn't the most direct path. After some debate they decided to keep following the caravan trail since it was easier going and they hadn't told the still absent Sylvanthi that they would be doing otherwise. As they neared the fork that led to Trilus they spotted a small forest to the west of the trail. The gap was at least 6 keymiles wide but they were a bit worried about a Tusk Rider attack. Sylvanthi had returned by this time and he volunteered to take Highflyer up and scout ahead. He returned having seen nothing but sure enough once they'd passed the small forest a horde of Tusk Riders rode out. They did not act exceptionally threatening (not any more than their appearance and reputation provided) and slowly approached the party which stopped and also did not act threatening. A large, grossly pregnant, (and just plain gross) Tusk Rider female approached and hailed them in Sartarite. Gerhardt returned her hail. She announced herself as Gretta Killmany of the Crushskulls and asked who their leader was. She assumed Durnfal was because of his armour but the party seemed uncommitted to this. They ended up agreeing to a parley, four of them and four Tusk Riders. Durnfal, Svart, Gerhardt and Sylvanthi on the party side, Gretta, her consort, Baby-eater, and two others (Crusher and Masher) on the Tusk Rider's side. The rest of the Tusk Riders would withdraw to the woods and the rest of the party would go 1/2 a key mile or so away in the opposite direction to wait. After introductions and the exchange of food, dried venison(?) from the Tusk Riders, and barley porridge and bacon from the party they got down to talking. Gretta claimed they were just in Balazar to see one of the god pigs (which they had heard about somehow, they didn't volunteer and the party never asked). They claimed they had been riding around trying to get some locals to stop and talk to them but hadn't cornered, err found anyone who could talk to them. The party decided they had four basic options: 1) tell them nothing; 2) attack them and risk being killed; 3) tell them the way to Dykene (Sylvanthi vetoed this option); or 4) tell them about Trilus. Since three out of the four negotiators were from cults with truth runes the party decided to tell the Tusk Riders about the god boar at Trilus. (Sylvanthi told the party he would warn King Yalaring (they may be enemies but they're still Balzarings. After the Tusk Riders withdrew to the woods to join their fellows he jumped aboard Highflyer and flew to Trilus. Sure enough after a while the Tusk Riders came out of the woods and headed off in the direction of Trilus. After Sylvanthi returned they continued on to Elko. After a few more uneventful days

they arrived there. After the usual check through Lunar customs and tax collectors (costing them a fur worth 50L) they entered the citadel. Sylvanthi showed them a few of the sites and put them in the King's Inn while he went to talk to Taklong Woodheart, High Priest of Yemalio in Balazar. (While waiting they all ate and most tried the local swill, err beer while Durnfal cleaned up. Sylvanthi returned an hour later and took Durnfal, Gerhardt, Svart and Hooman to the temple. They waited outside while the true believers went in. Taklong met and spoke with Durnfal and told him he needed a day to commune with the god and to return tomorrow for his decision. Upon returning to the inn they learned that they had been invited to dine that evening with King Glyptus the Good.

8) Earth Season 1618 (Um, did anyone see a runelord around here? We seem to have lost ours.)(September 19th, 1998)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior)(Henry), Hooman (Pentan warrior)(Darryl A.), Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Babeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.)

Party: Present in Spirit if not Person: , Burning Willow (Votanki hunter) (Neil); Peracles (Journeyman Rokari sorceror from Heortland)(Jeff N.)

The Regular NPC: Tamerlan (Waha noble)

Irregular NPCs: Sylvanthi Brighteyes (Balazaring Runelord/Rune Priest of Yemalio and Balazar); Primus, Secundus and Tertius aka Larry, Moe and Curly (Balazaring Yemalio initiates)

While waiting for evening to fall so they could attend the dinner at King Glyptus' palace Hallelujah and Burning Willow went to offer Hallelujah's services at the local Earth temple. Hallelujah was also wondering if the local Grandmother Earth priestess knew when exactly the upcoming high holy day of Babeester Gor was. The priestess was able to help her out with that and enlisted her services as Earth guardian at the upcoming ceremonies. Gerhardt went to find someplace where he could buy some new clothes. He was directed to Cyriel Endelkar, the local Etryies trader's place where he purchased two sets of Orlanthi style clothing at an outrageous price. (He also purchased a pair of boots and a belt). After he returned to the King's Inn the rest of the party who were waiting there decided they wanted to buy some new clothes as well, plus some equipment. Gerhardt, Svart, Greystone, Tamerlan and Peracles decided to find Hallelujah as she had some training as a merchant and enlist her aid in bargaining with the clerk. Durnfal and the Pentan Hooman decided to go to the merchants by themselves where Durnfal purchased a set of clothing. Durnfal lusted after a composite bow the merchant had which he was asking 15 furs for! (Roughly 1500 L, though the sales clerk would have taken either of the party members in exchange for the bow and its assorted equipment). Hooman also asked about horses and was told a horse would cost about five slaves. It was during this exchange that Hooman evidenced a strong dislike for slavery, no doubt part of his Pentan heritage. As the pair left Cyriel's they met the rest of the party who had managed to find Hallelujah and Burning Willow. The pair returned with Hallelujah and the crowd as Durnfal had forgotten about boots and hadn't bought any equipment. Hallelujah arranged to purchase four traveler's packs, five sets of clothes, six pairs of boots and the composite bow and its case

for all the rest of their furs, a lump of gold, 25 lumps of bronze and some tin. The party then returned to the inn where the four contenders for the title "Bearer of the Bow" , Hallelujah, Svart, Durnfal and Gerhardt, had an archery contest to see who would carry it first. Hooman joined in to test his skill against them. They decided to each take five shots with a critical worth three points, an impale two points and a hit one point. Durnfal scored two points, Lou three, Gerhardt four and Svart five while Hooman scored an impressive eight points! Svart gave the bow to Gerhardt to bear as he was already too encumbered. Some of the party then cleaned up for the dinner party. (Here Hooman and Greystone again showed their lack of dedication to their traditional ways of life by having baths! Tamerlan just put his new clothes on over the old set). They then all sat around waiting for their escort to the party to arrive. Soon a citadel guard showed up to show them to the palace. (Svart refused to attend since he wasn't allowed to bring his iron bastardwords with him and he couldn't find a good enough hiding place for them. He stayed back at the Inn playing games of chance with Sylvanthi's initiates). At the palace they were introduced to the royal family and the rest of the guests. In attendance were: the Royal Family, King Glyptus the Good, Queen Jocestis, Sylveius the heir, and Hecis the princess; the local Lunar officials, Euryptus the Bold garrison commander; Halcyon var Enkorth, aide to the Provincial Director of Security; Marusa the Shrew, Priestess of the Seven Mothers; and Elecora Kindtongue, Priestess of the Seven Mothers. A special group of Lunars were also in attendance, Flora Catanya, Priestess of Pela, the Barley Goddess; Sildis Puranis, Runelord of Yemalio and Balazar; and Marduk the Scarlet, Scimitar of Yanafil Tarnils. Also in attendance were Cyriel Endelkar, private Lunar citizen and trader and Taklong Woodheart, High Priest of Balazar and Yemalio in Balazar. The palace was a nightmare of bad taste (the food was a mostly entrails in honey sauces) and dining was done in the Lunar style of reclining on couches. The party were seated together but later on got the chance to mingle. All the male members of the party were entranced by the supernatural beauty of Flora Catanya, with most of the men deciding they would lay their lives down for her except, Durnfal who fell head over heels in love with her (he really fell for her when he discovered she was a priestess of the barley goddess!) and Greystone who thought she was good looking but that was it. Lou sat with Elecora and found her to be a nice woman if rather uninteresting. Hooman sat with Halcyon var Enkorth who did nothing but insult him. Sildis was sitting with Flora until Durnfal tried to bribe a servant to spill something on him so he'd leave to change his clothes. The servant said he'd do it for nothing and managed to spill wine all over Sildis's immaculate tunic. Cursing the servant he left to change and Durnfal quickly took his place. He spoke with Flora and was absolutely enraptured by her knowledge of barley cultivation. Hooman also sat with Sildis when he came back from changing his outfit and was "impressed" by the great deeds he recounted. Someone sat with the king and was exposed to his immense shallowness. The party tried to determine what Flora and her group were doing in Balazar and decided that the Lunars were trying to introduce agriculture to Balazar by marrying Pela to Balazar. (Lucky guess!) Hecis tried to pick Durnfal up but he only had eyes for Flora and he quickly gave her the brush-off. She then tried to pick Greystone up and had much more success. They left the dining room early to go back to her room. The rest of the party left en masse and returned to the inn. When they got back they noticed that Sylvanthi wasn't with them. They were discussing what to do about this when Greystone staggered in holding his stomach. Seems that Hecis slipped him some poison in their post-coital glass of wine (which he survived). He managed to escape from the palace and return to the King's Inn ahead of the pursuing citadel guards. Six armed and armoured warriors showed up and tried to arrest Greystone. The party argued with the guards that they

shouldn't be doing this or that they should wait until the next morning to pick Greystone up. The guards weren't interested in arguing the social justice of arresting Greystone, debating the Elkoï social system or in coming back the next morning for him. Finally the group decided not to slaughter the guards and the lot of them returned to the palace with them. There the king was summoned and when he was told what had happened he brushed the whole incident off and let Greystone go free. (The guards knew he was going to do this but they had to follow the formalities now didn't they). The party debated what to do about the missing Sylvanthi and decided it could wait until morning. (They had asked Peracles to use his magic but he hemmed and hawed about doing so). In the morning when they left the inn they were greeted by Highflyer, Sylvanthi's allied spirit who was perched on the roof. He cast a mindlink on Hallelujah and told her that he had felt his link with Sylvanthi being severed the previous night (he'd been off hunting for food). He had returned to look for him and asked for their help. Since normally the link between an allied spirit and his rune lord/priest couldn't be severed without the lord/priest's death Sylvanthi's disappearance was odd. They decided to consult with Taklong Woodheart to see if the god knew where Sylvanthi was. The hawk flew ahead and the party hastened after. They returned to the temple where they persuaded the guards not to attack the hawk. He perched on the temple roof and Taklong was informed of Sylvanthi's disappearance. He hastened to perform a divination which revealed nothing. The party went to the palace where the king was informed. He ordered a search of the citadel using twenty citadel guards. The party and Sylvanthi's initiated helped search and he was not found. (Taklong told Durnfal that he had decided that the god's wishes regarding the torches of Everburning was that they should be sent to the Sun Dome Temple in Sartar.) The hotheads of the party suggested that they would try and foil the Lunar plans to introduce agriculture into Balazar by "rescuing" Flora from her Lunar captors but this was greeted with the derision it deserved from the more practical. The hotheads ignored the derision and decided that they had to try anyway. Peracles was not so keen to foil the Lunars in their attempt to 'civilise' the Balazaring as he sees it as but one step on the long road to enlightened Malkionism (Rokari style). (Especially if Durnfal is the prime mover (obviously he suffers from Clintonitis). Better the group look for the Runelord and then head back 'home'. They also wanted to rescue Sylvanthi from his captivity.

9) Earth Season 1618 (Up the proletariat!)(October 3rd, 1998)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior)(Henry), Hooman (Pentan warrior)(Darryl A.), Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Babeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.)

Party: Present in Spirit if not Person: , Burning Willow (Votanki hunter) (Neil); Peracles (Journeyman Rokari sorcerer from Heortland)(Jeff N.), Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne),

The Regular NPC: Tamerlan (Waha noble)

Irregular NPCs: Sylvanthi Brighteyes (Balazaring Runelord/Rune Priest of Yemalio and Balazar)(MIA and presumed...?); Primus, Secundus and Tertius aka Larry, Moe and Curly (Balazaring Yemalio initiates)

The party decided that they would try and find Sylvanthi and do what they could to thwart the Lunars at the same time. They "brainstormed" and came up with three basic plans:

1. Kill someone. No one in particular specified.
2. Kill someone vital to the Lunars' plan. (Ultimately rejected due to the unknown quality of Marduk the Scarlet and the large number of Lunars present. Svart was convinced he could take them one at a time however).
3. Overthrow the Lunar Empire (basically - kill everyone). Not seriously considered...I think.

The party also attempted to incite the pig farmers to revolt but they were too fearful of the Lunars and were unconvinced the introduction of agriculture would harm them (What have the Lunars ever done for you? Well there's the aquaducts, oh yeah and the highways, don't forget about the highways...etc., etc.). They discovered from questioning various sources (Taklong Woodheart, Erde the "High Priestess" of the Hearth Goddess) that the ceremony would take place within a week's time. Erde suggested the best thing to do would be to disrupt the ceremony. This returned the party to plan 2. Hallelujah suggested that all this would do was postpone the marriage. What they really needed was a major disruption. Erde suggested they could try ruining the ceremony in a more serious manner by invoking the spirit of the Wild Mother who would be most wroth by the introduction of agriculture into her land.

The party learned that the Lunars had built an Earth temple at the village of Greater Bykotos (known as the big Bykotos to the locals to differentiate it from the village of Lesser Bykotos (little Bykotos) and completely identical in size and age) for the worship of Pela. This temple had yet to be consecrated. Hallelujah decided they would travel to the village to inspect this temple. The party travelled there and were met by a band of twenty peltasts who refused to allow them admission due to their not having written permission from Marduk. Hallelujah was incensed by this and a bloodbath was narrowly averted by her turning around and leaving. Peracles was persuaded to inspect the temple using his Project Vision spell. As far as he could tell it was just what it appeared, a standard cube shaped Earth temple that hadn't yet been consecrated. The peltasts sent one of their number by horseback back to the citadel to warn Marduk of their visit. The party decided that they would stay outside the citadel with the pig tenders rather than attempt to re-enter it. Erde found them lodgings with the pig tenders and they tried to stir them up to revolt. Lou sent a strongly worded protest into the citadel to Flora complaining about her inability to inspect an earth temple which a Lunar guard promised to deliver.

Early the next morning Flora, Marduk and an escort of YT initiates and peltasts came out to pay Lou a visit. Flora and Marduk (at Flora's urging) apologized for Lou inability to inspect the temple. (It was all an oversight, who knew a Babeester Gor would want to inspect the temple?) Flora gracefully declined Lou's offer of guardianship for the temple (at Marduk's urging, command?) and this did not impress Lou at all. Marduk made a speech about the benefits awaiting the locals from the introduction of agriculture and they were all impressed. The party's oratory lacked any similar impact. The party decided to contact Blueface to enlist his aid in invoking the Wild Mother. Lou used the Eubuck staff to place herself in mental contact with Blueface and he promised to come warning that it would take him at least three days to get there.

The next day the marriage party, a big group of Lunar soldiers, some citadel warriors and the royal family moved enmass to Greater Bykotus for the temple consecration. The party didn't know why they were going and feared the worse. They observed some sort of ceremony but weren't sure what it was for. The next two days also held some sort of ceremonies but nothing crucial seemed to happen. Then Blueface arrived and told Lou that she was the best candidate for invoking the Wild Mother. Lou was worried about her unborn baby and neither Blueface nor Erde could promise her nothing would happen to it. Lou agreed to do it with some reservations. Blueface told her she would have to fast and that the best way to attract the Wild Mother's attention was with a blood sacrifice, the more the better- preferably human. Svart and Hooman were keen to locate a Lunar volunteer.

10) Earth Season 1618 (Marrying the Goddess - A Tale from Grandpa)(November 14th, 1998)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior)(Henry), Hooman (Pentan warrior)(Darryl A.), Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Babeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.), and Gerhardt Frei (Orlanthi warrior)(Arne).

Party: Present in Spirit if not Person: , Burning Willow (Votanki hunter) (Neil); Peracles (Journeyman Rokari sorceror from Heortland)(Jeff N.).

The Regular NPC: Tamerlan (Waha noble)

Irregular NPCs: Sylvanthe Brighteyes (Balazaring Runelord/Rune Priest of Yemalio and Balazar)(MIA and presumed...?); Primus, Secundus and Tertius aka Larry, Moe and Curly (Balazaring Yemalio initiates) (Doing Yemalio only knew what).

Marrying the Goddess - A Tale from Grandpa

[The Setting: somewhere in Prax in a Alticamelus rider compound.

The Scene: a group of children are playing some sort of kickball game with a human skull in a desultory fashion. They do not notice as a rickety, old, hunched over figure approaches out of the glare of the noonday sun.]

--Hey you kids, whatcha you doin'?--

[the leader of the kids to another sotto voce]--Oh hyena dung, it's Grandpa, he probably wants to tell us another of his long, boring stories. [Much louder]--Hi, Grandpa, we were just waiting for you to come and tell us one of your great stories.--

--[Mutters to self] Sure you were you lying little bastard. [Grumbles to self in loud voice] Damn kids these day just don't got no respect for their elders. [Louder still] Come over here in the shade of this tent and I'll tell ya about the time one of my old buddies was possessed by a goddess-- [Totters over to the tent and gratefully sinks into a cross legged position. Waits for the kids to gather around him and starts into another boring story...]

"This story took place back when we wuz in a place called Balazar. It's a fur piece from here but our riders have raided it in the past. Not that it ever was worth raiding the folks there being dirt poor and all, but they make decent enough slaves I guess. Anyhoo my buddies and me wuz stuck there due to the fact that we needed to get these Torches of Everburnin' we'd had back from one of the local kings who had snatched 'em. I told you about them torches did'n I? They wuz supposed to be the blood of Yemalio hisself that he'd shed at some place called the Hill of Coal?, no Gold. Anyhoo the dark war god of the trolls had taken these drops of blood and stuck 'em somehow on the end of some lead clubs and made torches out of 'em. We'd gotten ahold of three of 'em through this mission we'd accepted and although we lost one of 'em we still had the other two and their lead carrying case (bloody heavy that thing was!) My Yemalio buddy made the mistake of showin' 'em to some locals and they wouldn't give 'em back. Anyhoo, we'd lost 'em and in the course of gettin' 'em back we got mixed up in this Lunar scheme to introduce agriculture to Balazar by marryin' one of their goddesses to the god the place was named after, Balazar.

Of course once we heard about this scheme we had to wreck it somehow. (Though come to think of it some of us were keener on the idea than others. Me and my Bison pal were agin the whole stinkin' Lunar business as was this Pentan I knew back then (yeah, I know the only good Pentan is a dead one but when you live the adventurer's life you make strange friends and stranger enemies). Raping the earth? [hawks and spits] Most of the rest of us were just agin' it because the Lunars were doin' it and this soulless sorceror we hung around with weren't agin it at all. Claimed it would be good for the "benighted locals"). My bud Lou, the Babeester Gor weren't agin it in principle but she wuz prepared to oppose it if the majority of us wuz. Kind of ironic considering the role she wuz to play in the whole business.

The idea wuz that by marryin' a grain goddess into the family the Balazarings would git access to the know-how and spells ya needs to plant crops successfully. This would make it cheaper for the Lunars to keep troops in Balazar since they wouldn't have to bring so much food in while at the same time wreckin' the local culture and makin' it easier for the Lunars to introdoocce their own evil lifestyle. The bastards. They'd collected an entire weddin' party to get this marriage done right. They had a priestess of some grain goddess to play the part of the goddess (and wuz she a looker!) and some turncoat Yemalio bastard to pretend to be Balazar. There was some old biddy Lunar priestess arrangin' the whole thing and the local high priest of Yemalio (who was an unwillin' party) to marry 'em. Our first thoughts on how to go about wreckin' the whole business wuz to kill someone vital like the priestess or the turncoat but the important people wuz always guarded by a bunch of Lunar soldiers and a scary Lunar rune lord who had five special flunkeys with 'im. So we reluctantly abandoned that idea and decided to rouse the locals instead. That accomplished bupkus cause the locals were too downtrodden to help.

Then Lou contacted this bugger called Blueface we'd met, a mighty powerful shaman who lives in Balazar, to ask his advice. He tells her he's on his way and that he'll be here in a coupla days. (He was concerned about the baby Lou was carryin', the so-called Dog Boy, the Balazaring's messiah so he'd given her this stick that allowed her to talk to him in his head somehow). We waited around for him and when he showed up he suggested we could wreck the ceremony by attracting the attention of the Wild Mother, the earth goddess of Balazar. She'd be sure to wreck the weddin' cause she hates agriculture.

(She's a mite like Eritha 'cept she don't even like tamed animals. Her concern is wild critters and plants). We asked how we wuz to git her attention and Blueface sed we'd have to have a volunteer to embody the goddess. He figured that Lou bein' an earthie was the best candidate. Lou wuz worried about the baby and Blueface couldn't reassure her as he'd never done nuttin' quite like this before but she said she'd do it anyway. He told us Lou would have to fast and we'd need a blood sacrifice to attract the goddess' attention. Somethin' big though, not no little critter, not even a bunch of little critters. Hooman, the Pentan, Svart the Humakti and myself were all keen on nabbin' a Lunar as our sacrifice but the rest were a li'l squeamish about that so we went huntin' instead. Three whole days we hunted and diddlysquat wuz all we found.

So we headed back to the Lunar occupied citadel of Elkoi near where the weddin' was gonna happin (and where we'd left Lou and Blueface) and got back the night before the invokin' wuz to happen. Svart, Hooman, Durnfal, (the Yemalio who'd lost them torches) and myself went to get ourselves a Lunar. Greystone, that wussy Bison, Gerhardt the Orlanthi and Burnin' Willow, the Votanki refused to help and went off lookin' to rustle up some pigs. We approached the Pig's Gate where they always had one Lunar on guard duty and I wuz supposed to confuse him with a spell so we could nab 'im. Damn spell didn't work so Svart hauls off and hits him with his sword which knocks 'em down. Then we tied him up and healed 'im up. Svart cut 'im and told 'im he'd finish his death rune later. This scared the poor bastard piss-less. The bastards then got me to schlep the bugger back to our hideout by myself while they snuck into the citadel for some damn reason. I think they wuz lookin' for an extra Lunar in case one wasn't enough. There they go, bold as brass saunterin' up and down the narrow pigshit strewn streets on Elkoi lookin' for a lone Lunar. The gits wandered over to the main gate and started openin' it so that they could leave. The two gate guards who were safe up on top of the wall asked 'em what the hell they wuz doin' and Svart actin' like he wuz pissed tried to tell 'em he wuz goin' outside to take a wiz. Them guards may have been Chaos lovin' Lunars but they wasn't that stupid. Why go outside when there wuz plenty of walls all around ya? One of 'em started blowin' a horn and those three morons managed to get the gate open and start runnin' for it. Lucky for 'em neither of the guards had a light spell or they'd have been in deep sheet. As it wuz Hooman took a lucky shot through the thigh with a javelin and the other two had to go back and grab 'im and drag 'im away from the gate.

Meanwhile Gerhardt and Greystone wuz tryin' to beg, borrow or steal some pigs. Unfortunately all the dogs them Balazarings keep made this kinda hard. Gerhardt snuck around but Greystone made enough noise to wake the dead and some irate pigtender told him to bugger off before he set his doigs on 'im. They tried to find some food to steal so they could lure some pigs away but they couldn't find innys. They thought about bashin' a hole in on of the pens or startin' a fire but they weren't nuttin' to burn so they changed their minds. So they just returned to the clearing we wuz usin' as a hideout and where we'd left Lou and Blueface.

When I got back to the clearing prodding that damn Lunar wit my sword I saw Lou sittin' before a fire chantin' somethin'. She looked spaced out and was buck nekked. Her face wuz covered with soot and ashes and her belly wuz stickin' out a bit seeing as she wuz a fur bit gone in her pregnancy.. Blueface looked just as creepy and he wuz jumpin' around and chantin' something evil soundin' also buck nekked. When the idiots three got back to the hideout Peracles the sorceror cast some evil, soul-suckin' spell

that started healin' up Hooman's leg. Finally the pig pirate wannabes returned empty handed. Once everyone had gathered Blueface dug this long trench in the ground and just before dawn he got Svart and me to hold the Lunar up. (Gerhardt had gone to watch the Lunars as he didn't want no part in no human sacrifice). Svart held 'im by the shoulders and I held his feet. We held 'im over the trench and once the first light of dawn showed Blueface slit his throat while chantin' something powerful. The Lunar kicked and squirmed while his blood spurted. I held his legs up high so all the blood would come out and once it wuz finished drippin' out we dropped 'im and Blueface cut his heart out and threw the still beatin' organ into the fire. The fire kicked up somethin' fierce and all of a sudden like it got real quite and then this little wind picks up startin' to kick li'l leaves around in a swirlin' pattern like a whirlvish but not so rough. Some of the leaves settled on top of the blood and this giant bird that looked somethin' like a swan and somethin' like an eagle dependin' on when you wuz lookin' at it landed. As soon as it landed it looked mostly like a beyootiful woman. Burnin' Willow told us this wuz a vily, a nature spirit that some people called huntin' nymphs. She wuz buck naked cept for a quiver of javelins she wuz carryin' on her back. Soon another vily settled and then all of a sudden Lou opens her mouth and with this awesome voice asks, "Why have you summoned me?" Blueface tells her what's goin' on and she grabs him and pulls him closer. She says, "I know you and you are not unworthy." Then she walks over to the trench, throws herself flat on her face and drinks it dry. With the blood all down her face and front and flanked by the vily she starts walkin' towards the new Earth temple the Lunars had built at this farmin' village called Lesser Bykotus.

The rest of us followed with our weapons out and our spells readied. As we reached the clearing's edge Gerhardt joined us. As soon as Lou and the vily stepped out from the clearing they wuz spotted. (I'd sure like to know what the Lunars thought about three buck nekked wimmen steppin' out from the woods, one with her face covered with ashes and blood all down her front.) Anyhoo, we could see the village with the temple in the middle. There wuz some sort of canopy stickin' out from the front under which the weddin' party members wuz gathered and off to one side wuz the royal family from Elkoi. All the villagers were standin' in a big group off to one side and there were about twenty peltasts standing guard around the perimeter of the village. There wuz also a dozen citadel guards as well, Yemalio spearmen mounted on horseback. When all this lot spotted the three nekked wimmen they all reacted differently, the farmers screamed and bugged off in the opposite direction as fast as they could go. The peltasts went into formation, the weddin' party kept on doin' their bizness and the horsemen charged us. The scary Lunar rune lord, Marduk the Scarlet and his five initiates sort of formed up between us and the weddin' party right in front of the peltasts. The horsemen barrelled up as fast as they could go but before they could even get in javelin range the vily started huckin' javelins at their horses. Whenever one of those javelin's hit a horse that horse balked and wouldn't come any closer. Then they started chuckin' 'em at the horsemen and one of 'em dropped dead outright and the rest peeled off. This accounted for half of the horsemen by the time the javelins finished flying and the other half charged us instead.

Lou and the vily ignored the horsemen, just kept on marchin' up and we got to fight 'em. Our javelin and bow fire wuz pretty useless and they started whaling on us. We hadn't planned our assault very good so we had all our best fighters on the same flank with the lighter armed and armoured ones on the other

flank. Durnfal and Svart took care of their three pretty quick with two gettin' killed and one yieldin' once he saw which way the fight wuz goin'. At the other end of the fight it wuz a different story. Burnin' Willow managed to keep herself alive with her dodgin' and her javelin but that poor Orlanthi bugger Gerhardt got hisself speared right through the chest. Poor bastard was killed outright. (I can just imagine what he would have said if he'd had the chance for some last words, "Ha, ha Tamerlan, I finally beat you in the dead boys club!") Greystone tried to call on Waha for aid but I guess he was busy elsewhere. Hooman was havin' trouble keepin' himself alive as well until I got around behind the horsemen and started choppin' at them damn horses. This caused the horses to shy and Greystone and me killed one of 'em and took the other two prisoner.

Meanwhile Lou and the vily just kept marcin' forward. Marduk called on 'em to halt and when they did'n he left 'em to the peltasts. His men moved aside and the peltasts let 'em have it. The vily screeched and jumped up into the air while Lou just dodged out of the way of most of the javelins chucked at her. One hit her in the leg but she just ignored it. The vily swooped down hurling javelins at the peltasts and those brave buggers just kept standin' there huckin' javelins back at 'em. When Marduk and his boys realized Lou wuzn't gonna stop they charged her and got ready to chop her. (By this point half of our fight wuz over and Durnfal grabbed a horse and charged in to help Lou. Svart ran up on foot and as soon as the rest of us were done we joined in leaving Peracles to guard the prisoners. Blueface was holdin' back doin' some more chantin' that seemed important so we did'n wanna bug 'im).

Lou laughed at Marduk and his boys and lifted her head back and howled. Sent a cold chill down our spines and the weddin' party and the royal party realized the fun wuz over so they took off. The Yemalio horsemen who had been hit by the vily's javelins took off with 'em (to guard 'em no doubt). Lou started changin' growin' fur and fangs. A couple of the initiates hit her but their scimitars just bounced off her. Marduk's blows she dodged. When the initiates realized they couldn't hurt Lou they switched to Durnfal and Svart. Durnfal held his off but Svart wuz double teamed and the one he wuzn't parryin' almost took his arm off with his scimitar. Since he'd been hurt before he went down like a ton of bricks. (Of course he'd taken care of the other one first). Hooman wuz tryin' to help by firin' his bow into combat but it wuzn't helpin' much what with us havin' to dodge his shots too. Greystone and I ran up too and all I managed to do was to get myself knocked out. The peltasts and the vily wuz exchangin' fire but then one of the vily got herself shot down. The remainin' vily came in for one more attack but got herself shot down too. By this point the peltasts were out of javelins and most of 'em had loss their will to fight. They decided to retire in good order (mighty smart of 'em!) and took off after the royal party and the weddin' attendees.

Durnfal took care of another of Marduk's initiates. He killed the bugger but the bugger called on his god and wuz healed up! (Guess he figgured it was his lucky day). Right then Lou ripped Marduk's throat out with her teeth. She turned to an initiate next and ripped his throat out too! This was enough for the rest of the initiates, including the guy who'd just come back from the other side and they all tried to run. Unfortunately Lou was faster than 'em and she ran 'em down ripping 'em to shreds with her claws one at a time. (Guess it wuzn't that guys lucky day after all). Then all these wild critters started comin' out of the woods and wreckin' the crops and the huts. Lou took a big leap onto one of the huts crushin' it into the ground and then marches into the temple. She does somethin' inside and the whole place collapses

to the ground. Then she starts comin' back our way and we all get this oh oh feelin' like we wuz in big trouble. Fortunately Blueface comes outta the woods chantin' and tells her to begone. Nuthin'. She gets closer and he tells her begone agin. This time she shudders and collapses. Durnfal says, "We better get the hell outta here but first, in the time honoured tradition, loot the bodies!" So we quickly strips all the Lunar dead and getting the captives to carry all the loot and haulin' Lou and Gerhardt's body we got the hell outta there.

We decided to head back to Dykene so we could get them damn torches back. Svart had taken Marduk's head along but he'd tossed it in the bushes a coupla miles away from the scene of the fight. There wuzn't anything we could do for poor Gerhardt so we burned 'im a coupla days later on a nice high spot with a nice smoky fire. It wuz the least we could do. It took Lou almost three whole days to wake up and when she did she said she had one almighty foul taste in her mouth. She also woke up with slit eyes like a cat and when we told her this she joked that this "would make it even harder to get a boyfriend". (What a woman!) We let the three Yemalios go back with a promise to bring their ransoms to Highbridge (without the Lunars followin' 'em preferably!).

And so died a good man. Gerhardt Frei, an Orlanthi, but a good man anyway.

--Uh, Grandpa? Does that story have a point?--

[Rising slowly to his feet and shaking his head sadly]

--Silly little buggers. So who says stories gotta have points? When you get to be my age, stories is all ya got.--

[Totters off into the glare of the sun]

Chronicles of the North - Part 3

11) Earth Season 1618 (Loot the Buffet!) (December 05, 1998)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary), Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior)(Henry), Hooman (Pentan warrior)(Darryl), Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Babeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.), Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.)

Party: Present in Spirit if not Person: Burning Willow (Votanki hunter) (Neil); Peracles (Journeyman Rokari sorceror from Heortland)(Jeff N.)

The Regular NPC: Tamerlan (Waha noble)

The party decided that they would take some of the equipment off of the dead Lunars (one set of chain, all of Marduk the Scarlet's equipment, all the bows and arrows, a pair of scimitars and everything magical in nature). They told their Yemalian captives that they could bury the rest for their own use. The guardsmen were very impressed by the party's generosity even moreso when Durnfal told them they could give their ransoms to the families of the guardmen slain in the battle rather than giving it to party. After hearing this they swore blood brotherhood with Durnfal and told him they would honor him above

all except Yemalio and King Glyptus. No one in the party was the right size to fit the iron plate so they just brought it along for future use. Greystone and Hooman shared the iron scimitars between themselves, Hallelujah took the crystal found on his body (after she woke up-everyone else refused it) and Svart took the black sweater Marduk had been wearing. They knew it was magical but they didn't know what it did. They also took as much food as they could carry from the wedding feast that had been laid out on trestle tables near the temple.

Once Lou regained consciousness (after they'd burned Gerhardt's body) she and Svart set out to find out what the black sweater did (the nearest Lhankhor Mhy's being keymiles away). They decided upon a fist fight to test it out and Lou promised not to enhance her strength with magic. Svart swung at her and missed. She swung back and pulled a muscle in her arm. She took an aimed blow at his chest, struck him and knocked Svart down by equaling his chest hit points. (Why didn't she swing at one of his arms? They're covered by the sweater too!) She quickly restored all his hit points using first aid and magical healing. Meanwhile Durnfal and Greystone were sparring as well doing no permanent damage to each other. Lou cast a disruption at Svart and that wasn't stopped by the sweater either. Tamerlan suggested he could try throwing a javelin at Svart but Svart called off the experimentation at that point.

Using their looted buffet supplies to extend their iron rations the party managed to travel all the way to Dykene. (They hunted and gathered along the way and Greystone showed a hitherto unknown aptitude for H&G's feeding easily two or three people each day. Burning Willow also helped by finding a lot of food for the party. She had very different criteria as to what constituted edible than the party did though). Hallelujah told the rest of the party that she preferred if they stayed in Dykene until after the baby was born as she didn't relish the idea of traveling while constipated and nauseous. (Go figure). After some half-hearted arguing they all decided to take Skilfil up on his offer of employment for four or five months at least. They briefly discussed going to Trilus after getting the torches from Dykene to stay since there was a Chalana Arroy there but Hallelujah believed a hearth mother would be sufficient. (The party's main reason for going to Trilus seemed to be so they could get thrown out of that citadel as well since it was the only one where they hadn't offended the local rulers. They decided that they could always go there on their way out of Balazar and get thrown out).

When the party reached Highbridge they discovered two human bodies crucified on constructs of wood and rawhide. A Tusk Rider was staked out on the ground right in front of the bridge. All had been tortured but their bodies had been feeding the local carrion eaters for too long to tell what kind of tools had been used on them.

When the party neared the citadel they were welcomed by a patrol of guardsmen who took them up to the citadel. There they met with King Skilfil and told him about Sylvanthe Brighteyes disappearance and the Lunar attempt to introduce agriculture to the area. They also asked for jobs and Skilfil said he'd like to sleep on their offer. He was visibly upset by Sylvanthe's loss and when he and Starnia Stormrender (Yemalio Light Son) were asked why they thought he'd been nabbed they suggested it was due to his status as senior runelord of Balazar in the area. This made him a much better candidate than Sildis Puranis had been (see 8) Earth Season 1618 (Um, did anyone see a runelord around here? We seem to have lost ours.)). They guessed that this was why he'd been removed from the scene. It didn't explain

why he was still alive though (they knew he was still alive because his allied spirit had not been released from its bond to him). The party cleaned up the best they could and went to bed at the Stabbing Cat Inn.

The next morning they went to the palace for breakfast with the king. The king told them that he'd decided to hire them (or at least some of them) and that they'd get the standard benefits-use of a horse, a share in any spoils, and food and room. He waived the arms and armour benefit as they already had better equipment themselves. As they sat at breakfast someone rushed in and announced that Sylvanthi Brighteyes and his initiates had been spotted approaching the citadel. The king ordered an escort out to meet him. Everyone went out to the main gate to meet him. His hawk familiar could be seen flying over the horsemen (as could Starnia on her hawk). His party got closer and closer and once he was in range for vision the party could see that he bore the marks of abusive treatment. When his party got up to the king, Skilfil embraced him and ushered him inside the palace to hear his story.

Sylvanthi told everyone that he had been knocked unconscious as he was leaving the banquet at the citadel of Elkoi he and the party had been invited to. When he regained consciousness he found himself in a windowless room with slave manacles attached to his wrists. He couldn't contact his allied spirit or his god and he lay there helpless for a number of days. The Lunars (his captors) hadn't been particularly cruel to him but they had neglected to feed him very often and had abused him verbally. He had the feeling they were going to kill him eventually but before that could happen Taklong Woodheart, King Glyptus and (more importantly) Elecora Kindtongue came to his prison and he was freed. He found his initiates in the King's Inn where he'd left them and collecting them and his familiar he left the citadel bearing supplies thrust upon him by King Glyptus.

The party asked him what the mood had been like in Elkoi and he said that the people were terrified that the Wild Mother had been invoked so close to their citadel. There seemed to be a resurgence of that old-time religion in response but it was premature to say what effect if any this would have on the long-term Lunar presence in Balazar.

King Skilfil declared a feast of celebration for the return of Sylvanthi and the party's role in squelching the Lunar's plans. The stocks of imported wine was broken out and most people proceeded to get blitzed. Most party members (other than Tamerlan) restrained themselves and didn't get too drunk. Everyone tried to tell glorious stories about their deeds. Most of these attempts failed miserably except for Greystone's account of his food collecting abilities on the trip back. The locals loved that! Svart attempted to glorify the memory of his dead cousin Gerhardt but he played up his role in the fight with the citadel guardsmen to the detriment of the others involved on that flank (i.e. Hooman, Tamerlan, Burning Willow, and Greystone). Offended, Tamerlan called Svart a liar. Svart called him out on it and they decided to fight to first blood with daggers-no magic allowed. Svart swung and missed while Tamerlan landed a lucky shot that made him the winner. He bragged a lot about his glorious victory with a blade over a Humakti claiming his god was the better war god. Why Svart spared him is uncertain.

Hooman, Svart, Durnfal, Tamerlan, and Greystone all joined Skilfil's guards. Burning Willow refused and took her place with the local hunters. Hallelujah also wanted to help the hunters but they refused her a place saying she wasn't skilled enough. She wanted to hunt alone but they wouldn't let her do this until

she had joined the cult of Foundchild as a laymember and learned the Peaceful Cut spell. This required her joining the eight year olds in a minor hero quest to learn the spell and the proper rituals/procedures required to hunt in Balazar. Peracles was sort of at a loss, the locals know nothing about sorcery and he has no skills really applicable to warfare of hunting. It remains to be seen how he's going to earn his keep without offending the locals.

After a week of being guards had passed the party was sent out to meet a group approaching the citadel. The group was known to include trolls so both Sylvanthi and Starnia were circling overhead to keep an eye on them. The captain of the guards Boldoni Boldface, felt that the group along with their aerial cover was sufficient to gauge the approaching party's intent. As they neared they realized the party consisted of three humans, a baboon, a dark troll and a trollkin. Orders were that trolls were not to be killed out of hand but neither the king nor the party wanted them within the citadel. Once the party got very close to the strangers they discovered that Alcibades was among the party. He introduced his associates as Arkan, Sword of Humakt, Baron Jheary Han, Wind Lord of Orlanth, Lawrence the baboon, X, initiate of Xiola Umbar, and so and so the trollkin. The party asked the strangers their intent and Alcibades told them he and his associates wanted to enter Dykene so that they could ask questions of the locals. They declined to elaborate. Svart insulted the Sword of Humakt and a duel was narrowly averted. Lou asked whether anyone had any contacts with the Lunars (especially since Alcibades was a Tarshite). The idea quite offended the Wind Lord and he almost drew on Lou but Svart reminded him that they were just asking questions as part of their duty to their liege lord. The Wind Lord relented as he understood quite well the conflicts of duty

Durnfal rode back to the citadel to warn Skilfil. He advised him not to allow the trolls into the citadel because they might tell any local Zorak Zoranis about the torches. Skilfil had had no intention of letting trolls into his citadel but he agreed. When the combined parties reached the citadel King Skilfil greeted the party and allowed the humans to enter. The trolls and the baboon were forced to stay outside where they were objects of great interest. The humans entered and started asking the locals questions about the possible location of a large mountain that was inhabited by flying monsters. (Hallelujah followed them around asking the people they questioned what they had been asked about so she knew what it was they were looking for.)

12) (Late) Earth Season 1618 (Death (what again?) of a Titan) (January 16, 1999)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldeneears (Gary); Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior)(Henry); Hooman (Pentan warrior)(Darryl); and Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.)

Party: Present in Spirit if not Person: Burning Willow (Votanki hunter) (Neil); Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Babeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.); and Peracles (Journeyman Rokari sorceror from Heortland)(Jeff N.)

The Regular NPC: Tamerlan (Waha noble)

One of the party's first duties was to protect the citadel dwellers during the grain harvest. The harvest took place half a day away from the citadel so all the participants had to camp out near the fields. The

harvest began with a ceremony dedicated to thanking the Wild Mother for her bounty. Each harvester used a obsidian blade to cut her or his left palm and smeared the blood on a patch of grain that wasn't harvested. Durnfal managed to attract the attention of one of the pretty locals named Atraxa and he decided to return her interest. Guard duty started off simple enough, just sitting around being bored in the hot weather but it soon took a turn for the worst.

As the party present (Svart, Greystone, Tamerlan, Hooman and Durnfal) were standing guard one warm day they heard a strange sound. Svart screamed, "Incoming." and threw himself off his horse. The others thought this strange until Atraxa screamed and fell to the ground. This was followed by loud, uproarious laughter. Svart told the others that they were under fire by some sort of siege engine. A quick look around led to a giant figure being spotted about a keymile away. He seemed to have a long log in his hands which he lifted to his lips. This action was quickly followed by another missile hitting near the harvesters. The group quickly decided to close with the giant and engage it in hand-to-hand combat. The three with horses (Svart, Durnfal and Hooman) mounted up and Tamerlan and Greystone grabbed hold of the horses to speed their running up.

The party started off towards the giant as fast as they could go. They figured that it would take them around 17 rounds to close with the giant. His next shot hit Tamerlan in the arm smashing it. Tamerlan screamed and dropped to the ground. Svart and Greystone stopped to help Tamerlan and he quickly got up. The three horsemen decided that they'd never make it to the giant if they stayed at the speed of the footmen so they continued at top speed leaving the footmen to follow at their best speed. The next target to be hit was Hooman's horse who took a stone to his right fore leg. This wasn't enough to stop the horse but the next round it took a stone in the chest which knocked it unconscious. (Tamerlan and Greystone paused long enough in their progress to put it out of its "misery"). Hooman easily managed to leap to the ground and Svart slowed long enough to let him on. The next stone hit Hooman in the right leg crippling it but he managed to stay on. After that a stone hit Durnfal, but bounced off his armour. The next missile hit Svart in the arm and the shock made him drop the sword in that hand and knocked him off his horse. Hooman took the reins and he and Durnfal prepared their spears as lances to charge the giant. Their first passes didn't even get through the giant's natural armour so they came around to make another pass. Durnfal's next pass managed to impale the giant and do some damage to his left leg but he was still standing. (Svart was running up while this was going on). The giant who had announced himself as Warren's Favourite Giant (WFG), kept shooting his "spitballs" at Durnfal and Hooman but he had considerably less success even though they were now closer! Durnfal kept inflicting small wounds on WFG's legs and abdomen and even Hooman managed to inflict a few points of damage. Durnfal kept trying to persuade the giant to stop attacking and leave but to no avail.

Svart had finally run up and his first blow bounced off the giant. The following round he got a critical on the giant's left leg and WFG was knocked off his feet. This blow had the unfortunate side-effect of getting WFG's attention and he switched to his melee weapon against Svart. Svart managed to wound him again and then WFG swung at Svart and hit. Svart managed to parry the blow but even with his iron bastardsword, protection spell and armour enough damage got through to crush his chest killing him instantly. Everyone who had spotted this (except Tamerlan) tried to call on his god for healing since

Svart's soul hadn't departed his body yet. Durnfal got Yemalio's attention and all the party's damage was healed. This put Svart back into the fight.

The following round he swung and damaged the giant again. The giant swung back and ripped his head off. This really pissed Durnfal off since he had expended 10 points of power in his d.i. Even though WFG was now interested in fleeing Durnfal wasn't interested in letting him go. WFG kept trying to use his club on his attackers but they aborted their charges whenever he had it in his hand. By this time Greystone and Tamerlan had run up and Greystone started disrupting the giant to some effect. WFG tried to shoot again but the fates conspired against him and his pea shooter shattered in his hands! using his club as a crutch he tried to hobble away but Durnfal and Hooman charged again. He hurled a stone at Durnfal but it bounced off his armour. Greystone managed to disrupt him again and Durnfal plunged his lance one last time into the giant killing it. Hooman kept stabbing the giant to make sure it was dead. Svart's remains were collected and his body was slung over Durnfal's pony for the trip back to the harvest site. (Both Durnfal and Greystone hacked teeth out of the giant's body as souvenirs of the battle). Everyone was very careful when handling the black bastard sword.

When they reached the field they discovered a unit of citadel guardsmen come to help them against the giant. Too little, too late. The party returned to the citadel with Svart's body. King Skilfil announced a big feast to celebrate the end of the harvest and mourn Svart's death. At the feast Durnfal got stinking drunk and disappeared. Stories were told about Svart's feats and his body was burnt. (A naked Durnfal did the honours). The king gifted each of the survivors giving Durnfal a gold torc, Hooman a silver armband, and Greystone and Tamerlan obsidian amulets on thongs. The party was somewhat concerned that Warren might be pissed now that his favourite giant was dead but divinations did not reveal who Warren might be so they relaxed a bit.

It was discovered that Hallelujah was the sole beneficiary of Svart's will and all his possessions went to her. They suspect that the black sword holds Svart's soul captive and some discussion was made about getting a herd man to hold the sword once they got back to Prax.

Greystone, Tamerlan and some hunter went back out to the giant's corpse to try and skin it. They found a sabertooth tiger in possession and they decided to let it get its fill before skinning the giant. Even the mighty tiger could only feed on the softest parts and it left after finishing off most of the penis and testicles. (Tamerlan managed to rescue the foreskin for a hat). The crew started skinning the giant and lots of carrion eaters congregated. They were all soon covered with gore and filth but a violent rain storm a few days later served to clean them up. As they waited out the storm in their tents the ground started shaking and most of the crew ran for it fearing more giants. A loud voice said, "Oh, poor Warren's Favourite, what's happened to you?" As Greystone slipped out of his tent he was grabbed and raised up to eye level with a female giant. She quickly reassured him that she meant him no harm and offered to cook him some food and serve him tea. She pitched an enormous tent and started a fire. She offered him some wretched concoction of herbs and plants served in a gold plated iron full helm marked with Yemalio's's runes and told Greystone that her name was Buncotto the Kind Giant. She stated that she loved all living creatures and meant no one any harm. He questioned her about Griffin Mountain and who Warren was but she had no idea of either. She threw an entire, hairy mammoth leg on the fire

which quickly filled the tent with smoke but the rest of the crew returned to share the food once they realized the giant meant no harm.

Eventually she left and the party finished their butchery job. They all managed to drag the huge hide back to Dykene.

Durnfal meanwhile had recovered (mostly) from his funk but had continued seeing the fully recovered Atraxa.

13) (Early) Dark Season 1618 (With the wind at my back...) (February 27, 1999)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary); Hooman (Pentan warrior)(Darryl); and Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.)

Introducing: Simon (mysterious stranger)(Henry)

Party: Present in Spirit if not Person: Burning Willow (Votanki hunter) (Neil); Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Babeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.); and Peracles (Journeyman Rokari sorceror from Heortland)(Jeff N.)

The Regular NPC: Tamerlan (Waha noble)

The party continues serving as followers of King Skilfil of Dykene.

Early in Dark Season the long overdue Joh Mith, Trader of Issaries finally arrives at Dykene. He says that he was delayed due to poor weather in Dragon Pass. He also told the King that his caravan had passed the sight of a Tusk Rider ambush. King Skilfil declares a day of holiday in celebration of Joh Mith's safe arrival. Another group of guardsmen challenges the party to a game of javelins and hoops. The prize is that the losers have to take the winners next stint at guarding the pig pens. The group is reluctant to participate due to their lack of skill until the guardsmen offer to pit only three of their number against three of the party. Burning Willow, Tamerlan and Greystone volunteer their services. After nine throws from each side the party is defeated and has to pay the penalty.

Tamerlan, Greystone, Burning Willow, Durnfal and Hooman enter a foot race around the citadel against four of the locals. It was a long grueling race with most of the Balazarings doing quite well right from the start and Greystone and Burning Willow showing promise at first. Durnfal and Hooman definitely did not show much promise at the start but Durnfal did improve near the end of the race. Hooman managed not to place last. Showing an amazing burst of speed Tamerlan managed to win the race! Greystone managed to place third after one of the Balazarings.

The following week the party started their guard duty in the pig pens. The same day they started a two day ice storm hit Balazar grounding aerial reconnaissance and making conditions miserable. On their third day of guard duty Durnfal had drawn the short straw and was making the rounds when he ran into three Tusk Riders moving around the pen. They attacked him and he managed to drive them back. The party heard the fight and came out of their hut. Hooman was first out and he went over to help Durnfal. The rest didn't move as quickly so they were clumped in the centre of the pens when another 10 Tusk

Riders in two groups of three and one of four moved in. Despite being demoralized Durnfal managed to hold the first three and then another three off for the whole fight finishing off four altogether. Hooman proved quite helpful finishing off one of them. Visibility was quite poor due to the blizzard only being about 10 meters.

The demoralized Gretta Killmany told her followers (the group of four) to join in the fight while she entered the pen holding the Red Boar. Another mysterious tall cloaked figure carrying a pole axe finally showed up and followed Gretta into the pen. Gretta emerged from the hut riding the Red Boar. She charged Hallelujah who didn't manage to get out of the way knocking her aside and crushing her arm in a trample attack. (She'd been staying at the hut of one of the Hearth Mother's followers when she heard the fighting).

Tamerlan was being attacked by two of the better fighters among the Tusk Riders and was surviving due to his iron shield and fairly heavy armour. Burning Willow threw a pair of javelins to negligible effect and was knocked down by one of the Tusk Riders. Greystone managed to demoralize the Tusk Rider's leader and used his flame blade to good effect taking out two by himself and one with the help of...a mysterious stranger who appeared out of the blizzard and attacked the Tusk Riders from behind slaying two with rapier and main gauche and helping Greystone kill the last.

After Gretta had fled the last two surviving Tusk Riders were captured and had their wounds bound. Through out the fight the Tusk Riders had done little damage, felling Tamerlan, Burning Willow and Hooman (momentarily) before all being killed except for the two taken alive. Durnfal took one of the bound Tusk Riders into a hut where he stripped off all his equipment. The Tusk Rider feared the worst but all he had planned was an attempt to disrupt the Tusk Rider for a power check which he got.

The citadel was finally notified and the king came out to survey the damage. He was most distressed that the Red Boar had been stolen and wanted to pursue right away. The Tusk Riders refused to tell where Gretta was headed but the mysterious stranger who said his name was Simon said he could take the king to where he had last seen the Tusk Riders camped since he had been tracking them. He insisted that he be allowed to look at the Tusk Rider's belongings to see if they had any of the possessions of his slaughtered friends. (They didn't).

Everyone quickly realized that it was pointless to pursue Gretta in the blizzard. The King offered his hospitality to the stranger and the party went back to their guarding. The next day the snow slowed down quite a bit and the following day dawned bright and clear. A quick survey of the hawk riders did not turn up any sign of the Tusk Riders but did spot a party of Broos digging a hole in the frozen ground some distance away. The party and Simon made preparations to track the Tusk Riders...

14) (Early) Dark Season 1618 (Gee, I wish I hadn't done that...) (March 20, 1999)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary); Hooman (Pentan warrior)(Darryl); Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.); Simon (still mysterious stranger)(Henry)

Party: Present in Spirit if not Person: Burning Willow (Votanki hunter) (Neil); Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Babeester Gor warrior)(Doug St.); and Peracles (Journeyman Rokari sorceror from Heortland)(Jeff N.)

The Regular NPC: Tamerlan (Waha noble)

Irregular NPCs: Sylvanthi Brighteyes (Tharkantus/Balazar i.e. Yemalio Runelord/Priest); Starnia Stormrender (Tharkantus i.e. Yemalio Runelord); Cleptus, Manaicus, Sleptus, and Ineptus (Tharkantus i.e. Yemalio bodyguard initiates of the two runelords); Starcia (Acolyte of the swine goddess Mralota); Stinky and Smelly (Balazaring pig herders).

Two days after Gretta had made off with the boar the above lot went in pursuit (well except for the sorceror who stayed put). Using Sylvanthi and Starnia as aerial reconnaissance they headed west (the most likely direction that Gretta had fled). Fairly quickly Starnia and her hawk spotted the boar at Taks mound, a nearby winter hearth of one of the tribes allied with Dykene. The hearth was about two days away and the party under Sylvanthi's guidance decided that half of the party would circle around the back to one entrance while the best riders attacked the front. (Simon refused to camp with the party saying he preferred to camp alone). This split the party into Hooman, Sylvanthi, Durnfal and three of the initiates (Cleptus, Manaicus, and Sleptus), attacking the front and Starnia, Simon, Greystone, Tamerlan, Burning Willow and the remaining initiate (Ineptus) attacking the back. (The acolyte and the herders were left to "guard" the hawks and any other mounts). As the back group approached Simon cast some sort of spell that allowed him to fly! The two groups positioned themselves and attacked!

Both sets of guards were quickly killed with the guards at the front fleeing and being cut down (but not killed) and the guards at the back being killed by a hail of javelins and crossbow quarrels. When the whole party entered the hearth they discovered tents and sleeping pigs. Very quickly the Tusk Riders awoke and leaping to their tuskers they fled up and over the sides of the hearth. The party realized the guards they had slain were all teenagers and the ones who had fled were all non-combatants. They wondered where Gretta and the rest of the warriors were. The party investigated the tents and found Balazaring remains tied to the standing stones and sacred hearth stone in the center of the hearth. Simon used his magic to fly higher to keep watch and spotted a group of Tusk Riders heading in the direction of the hearth. Starnia and her initiates kept watch over the boar. (Hooman kept calling for the boar to be killed but Starnia ignored him). The others remounted and prepared to fight. The Tusk Riders rode into the mouth and Gretta told the party they were going to die. Simon fired his heavy crossbow and killed her with his multi-missiled shot (the first shot impaled and the second critically). No one d.i.'d for her so she was out of the fight. The Tusk Riders were indecisive for a few seconds as Gretta's boy toy took over. The cavalry charged the Tuskers and engaged the elite Tuskers trying to hold the entrance. The rest of the party were watchful and Simon spotted the other Tusk Riders preparing to ride over the mound and attack (he neglected to warn anyone else but it didn't matter). (His flying angered Hooman who wanted to shoot him out of the air). He took the precaution of rising up into the air knowing that Tusk Riders rarely carry missile weapons. Unfortunately when they had lined up on top of the wall they started casting disrupts at Simon and came close to killing him. He quickly returned to the ground.

The combat did not go well for Durnfal and he was not his usual killing machine. Both sides at the front entrance spent a long time exchanging blows to little effect. Starnia charged in to help as well and didn't fare any better. The crowd of Tusk Riders on top of the wall charged down and engaged the infantry. They didn't have much effect and swept by to charge again. Fortunately most of the party were good at parrying and had large or iron shields. This reduced the effectiveness of the Tuskers' charge. (Though luck played a part as well because twice Yemalio initiates were knocked down by serious wounds only to avoid being trampled to death by being hit in the same location!) The Tusk Riders charged about three or four times. They knocked down and killed one of the initiates and lost three or four on their side altogether. During their last charge as Tamerlan swung back he rolled a critical (100), then he rolled a 92 (hit nearest friend for maximum rolled damage). Unfortunately Burning Willow was standing right behind him so his bastard sword went right into her (roll location-12, the chest). Maximum rolled damage= 18 points. Dead. Greystone and Hooman tried to d.i. for her but failed, Tamerlan said, "Gee, I wish I hadn't done that.", rolled a 02 and she was alive again. (But now she has a death rune scar between her breasts).

Things got a bit more serious when some of these attackers abandoned the infantry and attacked the cavalry from behind. This knocked Hooman down (he escaped by using his divine fly spell) and got Sylvanthi killed. He used his d.i. (10 points!) to escape and ended up on his hawk. Durnfal meanwhile was holding off three at once and slowly grinding them down. The two initiates guarding the boar made the mistake of heading to help Starnia on foot and they were run down by Tusk Riders. This left the boar unguarded and one of the Tusk Riders went over to try and control the boar. Hooman was using his bow to attack to little effect and Sylvanthi came swooping in on his hawk attacking and killing one of the Tusk Riders elites. The Tusk Rider finally got control of the boar and he attempted to ride it out of the hearth. Sylvanthi swooped down again and his hawk killed the Tusk Rider but the boar ran off into the woods.

The Tusk Riders broke off and went in pursuit and the party prepared to go after them...

15) (Early) Dark Season 1618 (April 10, 1999)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongsphear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary); Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.); and Simon (still mysterious stranger)(Henry)

Party: Present in Spirit if not Person: Burning Willow (Votanki hunter) (Neil); and Hooman (Pentan warrior)(Darryl).

The Regular NPC: Tamerlan (Waha noble)

Irregular NPCs: Sylvanthi Brighteyes (Tharkantus/Balazar i.e. Yemalio Runelord/Priest); Starnia Stormrender (Tharkantus i.e. Yemalio Runelord); Cleptus, and Manaicus (Tharkantus i.e. Yemalio bodyguard initiates of the two runelords); Starcia (Acolyte of the swine goddess Mralota); Stinky and Smelly (Balazaring pig herders).

With Sleptus and Ineptus dead and the Tusk Riders fled the party searched for loot and cut down the defiled bodies of the dead Balazarings. Four items of a magical nature were found on the body of Gretta Killmany, three of the four were severed hands, two human, one troll while the other was an amulet of some sort. Greystone carefully wrapped up the amulet without touching it and stashed it in his clothes. The three hands were offered the Peaceful Cut and burnt. The Tusk Rider bodies were piled in the centre of the winter hearth and burnt along with their tents and food supply. The dead Balazarings were taken along for proper burial as was the Tusk Rider's metal armour and weapons. 150 lunars or so of silver coins were also found, mostly of southern Genertelan origin. Both Burning Willow and Tamerlan decided to carry long spears to help ward off the Tusk Riders.

The party gathered the swine priestess and the herders and moved off a ways to camp. The next day using the hawk riders the boar and the Tusk Riders who had regrouped were both located. The boar was heading south with the Tusk Riders in hot pursuit. The party followed. The next day the boar turned west and started heading out of Balazar. The party pursued him and caught up with him before the Tusk Riders did. The party spotted the boar and decided to try and get around him so he could be herded toward the priestess and the pig herders. The boar spotted them and fled. Pursuing the boar they caught up with him in a small clearing that was dominated by two translucent, four metre tall blue menhirs atop a low mound. The top of the mound was snow free, though the grass was dead. Greystone cast a detect magic and a woman appeared (or was revealed) standing between the two stones. She was wearing a short khiton in red with gold fire and spirit runes on its hem and seemed to be aware of the party. None of the Balazarings present knew anything about the origin of the stones or any myths about an imprisoned woman. The priestess and the herders approached the boar with a bag of barley and managed to get a lasso around its neck. They led it off and the party examined the woman a bit. Simon determined that she was not present on this plane but attempts to communicate with speech and spell failed. Durnfal was opposed to attempts to free her and the party eventually decided to come back on their own time.

Leading the boar the party debated whether they should head towards the plain or stay in the forest. They decided to stay in the forest where neither they nor the Tusk Riders could charge. They did decide to set an ambush for the Tusk Riders and choose the far side of a frozen creek where the Tusk Riders couldn't charge straight at them. They waited and eventually two scouts reached the creek edge. They spotted the hidden Simon who was keeping watch and turned back. The party prepared themselves and weren't surprised when the Tusk Riders came at them from the south instead of heading across. The Tusk Riders demanded the boar and when the party refused they cast demoralizes at the three most formidable foes (Durnfal, Sylvanthi and Starnia. The first two were affected but Sylvatni's allied spirit removed the spell). Then the Tusk Riders "charged" and A mighty battle ensued...

During the charge Simon fired his heavy crossbow disabling the arm of one of the elite Tusk Riders who dropped back to heal himself. The initial charge took out both Tamerlan and Sylvanthi Brighteyes (who was fighting two at once, one of them a Tusk Rider elite) and the party realized what a threat the boars were. Starnia was forced to use her d.i. to heal the pair which cost her 7 points of power (knocking her down to two points). The party parried and attacked the boars ignoring the Tusk Riders to their detriment (in Sylvanthi's and Tamerlan's cases). After three rounds none of them were left. The fight

was the usual grind and the party slaughtered all the Tusk Riders within five rounds. Burning Willow positioned herself behind Durnfal and tried to use her long spear to no effect (other than to fumble and lose her next two attacks). Simon ran to support the flank and Burning Willow stepped over Sylvanthi's body when he was knocked down again by a head shot. She was hit by one of the Tusk Rider elites in the abdomen and knocked down. Sylvanthi's giant hawk allied spirit, meanwhile had landed and cast a heal 6 on Sylvanthi's head which got him back into the fight. The hawk was unable to heal Burning Willow since the Tusk Rider was using a spear with a Seal Wound spell on it, but did keep her alive. Simon killed the average Tusk Rider. Durnfal was also hit by a spear with Seal Wound on it but only for a couple of points. He also gave in to impulse to fanaticize himself for the first time and had the benefit of two attacks. Once he did this and Simon was in the fight the Tusk Riders were swiftly slain except for the one mounted average Tusk Rider (who had slain the initiate) who escaped.

The fight was made noteworthy by the number of times Sylvanthi was knocked down, the length of time people had their weapons stick in enemies. (Greystone had his flaming scimitar impaled in a foe's leg for at least three rounds, Hooman had his stuck for a couple of rounds and Tamerlan had his bastard sword stuck for at least three rounds).

The Red Boar was taken away and the surviving tuskers and Tusk Riders were slain. The bodies were looted of metal armour and weapons and the party headed back to the citadel. They met a party of Balazaring hunters and with their help made it back unscathed to a rich reward.

16) (Early) Dark Season 1618 (June 05, 1999)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary); Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.); Simon (still mysterious stranger)(Henry); Hooman (Pentan warrior)(Darryl); and Peracles (Journeyman Rokari sorcerer from Heortland)(Jeff N.).

The Regular NPCs: Tamerlan (Waha noble); and Burning Willow (Votanki hunter).

After returning to Dykene with the boar and their booty the party was rewarded by King Skilfil with the gift of their choice of either leather padding or curiboilli made out of the superior boar hide. Durnfal and Burning Willow were offered horses instead. Burning Willow turned down the horse and accepted a gold torc instead.

The party decided to tie up some of the loose threads. After listing the possibilities: 1) check into freeing the trapped woman(?) they'd found; or 2) check what the broos digging the hole* they'd heard about where up to they decided on the broos. (Hallelujah's refusal to "summon" Blueface using the Eubuck staff didn't hurt this decision! (They'd hoped to ask him about the woman)).

So taking a week's provisions (for the most part) the party set off. As usual Simon, Durnfal, and Hooman rode while Greystone, Tamerlan, and Burning Willow walked. Unusually Peracles the sorcerer tagged along, riding pillion with Simon on his horse. The party travelled for almost two days without event to a spot where they decided to stop so they could spy out what the broos were up to. Unfortunately the next two days a storm blew up and snowed them in. The following day Peracles sent

his projected vision out and spied that there were 13 broos all together, with one broo boss, four who seemed to be guarding the hole (which was about ten meters across and five meters deep) while the rest dug or hauled dirt. They seemed to be taking the removed dirt into the nearby forest and just dumping it there out of immediate sight of the hole. Two broos always seemed to be out of the hole lugging baskets of dirt into the trees. When a hawk rider flew over the broos outside of the hole ran and hid in the woods out of sight.

The party decided to split up, with Durnfal, Hooman and Peracles riding up while the rest snuck up close to hole through the forest. While the bulk of the party was sneaking through the woods the big boss broo went down into the hole to chew out one of the broos. The riders moved slowly towards the hole along the edge of the woods while the rest tried to sneak up on the diggers. They managed to get fairly close without alerting the broos but didn't manage to catch them in the woods. The broos heard them moving in the woods and didn't go back in. They waited near the hole trying to decide what to do. One of the guards was about to send them back in when the horsemen showed up. The pair started firing arrows (Hooman from horseback and Durnfal dismounted). The broos started returning fire from the long bows they were carrying (the dirt bearers used slings instead). When the broos started returning fire Peracles leapt off of the horse. Missile fire proving ineffective the guard sent the flunkies to attack the skulkers in the woods instead while he followed them up. He was the victim of a sorcerous hinder spell which made him very ineffective. Simon's horse was wounded and ran off. The party in the woods engaged the broos and started a long drawn out fight. Simon impaled one of the broos in the head and couldn't get his dagger out right away. (He spent three rounds trying to pull it out and contracted a disease which turned out to be the sniffles, fortunately. He was lucky because there weren't any broos around to hit him, the slowed guard tried but he couldn't get at him). The broos tried to climb out of the hole to fight but Peracles unleashed a sylph on them which snatched three broos off the ladders and dropped them into the holes to their deaths before being wounded and running away.

Once all the broos were out of the hole the boss broo sent them en masse into the woods to attack the party and get out of sight of the archers. Durnfal and Hooman moved closer and Hooman kept shooting into close combat without regard for his friends!

The attackers were slaughtered with no real danger to the party, even Burning Willow managed to bloody her spear. (Tamerlan managed to trip over a dead broo but that's par for the course!) The boss broo and one flunky managed to escape, three of the good fighters were slain by missile fire near the pit while the other was shot down in the woods as he (slowly) tried to flee. The rest were cut down where they stood. The sylph was put to good use dumping broo bodies in the pit and then collecting wood to try and burn the corpses. (Burning Willow asked the wood spirits permission first, of course!) The party, minus their horses (which had either run off wounded or been killed outright (Hooman's had been hit in the chest by a lucky shot which necessitated his rapid dismounting). The party refused to take the horses and Durnfal saw that they didn't suffer needlessly.

They returned to the citadel where Simon was forced to camp outside until a priestess declared him clean of disease.

*The previous session they'd learned that the hawk riders had spotted a party of broos digging a big hole about a day and a half north-east of the citadel.

Chronicles of the North - Part 4

17) (Middle) Dark Season 1618 (The Big Broohaha) (October 23, 1999)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongsphear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldeneears (Gary); Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.); Simon (still mysterious stranger)(Henry); and Hooman (Pentan warrior)(Darryl)

The Regular NPCs: Tamerlan (Waha noble); and Burning Willow (Votanki hunter).

The party got a well deserved week to rest and recuperate from their battles with the broos. King Skilfil did not reward them for their work against the broos which started certain party members wondering why they were helping him and whether the King had their best interests in mind. Being a loyal follower Greystone tried to distance himself from these sentiments.

After their week of rest they learned that once again a party of broos had been spotted digging at the site. King Skilfil summoned them to his presence and sent them back out to kill these broos too. They had to wait almost seven days however for ice and snow storms to abate. They asked whether this weather was normal and no one among the locals seemed to find it all that peculiar. Only Hooman was unaffected by the cold however, the rest found the cold quite unbearable. They managed to spend some of their time waiting in practising walking in snowshoes, a skill they would definitely need. Simon tried to get close to Halleujah Harnsdottir but she told him to bugger off. Greystone collected some special equipment to handle broo carcasses, long poles with hooks on the end, etc.

They finally got some a clear weather so pulling a fair bit of food behind them on sleighs they set off. They didn't make good time and were snowed in again for two days after the first night on the trail. They finally got some more clear weather. They proceeded cautiously in the direction of the dig noticing that there wasn't much in the way of animal life to be seen. They did spot a crow and wondered whether they should use their Guise of the Crow spell to mask their approach. Since Simon and Hooman didn't know the spell they decided it wasn't worth it just yet. As they got closer Simon used his sorcerous flight to move up to tree top level to see if he could spot anything. Once he got a little ahead of the party a huge flock of crows arose out of the trees and swarmed him. His sorcerous damage resistance protected him and he started back toward the party. When the party saw the huge flock of crows and fearing that Granny Keeneyes couldn't be far away Durnfal, Burning Willow, Greystone and Tamerlan moved into the woods casting their Guise of the Crow spells as they went. They neglected to warn Simon or Hooman so Hooman stayed to use his bow on the crows. Simon found himself under the effects of a slow spell which rendered him immobile. Soon after Hooman found himself under the effects of one as well and he could only stand there gaping as 10 broos with bows moved out of the woods.

The party in the woods were scanning and Durnfal spotted a lumpy looking cloaked figure off in the woods along with three attending broos. He shot two arrows at the figure hitting it twice. When Burning Willow found out what he was doing she was horrified, since she was the only female around and if he killed Granny Keeneyes' host she'd be the only suitable vessel. Sure enough it was Granny Keeneyes and she called on the party to surrender saying they wouldn't be killed right away. Not being known for their surrendering the party (including the still horrified Burning Willow ("Don't kill her dammit!") She had briefly considered running away instead but decided she couldn't run fast enough.) charged her and her broos. The broos moved to intercept.

Out in the open Simon managed to kill one of the broos with his crossbow but their return fire was slowly whittling down his hit points. He summoned a wind which started blowing him away and the broos turned their attentions to Hooman. He yelled for help and Greystone moved over to help him. Meanwhile the three still in the woods were now facing the broos there. Durnfal found himself immobilized by Granny's slow spell and when the broos in the woods ran up the unbearable stench emanating from the middle one knocked him unconscious. This left Tamerlan who had been sickened by the stench and Burning Willow who had been hoping to stand behind Durnfal and fight to face Granny's elite broos. Greystone returned dragging Hooman and faced him up so that he could join the line. Greystone moved over to the right flank. The broos outside the woods took some more shots at the rapidly disappearing Simon and then headed into the woods.

The party exchanged some blows to little effect and where then dealt another severe blow (pun intended) when a broo critically head butted Greystone in the skull knocking him down with 12 points to the head. (It was at this point that the party started seriously considering Granny's offer of surrender. They started inflating this offer of surrender into the idea of switching sides and joining chaos, shouts of I want a chaos feature! were heard, but there was no way the stout Wahas were going to join chaos). Greystone, Hooman and Burning Willow all failed their d.i.'s but Tamerlan once again successfully d.i.'d and all the party members wounds were healed, damaging spells removed and consciousness returned. (Even to the drifting Simon who proceeded to return to the ground and headed back to where the party was).

Things still looked grim as they were battling twelve broos (the group from the opne having moved in and surrounded the party). Granny quickly cast more demoralizes and affected most of the party. Hooman lost his scimitar in the leg of one of the elite broos and proceeded to show his bravery by grappling a broo by the head and trying to throw him. (Everyone was impressed by this act of valour but questioned the wisdom of going into close combat with a known disease carrier). He soon switched to a dagger and swore to carry two swords in future fights. Fortunately it took the broo with the sword in his leg several rounds to pull it out and return to the fight. The fight turned into the usual grind with no wounds being exchanged unless someone rolled a critical or special. Burning Willow had her arm taken out and was forced to try healing herself before she could return to the fight. Hooman managed to hold off three broos for quite a while armed only with a dagger and shield before he was struck in the abdomen and knocked down. Fortunately he was healed before he bled to death. All throughout the fight Granny kept calling on the party to surrender but no one took her up on her offer. As her broos

were being whittled away she screamed something about, "How the hells am I ever going to catch my giant if you keep killing all my help!"

Simon returned and used his flight spell to good advantage flying just high enough so that he had all the advantages of being mounted versus unmounted foes. He quickly struck one broo down but Granny cast a demoralize on him reducing his effectiveness. When he got his dagger stuck in another broo he moved higher up out of the broos reach and then Granny cast a slow on him forcing him to call a new wind up to blow himself away. The three big broos were all slain (one's spirit had tried to possess Greystone but had flailed ineffectually away at Greystone's mighty spirit) and half of the lesser broos as well. Granny, frustrated by the quality of help she was getting had slunk away by this time and the last five remaining broos tried to flee as well. Tamerlan and Greystone cut two down but the other three got away.

The party tried to clean up the bodies but didn't have much success because of the trees so they decided to leave the bodies where they had fallen. Hooman, Tamerlan and Burning Willow all managed to catch diseases from the broos (in Burning Willow's case three of them despite her 17 CON!) The party decided to return to Dykene.

18) (Early) Storm Season 1618 (My mama told me...you'd better shop around) (November 12, 1999)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary); Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.); Simon (still mysterious stranger)(Henry); and Hooman (Pentan warrior)(Darryl)

The Regular NPCs: Tamerlan (Waha noble); and Burning Willow (Votanki hunter).

While the party discussed returning to Dykene Blueface appeared and helped them to recover from their diseases. He released a golem to clean up the broos, apologising to the Earth Goddess for tainting her realm and led the party to a better camping ground. He told them that he had a plan to get rid of Granny Keeneyes once and for all but he needed their aid. (See The Hunt for Granny Keeneyes for the plan). The party agrees and tells him about Granny's plan to put her spirit in a giant body. Blueface is appalled at this and his desire to get Granny is reinforced. After waiting until they are healed the party returns to Dykene accompanied by Blueface and Greyrunner Runefang. Their Blueface enlists King Skilfill's aid and he sends out hawk riders to find Bunscoatto and Granny. The party gets the sword and some gold and decide to go find themselves a Lunar (despite jokes about using animals, broos or a "Hooman" host for Svart's soul). No one bothers to consult Svart even though Simon thinks this would be a good idea. They travel to Elkoi meeting no one on the way much to their displeasure.

To read what happened then read An Investigation into...

An Investigation into the Recent Death of Halcyon var Enkorth

All Hail the Reaching Moon!

An Investigation into the Recent Death of Halcyon var Enkorth

Citadel of Elkoi, Occupied Balazar 7/47

Hail Minister Windlass,

As ordered I had travelled to the citadel of Elkoi to investigate the recent death of your aide Halcyon var Enkorth. Upon my arrival in the citadel I made my presence and objective known to Euryptus the Bold, commander of the Lunar garrison, Elecora Kindtongue, High Priestess of the Seven Mothers, and Marusa, known as the Shrew, priestess of Jalakel the Witch, the individual rumoured to have been working the closest with var Enkorth. All three parties offered me their full co-operation and placed all their available resources at my disposal. I did not bother to make my presence known to King Glyptus the Good the local puppet as his loyalties are somewhat suspect.

I questioned all the witnesses that Euryptus the Bold's investigation had found and made my own inquiries to see whether I could find any additional witnesses. I managed to locate an additional eyewitness who was able to provide some useful information.

The particulars of his death are as follows :

On the night known in the Theyalan calendar as Windsday during Death week the four peltasts on duty at the quaintly termed Pig Gate were accosted and killed by five warriors. (This night unfortunately was one of a black moon so the only available light was from the torches at the gate). The guard at this gate was increased to four from one recently due to an earlier infiltration of this gate by what are believed to be the very same group of warriors. (Since this occurrence the Pig Gate has been kept barred at night and the guards are stationed within the walls instead).

Forensic spellcasting determined that the guards had been distracted by the sudden appearance of a rather tall, extremely good looking woman who had staggered up and collapsed at their feet. (It is uncertain whether this woman was one Hallelujah Harndottir, a follower of Babeester Gor, or an unknown woman of Balazaring origin known to associate with this crew of villains). While they were so distracted one of their number was Befuddled while the other three were hit by a hail of missiles. One was slain by a javelin wound to the chest, one was killed by a Multimissiled arrow causing savage wounds and the third one was slain by a combination of Multimissiled arrow and a dagger wound inflicted by the so-called woman in need. The Befuddled guard was then foully killed by a dagger blow to the back of the chest as he stood helpless. No doubt inflicted by the same "woman in need". Two of the warriors believed to be Praxians then donned the dead guards equipment and pretended to stand guard while the woman believed to be a Balazaring crouched nearby in the shadows.

The remaining two warriors then entered the citadel bearing one of the dead guard's body with them and made their way to the King's Inn where Halcyon var Enkorth had had his lodgings. (This body was later found propped up in a dark corner outside the inn. It is uncertain what they had meant to do with it). It is believed that they were either journeyed there with, met there or were proceeded there by a sorceror of unknown origin known only by the name, no doubt a pseudonym, of "Simon". (For the sake of brevity I'll continue to refer to this sorceror as "Simon"). This "Simon" had given this name to the guards at the main gate earlier that day when he had entered the citadel under the no doubt false

pretense of hiring a bodyguard. He claimed to have been part of a adventuring party who had been all (with the exception of himself) slain by Tusk Riders. No record exists of any such party having been registered at Elkoi nor has the presence of Tusk Riders been confirmed within Balazar. It was discovered that he was a sorcerer when the assessor at the main gate cast the usual Detect Magic to assess his taxes. He paid the entry tax and having had his weapons peace strapped asked for directions to an inn he could stay in. Directed to the King's Inn he paid for a night's lodging in a shared room. He attracted the innkeeper's attention because of the large quantity of gold wheels he was carrying and because he ordered water to drink. Travellers from deep within Balazar are unusual at this time of the year as well. He made his stated attention of hiring a bodyguard known to the innkeep, one Moraring Broom, and asked whether he knew of anywhere he could find one. The innkeep suggested he try Cyriel Endelkar, the chief priest of the Etryries cult in Balazar and provided him with directions to his compound.

"Simon" proceeded straight to Cyriel Endelkar's compound where he was greeted by three muscular bodyguards employed by Endelkar. He made his purpose known to the three and while one was inside informing his master of a visitor this "Simon" attempted to hire one of these guards away from Endelkar's employ. When the third guard came back he was ushered into Endelkar's presence where he repeated his story about being the sole survivor of his party and his desire to hire a bodyguard. Endelkar said that he would pass this message on to any likely candidates but he didn't think that "Simon" would be able to find anyone to hire at this time of the year. "Simon" thanked him and made his way back to the gate he had exited the citadel by. There the guards attempted to shake him down for bribes by claiming not to have seen him exit the gate. (Although on my questioning them they admitted to having been on duty at the gate when he had actually exited). This shake down attempt ended upon the "intervention" of Halcyon var Enkorth who had been notified of the entry of a rich sorcerer into the citadel by the assessor at the main gate. var Enkorth escorted "Simon" back to the King's Inn and sometime during the trip back he arranged for an "innocent" fencing bout with "Simon" since the late var Enkorth was a keen fencer and that was the apparent weapon of choice of the sorcerer as well.

Upon returning to the inn var Enkorth told the sorcerer that he would need to go to his room to fetch his rapier. When he returned the pair moved outside to the courtyard before the inn for their bout. It was agreed that no magic would be used and "Simon" removed some magic from his weapons before the bout. As witnesses the pair had a group of Lunar peltasts from the garrison. The pair exchanged blows for a while until var Enkorth was slightly wounded. He insisted on continuing the bout and the fight went on. It was at this point that a confederate of var Enkorth's cast a Befuddle spell at "Simon" which sorcerous protection prevented from working. "Simon" then accused var Enkorth of having poison on his rapier blade which was probably true from all reports I have heard on var Enkorth's personality. var Enkorth ordered the watching soldiers to seize "Simon", which they did. He was ushered to a guard post where he was relieved of all his money and magic items and expelled from the Citadel.

No one expected that he would return wanting revenge so var Enkorth did not take any additional precautions to ensure his safety. While his two confederates waited below "Simon" entered the King's Inn by a back window where he foully slew a sleeping merchant. He then entered the inn and made his way to the hallway outside var Enkorth's room where he doused the floorboards with lamp oil and set a

fire that served to block the stairways up and down and var Enkorth's door. The King's Inn is a three story structure made up of a stone shell and a wooden interior. The ground floor is used as a drinking and eating establishment with an attached kitchen. The first floor is made up of private and shared rooms (plus the room's the innkeep lived in) as well as the chambers var Enkorth lived in while he was in Elkoi. The second floor served as the communal room and as barracks for Lunar soldiers.

According to my eyewitness she was awoken by a sound she could not identify and when she looked out of her window across the way from var Enkorth's windows she saw that the windows in his room were lit from within by a bright light which she quickly realized was fire. She was going to spread the alarm when she noticed a black clad figure walking on thin air outlined in one of the windows. (Undoubtably the sorcerer "Simon"). This figure stuck his head into the window (which I suspect he had opened) and was attacked by a small salamander var Enkorth was known to possess. She also saw a flash of light as the Warding spell guarding var Enkorth's rooms went off but apparently "Simon's" sorcery defeated the Warding. My eyewitness thinks this figure may have been hit by an arrow fired from within the room but she was uncertain about this. "Simon" easily slew the salamander and retreated from the window. She saw him move higher up above the window but he seemed surprised when var Enkorth leapt through the other window and landed on the ground wielding a long spear. It was then that my eyewitness spotted "Simon's" confederates. From her description one of them had to be a rogue Yemalio initiate known as Durnfal, Baron of Golden Ears (research in the Irripi Ontor temple in Glamour show this to be a small fief beholden to the Count of Sun County in Prax). It is uncertain who the other figure was although he has a known confederate who is a Pentan horseman and the figure was wielding a bow. (A weapon the Balazarings are known to shun as taboo).

This pair moved forward to attack var Enkorth and he managed to befuddle the Yemalian. Unfortunately he managed to shake off the effects of the spell right away and kept advancing. The pair exchanged blows and the sorcerer swept down from behind and stabbed var Enkorth in the chest apparently killing him. By this time the Lunar soldiers from the second floor had lowered ropes made out of bedding to the ground and the first of them tried to kick the sorcerer in the head. His blow landed but bounced off some magical protection. The pair on the ground grabbed var Enkorth and ran off toward the Pig Gate with him with the sorcerer flying behind. Just as they ran out of sight the sorcerer cast some spell on var Enkorth that made him fly up to him and he flew off with the body.

Having returned to the gate where their friends waited the six fled into the darkness bearing var Enkorth's body with them. His head was later found nailed to a tree not far from the citadel. Fortunately the timely intervention of Lunar priestesses from the local temple put the fire out before too much damage was incurred (sylphs being used to smother the fire). Euryptus the Bold, commander of the Lunar garrison ordered his men to repair the damage at no cost to the innkeeper. The innkeeper, Moraring Broom was so grateful at this that he immediately joined the Seven Mothers. All-in-all only six people died in the raid, including Halcyon var Enkorth, the unfortunate merchant and the four gate guards. It is obvious that var Enkorth's actions were in part responsible for his death however this sort of vigilante action cannot be tolerated so I have authorised in your name an increase in the bounty on these villains from 100 wheels to 200 wheels each alive and 175 wheels each dead. Except for the ringleader, the sorcerer, on his head I have authorised a bounty of 300 wheels dead or alive. (They were

already under bounty (except the sorceror) for the role they had played in thwarting the marriage of the Immtheran grain goddess, Imma into the Balazarting pantheon. It is my hope that these sums will either tempt the Balazarings to betray these six or will attract bounty hunters. It is my contention that security is adequate at the citadel especially with the new precautions taken after this raid.

I remain yours,

Troigentes Lakedaimon, Special Investigator assigned to the Ministry of Provincial Security

19) (Early) Storm Season 1618 (A Letter from Balazar) (December 04, 1999)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary); Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.); Simon (still mysterious stranger)(Henry); and Hooman (Pentan warrior)(Darryl)

The Regular NPCs: Tamerlan (Waha noble); and Burning Willow (Votanki hunter).

Fleeing Elkoi with Halcyon's body the party meets a strange Lunar...

A Letter from Balazar

This letter dates from after his exile but was discovered in the same archive as the others.

Dearest Felicitus,

I hope this missive finds you well. My exile still pains me, especially the recent loss of my entourage which I told you about in an earlier letter. Alone I had made my way down from the Redlands to the Kingdom of Immther and then on to Balazar. In the capital of Lunar controlled Balazar I met with a rather wonderful surprise. The best servant I have ever had the pleasure to employ, Gregorious, was there waiting for me! You remember Gregorious do you not? I had been forced to let him go so that he could enter the employ of another so that some gambling debt I had incurred with the wrong sort to be in debt to would be forgiven. He told me that Moonson himself (no doubt feeling remorse at his having banished me) had hired him away from his most recent employers for the sole purpose of finding me and entering my employ once more! My jubilation at this chain of events was unprecedented. I almost turned cartwheels in my joy. In addition to Gregorious Moonson had sent two creatures of a curious race known as Groratorans or Maidstone Archers to act as my bodyguards. These are enormous creatures with no head but rather an extra arm placed where a head would be on a man. They have eyes on the backs of each of their three hands and are the most amazing archers I have ever seen! They also wield twin troll mauls to good effect. I have truly been blessed by Moonson! (Now if only he would take this curse off of me so I could return to Glamour! I have sent him a letter thanking him for this wonderful gift however).

Being in Elkoi was almost like old school week for who should I see there but that charming specimen Merodach the Black. Shudder. Meeting that cold blooded monster again was a pleasure I would rather have avoided. You remember Merodach and his brother Marduk don't you? They were those twin

Scimitars of Yanafal Tarnils that made Shargashi look like members of Donander's cult. The grimmest, most heartless men I have ever met. And that includes my visit to Alkoth! Merodach informed me that he was in Elkoi to avenge his brother's death. (All praise Yanafil Tarnils for embracing that vermin to his breast. I'm sure he's an important member of the Legion of Doom). I shouldn't be so hard on the late, unlamented Marduk I suppose he at least had the virtue that you could get along with him as long as you didn't violate any part, no matter how tiny of the Yanafal Tarnil's moral code or threaten the Empire. With Merodach (who told me with a straight face that the only thing wrong with his dear departed brother was that "He was too soft." This the man whose allied spirit was rumoured to be scared of him? Too soft! I think not) you don't know where you stand at any time. It's impossible to know what might make him engage on a random killing spree of innocents. How he has managed to avoid breaking any of Moonson's laws is beyond me. Anyway, yet another reason to flee, err leave Elkoi. Oh before I forget I was informed that Marduk had been slain by a foreigner incarnating the Wild Mother, some sort of nature goddess. Bit his head off I understand, poor thing. And I'm not sure who I pity more, poor Marduk for dying or the Wild Mother for having to taste him. Seems that dear Merodach is looking for the foreigners who helped the Wild Mother and took all of Marduk's gear as well. I pity them.

The main intent of this letter is to relate some droll events that I witnessed while in Balazar. My new entourage and myself had just left the citadel of Elkoi (the aforementioned capital of Lunar Balazar) immediately after the strange death of a Lunar official named Halcyon var something or another. Apparently he had been murdered by some barbarians who had entered the citadel with the express intent of slaying him. Well they succeeded quite well thank you and put the entire garrison into an uproar! Why they were even going to refuse to allow me to exit until the Groratorans and my letter from Moonson asking that all who see it give the bearer whatever assistance they can made them change their minds. They were suspicious of my leaving at night but I had already stayed in Elkoi as long as I could bear and no longer being able to ignore the insistence of my curse that I move on we were forced to leave Elkoi immediately. I had left my departure too long and by this time I was basically incapable of making a rational decision so we set off in the wrong direction heading north instead of east as I had planned on. When I had moved far enough away from the citadel to allow me to stop we halted in order to have a bite and consider our next move. While we sat there cooking a filling, but bland repast of porridge one of the Groratorans informed me that we were being watched by someone in the woods. Not fearing the locals I called out an invitation for the watcher to approach. He (as it turned out to be) did so and proved to be an outlander barbarian. Introductions were exchanged and he turned out to be a Praxian nomad of the sort that ride bison, named Greystone. He told me that he and his compatriots were just exercising due caution at the sight of a fire burning along the trail. I invited him to dine with me and he did so. One of the Groratorans (it may have been the same one or it may have been the other damn me if I can tell one from the other) informed me that there was a flying man hovering overhead. I told this Greystone that his flying friend could join us if he wanted. (One of the Groratorans strung his bow for added emphasis). The flyer landed and introduced himself as one Simon some sort of sorcerer. We spoke for a while and exchanged superficialities. I told them of the recent goings on in the citadel and mentioned Merodach's presence. The Praxian seemed a bit upset at this news but I might have imagined that. They told me that they and their friends were travelling east and

asked whether I would be interested in accompanying them. I said we would (misery does love company after all) but I told them flat out that I would not get involved with any fights they might have with Empire forces. I may be in exile but I am not a traitor! The companions of the pair I had already met turned out to be a Yemalian in gold plate baron something or another, another scruffy Praxian whose name escapes me, an absolutely stunning local with gorgeous red hair named Burning Willow, and one of those accursed Pentan horsemen that has caused the Empire such grief in the past. They had two horses with them, one of which was bearing a burden that looked suspiciously like a corpse on it. Obviously these were the barbarians that had murdered Halcyon var whatever, not that I cared aught for that.

We travelled cross country (not an easy task considering it was winter and the terrain was hilly) southeast from where we had met avoiding the trail back to Elkoi with the intent of finding the path that led eastward to Trilus (another Balazaring citadel - not allied with us) and on to Dykene, the destination of these barbarians. I had agreed to accompany them as far as Trilus where I had decided to visit awhile. We had travelled for a day or so when my new companions noticed that we were being followed by a file of Lunar peltasts. There were nine foot soldiers accompanied by an officer on horseback and their numbers caused my friends some concern. It seemed clear from their actions that the peltasts were in no hurry to engage the barbarians but would rather follow them wherever they were going. They decided that they would try and lose their followers. The terrain wasn't rough enough for that but they did decide to make a stand and see if they could scare the Lunars off. While they prepared themselves at the bottom of a dip in the land my aides and I settled down for a nice picnic lunch of ham and some horrible dried vegetables and grains that the locals eat. The four warriors on foot (the sorceror, the Praxians and the beautiful Burning Willow) prepared themselves for battle, readying their javelins (in the case of all but the sorceror who had a heavy cross bow instead and had risen into the air a bit to prevent his being attacked in melee). They made sure that they were just far enough away from the top of the ridge so as to be out of javelin range. The Yemalian and the Pentan meanwhile had mounted their horses (minus poor Halcyon's body which they stashed) and both armed with bows they moved closer to the top of the ridge.

The mounted Lunar officer popped over the ridge to be met by missile fire from the mounted barbarians, the Praxian Greystone who had a bow as well as his javelins and the sorceror. Yanafil must have smiled on the warrior as he took but a slight arm wound from this barrage. He quickly rode his horse back over the ridge and soon thereafter the peltasts came over the ridge and moved in to attack the foot soldiers. They rushed forward while the officer rode to battle the horsemen. He managed to befuddle the Pentan and exchanged blows with the Yemalian to no effect. The peltasts meanwhile had moved forward all except one who had been shot in the leg by the Pentan before he was befuddled. He stopped to heal himself (ah, but it was a pleasure to see well trained Lunar troops in action!) The javelins of the barbarians had no great effect (the peltast's using their namesake shields to good effect) but the peltasts' javelins took out the beautiful Burning Willow! She stood there as first one, then another javelin sprouted from her beautiful body, first in the chest and then the head. She toppled over obviously dead from this last wound. The barbarians all shouted in dismay at this and then attempted to get their god's to intercede for them. The Praxian whose name I cannot recall told me later that he

was almost swept up into his god's presence but fortunately he didn't have quite enough favour in his god's eyes! [Editor's note : missed his POW by one!] The others called in vain until the Pentan managed to get his god's attention and a mighty wind swept through the battlefield healing all the barbarian combatants! [Editor's note : down to 4 POW]

The peltasts retreated at this point back over the ridge to regroup as they no longer had any javelins (other than the one who had been wounded earlier in the leg - this fact will prove significant later on in this account). The barbarians let them go for the time being while they collected javelins. Meanwhile the Yemalian had chased the peltasts' officer off with his lance until the officer turned in his saddle and befuddled him! He then returned to the battle while the Praxian Geystone raced off to dispell his friends befuddlement. The officer returned and charged the Pentan trading blows from lances until the officer befuddled the Pentan. He then charged killing his mount turning him into a footman. Another exchange of blows crippled the Pentan's arm and he lacked the magic needed to heal himself. At this point the officer moved to attack the Yemalian.

The peltasts meanwhile had regrouped and charged back over the slope wielding scimitars and peltas and casting magic at their enemies. Six of them attacked the three standing there (the sorceror, Burning Willow and the other Praxian) while the other three moved to pursue Greystone. The sorceror had reloaded his crossbow and was preparing to fire when the peltast who still had a javelin threw it at him. Unfortunately this peltast was much gifted by the goddess and was both quicker than the sorceror and possessed of a large multimissile spell. Three magical and one mundane missile hurtled at the sorceror and killed him! [Editor's Note : he bought a critical to the chest]. The nameless Praxian and the beauteous Burning Willow were left facing six opponents by themselves until the Pentan moved to join them. A scimitar blow to the head knocked the Praxian down and the Pentan was killed by a scimitar blow through the chest while battling three of the peltasts. Greystone managed to hold off the three he was fighting until the Yemalian managed to kill one of them with his lance from horseback. The Yemalian killed the officer's horse and at this point things looked grim for the barbarians. Only two of their number were still standing (the beauteous Burning Willow having been knocked down by a blow to the leg - and the peltasts promising her the "fate worse than death", while the Praxian was unconscious and the other two were dead).

The Yemalian moved out of spell range after being subjected to a barrage of spells from the peltasts and Greystone was moving to join him when the Yemalian tried to make a deal for his comrades who still survived. He offered to swap a black iron bastard sword for his live friends and the bodies of his dead friends. The officer said he would consider this but he would have to examine the sword first. Greystone moved forward and tossed the sword down. The officer moved over and picked it up. As soon as he touched it he tossed it to the ground in alarm and cried treachery! The peltasts moved forward to finish the fight but he waved them back. He stooped and picked the sword up and it seemed to my trained eye to be in communication with some spirit residing within the sword. He foolishly opened himself to attack and the spirit within the sword attacked him. The peltasts moved forward to aid him. After a brief spirit combat which allowed the peltasts to move past him towards the surviving barbarians the spirit now residing in the officer's body attacked two of his own peltasts from behind with the black sword killing one! The spirit in the body seemed to be a mite unsteady in its new home

and the peltasts managed to kill their own commander's body in a very short fight. The Praxian having had his head wound healed a bit by Burning Willow (who had been lying beside him) had gotten up and joined the fight as did the other two barbarians but when the officer fell the fighting stopped again.

The senior most of the peltasts and the Yemalian negotiated and the two groups picked up their dead and went their separate ways. Greystone picked up the black sword and allowed the spirit within to possess (temporarily) his body. The spirit asked that he be allowed to stay in someone's body so that he could recover all the magic he had expended battling the officer and someone agreed to do so.

I haven't seen such an epic battle for a long time. It was almost worthy of a ballad and if my talents were in that area I might compose one. A pity that such doughty (and lucky!) fighters are not allied with the Empire.

Yours as always,

Fresser

20) (Early) Storm Season 1618 (Another Letter from Balazar) (February 16, 2000)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary); Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.); Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior and part-time occupant of Greystone's body)(Henry)

The Regular NPCs: Tamerlan (Waha noble); and Burning Willow (Votanki hunter).

The party continues on to Trilus fleeing Lunar pursuit.

Another Letter from Balazar

This letter also dates from after his exile but was discovered in the same archive as the others.

Dearest Felicitus,

My goodness Felicitus, I never expected to experience such excitement in my exile as I have in this rather pathetic land of Balazar! As I had told you in my last letter I was travelling with this ragtag group of barbarians when they were attacked by some Lunar peltasts. After an amazing battle and some trickery at the end the barbarians managed to defeat the peltasts. Once the battle was over the Praxian Greystone came over to talk with me, or rather the spirit that had possessed his body did. He, a Sartarite Humakti named Svart Ulfsson asked whether I could heal their dead and wounded. I told him that I would heal their wounded but that I would not do anything about the dead (not that I could have but there is no point in revealing too much of one's abilities is there?) I healed all their wounds and we agreed to continue on to Trilus. Loading the corpses of their friends on their sole surviving horse we made some haste since they believed themselves to be pursued. The Humakti in the Praxian's body was allowed to stay in that body so that he could regain his magical power. He wanted the other Praxian to surrender the bastard sword he was carrying (as it had originally belonged to him) but that one refused

as it was the only weapon he had. After all this was settled we continued on our way and our travel was uneventful for the rest of that day.

That evening however I had a visitor. Gregorius had gone out to answer nature's call and upon his return told me that no less than Merodach the Black was lurking in the bushes, wishing to speak with me. Accompanied by my Groratoran bodyguards I made my way into the bushes (under the pretext of relieving my bladder. Cursing as I stumbled through the bushes I tripped over something I had thought to be a root but quickly realized was the foot of that bastard Merodach. He moved to help me up but my Groratorans quickly intercepted and gestured him aside. I cursed him and the following conversation (as I remember it) followed. "Are you not happy to see a fellow Lunar in this wasteland, friend Fresser?" "Oh certainly, what in all the hells do you want?" "I wanted to warn you not to offer any aid to those fugitives you are travelling with for some inconceivable reason." "My reasons are my own and while I will not interfere with your plans to capture them neither will I assist you in any way." "You realize that it is your duty as a loyal subject of the Empire to assist me in capturing these villains." I snorted and replied, "Since I have been exiled and am travelling as a private citizen I do not believe that you have any authority to give orders to me." This angered him and he started to move towards me while at the same time moving his hands towards his scimitars saying, "Why you fat tub of..."

He stopped when both Groratorans lowered their bows, arrows ready, at him. The sight of a pair of mobile siege engines threatening you would probably stop any sane man and it even gave him pause. He straightened up, slowly, while lowering his hands palm facing towards me at his sides. "Fine stay out of it then. But do not expect that I will forget to tell the Emperor about this." I snorted and said, "Since when have you had access to the Emperor?" He glared and turned on his heels and stalked off. I returned to camp and some well deserved sleep.

The next morning we awoke and had a rather dismal breakfast. The Praxian whose name I cannot recall had spent the whole of the previous evening collecting deadwood for a funeral pyre with the assistance of the beautiful Burning Willow. Once we were ready to leave the pyre was lit. (It was amusing seeing these brave adventurers in action as they pored over the belongings of their deceased compatriots and decided what was worthless enough to them to allow to be burnt). I had assisted them the previous evening identifying some vials as poison that they had gotten from the Lunar they had killed in Elkoi. They poured these out much to the distress of the Praxian whose name I cannot recall who did not seem adverse to using poison. I shall keep my eyes on that one). After the pyre was burning well (they had placed it right across the caravan trail running from Elkoi to Trilus so that the chance of the fire spreading was lessened) we made our departure.

We traveled for half the day and had just had lunch when we became aware of hoof beats coming from behind us. We were down in a slight dip in the road and the barbarians quickly decided to make a stand as there were no trees or cover anywhere near. My party moved off to find a good vantage point and we settled down to watch. The Praxian whose name I cannot recall set up a heavy crossbow that he had liberated from the dead sorcerer and the rest prepared various missile weapons. They did not have long to wait as over the ridge from the direction they had come from appeared six horsemen and seven peltasts. I recognized the bastard in the middle with the black plate armour as Merodach and the other

horsemen as his inevitable initiate followers while we learned later from the survivors that the peltasts were the very same ones they had battled earlier. Merodach and his followers had met them on the road and ordered them to accompany him in his pursuit. Merodach ordered them to surrender while the Humakti in the Praxian's body moved over next to the other Praxian and cast some sort of spell on the loaded quarrel. The barbarians refused to surrender and were preparing themselves for battle (or more likely death) when an unexpected development occurred.

The first we knew of this development was when a booming voice was heard bellowing out some dreadful Orlanthi doggerel about foul chaos, etc., etc. I saw that a group of nine horsemen (and women) of very motley aspect were aligned on the crest of the rise behind the barbarians. The leader of this group, an Orlanthi windlord named Torath Manover (as I later learned) told Merodach that this was not Lunar territory and that the barbarians were now under his protection. Merodach told them not to interfere or he would destroy them all. I could spy covert spell casting on both sides as rune and spirit spells were cast. I could see that Merodach was somewhat unwilling to engage these unknown Orlanthi in battle since he had no idea how many priests or lords were in their party. The Yemalian rode back to talk to the Orlanthi leaving his three compatriots all alone in the middle. A great deal of cursing and name calling went on and Merodach offered single combat. (I learned later that an Orlanthi priestess named Pay Surney talked the wind lord out of accepting the challenge). Finally Merodach ordered his followers to attack. The Praxian whose name I cannot recall fired the crossbow (which of course had been multimissiled) at Merodach but all the missiles bounced off of his armour. Then the three of them started running back to the Orlanthi line. Merodach's initiates fired their bows and then charged down the slope while the peltasts threw their javelins. The Praxian Greystone took a javelin through the arm and the other Praxian was pierced through the abdomen. Burning Willow and Greystone made it up to the Orlanthi lines but the other one fell down and had to lie there while a cavalry charge passed over him. (I later learned that Greystone had regained control of his body.)

A female Orlanthi cast a spell summoning clouds while the rest charged the Lunars (along with the Yeamlan). One Orlanthi was unhorsed by Merodach and a Lunar initiate was demoralized by one of the Orlanthi initiates (Bjorn Windchaser). Only Merodach among the Lunars was armed with a lance and few of the Orlanthi were so armed. The rest were unscathed by the attack. The Orlanthi swept on to attack the peltasts while all the Lunars but the befuddled one charged the priestess. Before they reached her she cast a massive spell that affected all five unbefuddled Lunars summoning thunder from the skies to strike them. Four were killed or badly wounded by this while Merodach (of course) was unharmed due to his protective magics. He and the surviving initiate attacked the priestess who was badly wounded before using more magic to teleport away from her attackers. Merodach and the initiate turned to attack the Orlanthi who had killed or disabled three of the peltasts. The rest seeing most of their side out of the fight threw their weapons down in surrender. The priestess took care of the demoralized initiate with some spell that shot lightning out of her sword and the other one was knocked out of the fight by the Orlanthi runelord. From here on the battle was basically Merodach versus all the surviving Lunars and barbarians.

The windlord and he made pass after pass (since neither would strike at the other's horse) to little effect (though any normal man would have been killed by the massive blows dealt out). Eventually one of the

Orlanthi with less compunctions rode up to Merodach while he was busy with the windlord and attacked his horse wounding it. Merodach asked Yanafil for divine favour to heal it! Then it was wounded again and he was on foot versus horsemen. They called on him to surrender but he refused saying that he would kill them all. His skill and magical protection was such that he faced off these foes for quite a while armed only with a pair of scimitars or a bow. (At one point in his anger he threw an iron throwing knife at the wind lord's horse, little good that did though!) He looked to be trying to escape but it was impossible with him afoot and opponents still on horseback. He used a Sever Spirit spell to slay the windlord's horse to even the fight but there were too many remounts available for this to be effective. The Praxian Greystone managed to boost a demoralize spell enough to affect Merodach but this only forced him to cast a Berserk to counteract it.

They called on him to surrender but he refused saying that he would kill them all. This made him even more deadly an opponent as he had had little need to defend due to his armour and magical protection. Firing arrows he finally took out the windlord's second horse and the fight continued on foot. He proved to be a deadly foe and while the wind lord was able to take his blows and survive he had no ability to deal blows like Merodach. At this point they would have let him go but he was still Berserk and would not parlay. Even the Yemalio follower who seemed to be the best fighter of the barbarians was very reluctant to face Merodach. No matter how they maneuvered Merodach turned to face at least a few of them. Even striking from behind the Baron was unable to wound Merodach! They tried to surround him but all that got them was one dead and three wounded Orlanthi initiates. The wind lord was reduced to parrying and watching his iron shield and sword slowly getting destroyed by Merodach's blows while others held back because they feared to face Merodach. Finally the beautiful Burning Willow threw a javelin that got through Merodach's protection and the Humakti spirit in Greystone's body and an Orlanthi initiate also got wounds in that struck Merodach down. Unfortunately he called Yanafil's divine favour down unto himself again and was answered! He stood up again uninjured and declared that he was leaving (apparently Yanafil removed his Berserk spell when He healed him so he was no longer mad). The wind lord told everyone to let him go and Merodach stormed off on foot all by himself vowing that we had not seen the last of him!

What a life it is to be an adventurer. Gathering their Lunar prisoners and the dead and wounded we travelled on to the citadel of Trilus to see about getting the dead Orlanthi resurrected. Life certainly is quite interesting (if short) out here in the hinterlands of the Empire.

Yours as always,

Fresser

GM's Note : Merodach had 21 points of armour/magic in all locations except the chest, abdomen and arms where he had 29 points of protection. With his fine scimitars, Bladesharp 6 and True Scimitar he was doing 2D6+12 plus his 1D6 damage bonus so 22-23 points on average. His attack percentage was 300% with his left hand and 210% with his right or two left hand attacks at 165% and two right hand attacks at 125%!!!

21) (Middle) Storm Season 1618 (He's Baaack) (March 04, 2000)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongspear, (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears (Gary); Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.); Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior and part-time occupant of Greystone's body)(Henry); and Bjorn Windchaser (Darryl)

The Regular NPCs: Tamerlan (Waha noble); and Burning Willow (Votanki hunter).

The party entered the citadel of Trilus accompanied by the Orlanthi, their wounded and dead, the prisoners and the loot. As the Orlanthi entered the citadel Torath Manover quizzed his newest follower Bjorn Windchaser as to the names of the seven Lightbringers. Bjorn couldn't name any beyond Orlanth and Torath and the other Orlanthi were appalled. (Later Torath told Bjorn that he didn't want to continue their relationship. Bjorn asked the party if he could join them in their travels so he could find his brother and they agreed). The party took as their share just the four surviving Lunars. The party settled in at the Stuck Pig Inn ran by Djimm Mith, Joh Mith's son. The party decided to test the prisoners to see who would be most suitable as a host for Svart. Tossing things to the three peltasts and the initiate quickly eliminated two of the peltasts. The surviving peltast and the initiate wrestled and ran foot races and the party decided that the peltast was the best candidate. (Some discussion was made though about using the homely female peltast as the candidate, after first getting her pregnant. They also discussed putting Svart into a body and then selling him into slavery deep in the Lunar Empire. Good sense finally prevailed though).

They decided that they would contact Rhegus Whitehair the local Lunar merchant to see whether he would take the rest of the prisoners off their hands by paying their ransom. Rhegus wanted to pay them off in furs or hides but the party wasn't crazy about such bulky goods. Rhegus was unable to pay money so he said that he would see whether the king of Trilus would give him some money or some less bulky goods in advance of receiving ransoms from Elkoi. He told them that he would contact the king and get back to them. The party visited the Lightbringers Hall to visit the Lhankhor Mhy priest Bluebird to see whether he could magically identify the items the group had taken off of Simon and Halcyon var Enkorth's bodies. He agreed at the cost of 300 L per spell. The party agreed to wait until he cast and recovered three spells.

Rhegus spoke with Yalaring and got eight mammoth tusks worth roughly the ransoms of the captives. The party spent all but two of the tusks on spells, room and board and provisions. They learned from Bluebird that Simon's ring was a MP storage device (on top of making Orlanthi feel uncomfortable, which they already knew) Durnfal took that item. They learned that the red sphere would make you invulnerable to fire elementals if you gave it a point of POW and the other small crystal was also a MP storage crystal. The party then left Trilus after a week and travelled back to Dykene. (Fresser and his party stayed behind in Trilus and said that he would travel on to Elkoi eventually).

The party arrived back at Dyene where Blueface was happy to see them. After they settled in the party decided that they would offer the peltast (whose name was Lapsas) his freedom if he could beat one of their party in a battle with the black sword. He agreed after making them swear on their gods that they would do so. Durnfal decided to battle Lapsas who wore Tamerlan's armour for the battle. They cast

magic on their weapons and armour and engaged. Durnfal tried to disrupt Lapsas while he tried to demoralize Durnfal. The battle was on and the pair exchanged blows. Lapsas managed to damage Durnfal's spear a bit but Durnfal hit him a couple of times most seriously crippling his arm. The battle stopped so Blueface could heal him because they were worried that he would be killed outright if he took another such a blow. Tamerlan told Durnfal to switch to aimed blows at the abdomen and Durnfal did knocking Lapsas down. He lay there and started bleeding to death. Durnfal tore his armour off and tried to disrupt him before he died but he wasn't able to do so.. Blueface quickly healed him up and once again Svart Ulfsson was in charge of a body.

22) Sacred Time 1618 (Sniff ya later) (April 29, 2000)

Party: Present in Person: Durnfal Strongspear (Yemalio ex-Farmer now Baron of Goldenears) (Gary); Greystone (Waha herder)(Doug Sh.); Svart Ulfsson (Humakti warrior)(Henry); and Bjorn Windchaser (Darryl)

Virtual Presence: Hallelujah Harnsdottir (Babeester Gor axe maiden and mother to the prophesised Dog Boy) (Doug St.)

The Regular NPCs: Tamerlan (Waha noble); and Burning Willow (Votankihunter).

After getting his new body Svart immediately spent a lot of time getting used to it. He asked Blueface if he would help him create new foci for him and Blueface did. Svart also tried to negotiate new terms for the use of Bane as a trap for Granny Keeneyes but Blueface didn't want to since the party had already agreed to dedicate the sword to that purpose. Svart asked him for a replacement and finally Blueface said that he could tell the party where the Windsword of Orlanth was hidden. Svart settled for this and some new points of spirit magic. Other party members rested and trained. Blueface asked them for their assistance in protecting Hallelujah during her imminent birth and they agreed to do so.

For more detail:.

Burning Willow's Tale

The hide curtain moved and a tall figure slipped into the room. The banked embers in the brazier glowed a dull red and cast a bit of light in the room. Burning Willow shook her head at the extravagance of these citadel dwellers. Though she tried to be as stealthy as possible the room's sole inhabitant must have heard her. On the raised sleeping platform the pile of furs stirred and a voice mumbled sleepily..."Willow is that you? Did the Mothers let you go early? I thought they wanted you to rest under their care for two more days?" "Hush, they did not let me go, I let me go. I grew tired of lying around all day, and especially all night all alone, doing nothing. I missed the feel of being in your arms and making love to you." The figure on the bed sat up illuminating his bare torso. He sat watching silently while Burning Willow dropped her cloak and removed her clothing. The dim light cast shadows on her slim figure. He moved aside to make room for her and she crawled under the furs with him. They made love, starting off slowly and gently and then increasingly passionately. After they had both climaxed and lay together still entwined the man asked her how she felt. "Fine replied," Burning Willow,

"But I want to tell you what happened to us." "Shouldn't you sleep now and rest some more after what you've been through?" he asked. "I will rest but first I want to tell you what happened." He raised himself up on one elbow and gave her his full attention. She raised herself on one elbow as well letting her long red hair flow over her breasts. "You know of course," she started, "that the time had come for the prophesized one to be born..."

Well all the preparations had been made. Every Mother who could be spared had agreed to assist in whatever fashion they could. Hallelujah Harnsdottir had temporarily severed her ties to her dark goddess so that she could enter the sacred birthing chamber. The chamber and all the participants had been purified and all was ready. As you well know the citadel guard and all the hawk riders were out in force guarding the area around the citadel and the birthing chamber. What you may not know is that Blueface had asked those of us who were friends of Hallelujah's to lend our assistance as well. He told us that he feared interference in the birth from the Moon worshippers and he wanted us to act as a sort of spiritual guard. We all agreed to lend our aid in whatever fashion we could. Blueface taught us some sacred chants that would heighten our perceptions of the secret world. He also provided us with some sacred herbs that enabled us to walk in both worlds at once. We stripped off all of our worldly shackles and Blueface painted us with sacred designs to armour and clothe us. We danced garbed only in our sacred designs around a large bonfire lit to keep us warm and set as close as possible to the mouth of the birthing chamber but not so close that we would risk polluting it. We lost track of the time while the Mothers drummed and sang to scare the evil spirits away. We had been chanting and circling the fire for an unknown time when all the dogs in Elkoi howled out a welcome to the Dog Boy. Suddenly a red beam of light descended to the ground from the direction of the Red Moon. It entered the birthing chamber and we heard a loud scream.

It wasn't until later that I learned what had happened inside the chamber. The birth was taking a long time as the baby was very large and very reluctant to leave its warm nest. Finally, after a long struggle the baby was out and the dogs howled their greeting. But before he could be named and his cord cut a dark, cloaked figure appeared out of thin air and brandishing a black stone blade severed the cord! At the same time the red beam entered the chamber and bathed the room with its crimson glow. The baby's spirit, without the protection of having been named and welcomed to the tribe was torn from his body and whisked away into the sky. Hallelujah let out a mighty roar and grabbed a hold of his tiny ankle. Her spirit was torn out of her body as well and soared after the baby. Blueface attacked the figure with magic but it disappeared as it had arrived.

Outside meanwhile we saw the baby soaring up into the sky towing Hallelujah along behind her up into the sky. Svart grabbed Hallelujah's ankle and soared off into the sky as well. One by one we all grabbed hold of the lowest person on the chain and were pulled up into the sky. All we could manage was to hold on as the baby twisted and soared through the sky. We experienced gut wrenching sensations of disorientation and our senses reeled as we left our mortal world. Suddenly Hallelujah cried out in loss as she lost her grip on the baby's ankle and we fell to the ground.

We lay stunned awhile by the impact and then as we slowly gathered our wits about us first Bjorn and then the rest of us realized that we were now clad in the bodies of hunting dogs. All of us were black

except myself who was grey. We lay in a land of gentle rolling hills where all the plants were covered by fruits and berries. Animals both familiar and unknown were everywhere and they were of every colour and hue and many were covered in feathers and furs. I realized that we were in the Green Age before Death came and that somehow we had been transported to the Other World. Hallelujah quickly scented something she knew to be her baby, transformed into a puppy like the rest of us, and we all took off to track it. We had been tracking the baby for quite a while when we came across a large Squirrel who greeted us and quickly seemed to realize that we were not as we appeared. He seemed familiar to us and it didn't take us long to realize that he was the Trickster! I should have warned my companions but something kept me from speaking what I knew unless I was asked directly. He traveled alongside us to "Watch the fun", as he put it.

Finally we tracked the scent to a pack of Red Dogs gathered around a bush. Beneath the bush was the puppy and a red bitch trying to get it to suckle. The puppy was doing its best to resist the red bitch but looked to be weakening. Hallelujah charged the dogs and leapt over them. The rest of us rushed in too and although we could not use violence we were able to force the Red Dogs away from the puppy so that it could nurse from his true mother. It was apparent to us that the Red Dogs were Lunar spirit travelers who were trying to get Puppy to divert from the true path of Brother Dog so that once he was back in his body he would favour the Lunars.

Then the sun fell from the sky and the world was cast into darkness. The plants started dying and animals began to shove and struggle to get at the remaining plants. This went on for some time until we heard a great voice roaring "Come!" The puppy headed off in that direction and we all followed along behind. We finally arrived at a great bowl where we saw more animals than we could count. We all saw animals we had seen before as well as ones no one had ever seen. All the animals appeared different as their colours were different (usually brighter or more colourful) than the ones we're familiar with, or they had feathers, scales or fur that they no longer have. At the centre of the bowl was a large rock on top of which was perched an enormous saber-toothed tiger. The animals were all alarmed and scared and wanted to know what they could eat. Tiger explained to the animals that in the Wild Mother's absence he had gathered them there and asks them if anyone had any suggestions as to what they should do about the food problem. Many suggestions were made but no one could agree on what they should do. Finally Weasel spoke, once, twice and three times and was finally heard. He suggested that some animals eat other animals instead of plants. All the animals argued loudly about this but finally Tiger got them to agree to do this and made all the animals vote. They voted to agree with this and then Tiger asked them to stand on one side of the clearing or another depending on what they were going to eat. They all decided to follow one way or the other, except for Bear and Raccoon who couldn't make up their minds and Tiger said they could eat both. Then Votank himself appeared and when asked by Tiger what he would choose to eat he told the assembled animals that, "He would eat what ever he choose to!" The Red Dogs were there and tried to get the puppy to choose to be a plant eater. Eloquent speeches by his mother, Svart and most of the others made him decide to eat meat.

Then we wandered hungry for quite a while until we met up with Wolf and seven Red Wolves. They were all fat and sleek and they offered to show Puppy where they got their food from. They showed us a pile of dead animals in a cave and tried hard to persuade Puppy to eat from them. We had to collect

some food from outside the cave and Svart made a plea for eating fresh kills instead of carrion that persuaded Puppy to follow the true path.

Having fed to our satisfaction we traveled on. We were passing through some hills when we spotted two glowing figures coming accompanied by Squirrel. They came closer and asked in one voice whether Puppy (who was now a young dog) would be their friend or their prey. Puppy wanted to join them but we didn't know which was the true Foundchild. Squirrel said that he didn't know either. They both called themselves Hunter but we suspected from the presence of the Red Dogs on a nearby hillside that one of them was a fraud. We decided to test them. Svart moved up to sniff one of them and got his snout burned for his problems. He said the one on the left smelled like "fire and wilderness". Then Durnfal smelled the one on the right and he smelled the same (and he burned himself as well!) We then asked them to hunt and kill something to prove that they were Hunter. They asked what they should hunt and Svart suggested that they hunt the Red Dogs. Well, the Red Dogs ran off but the Hunters killed two of them and skinned the bodies. Both used the Peaceful Cut but the one on the left seemed more adept than the one on the right. Then Bjorn asked them how they decided what animals were proper to hunt. The one on the right said, "The names of the animals that may be hunted have been handed down to us in oral tradition since time began." The one on the left answered, "By the lack of light in their eyes." By this we knew the one on the left to be Foundchild and we told Puppy that he could join him. The one on the right dropped his glow and we saw that he was a foreign Hunter god armed with a bow. He smiled and vanished as did Foundchild after Puppy and he exchanged vows of friendship and loyalty.

Then as we traveled along with Puppy who was an adult by now we came across a dead God. There was a pool of blood under him and the Red Dogs guarded the pool keeping all the animals who wanted to drink from the blood away. After much discussion and some reluctance on Hallelujah's part we attacked the Red Dogs and after a short battle in which only Hallelujah and Durnfal were wounded we drove them off. We drank of the blood and all of our wounds were healed. We all received some sort of physical or spiritual benefit from drinking the blood. We tried to look at the dead God's face but we couldn't look on his visage although he was dead.

By this time we were sick of the Spirit World and we were ready to return to Elkoi. I believe we would have been stuck there, endlessly reliving the life of Brother Dog except that Blueface appeared and showed us the way home. When we returned to our bodies he forced us to eat an antidote to the poison he had given us and we all learned the name Hallelujah had given her son, Belintar Fatesson.

Blueface told us that the mysterious interloper had disappeared as he(?) had appeared. We later learned that the interloper had also snuck into the citadel and stolen the black sweater we had taken from the Scimitar of Yanafal Tarnils' body from Hallelujah's room. One of the guards swore that he saw a giant moth bearing two riders flying off in the direction of Elkoi that night. We asked Fresser who he thought the strange figure was and he told us that it must have been a Blue Moon assassin troll. The sweater the Scimitar had worn was a special gift of the Emperor and had magical properties. The priestess must have been sent to interfere in the birth and steal the sweater. Fresser suggested killing

us all had probably been on the assassin's agenda as well but interfering with the birth proved more important.

Burning Willow fell silent and thought about what had transpired. The man shook his head in wonder and said, "I am glad that you are back safe and sound for I would sorely miss you if you had not returned". He embraced her and stroked her back until she fell asleep. Then he fell asleep as well.