

Adventure Log for Planescape Campaign II, October 1997 - September 1998

Attention DM's: While a few of my group's adventures are wholly or mostly the creations of others (from official TSR materials), some of the adventures mentioned below are my own creations. I'd be happy to share further details of the following adventures. Please [e-mail me](#) if you want this sort of information. -- *Eric*

Adventure Log

"Field of Nettles" -- Three of our heroes -- Sachmet the Scrivener, Brawn Silveraxe the Dwarven Paladin, and Sinjin the Tiefling Warrior -- meet by chance on the first layer of Gehenna outside Sung Chiang's Teardrop Palace, and decide to look for profitable work together. The marketplace turns out to be a good place to buy provisions and magical items -- in fact, at Ontallo's Wizardry our gang of three becomes a gang of four when Shale the Mind-Bending Bladeling joins them.

They respond to a posted want ad from one Tully Gawmson. His pet Nightmare Skull Guardian attacks with fireballs and magic missiles -- this turns out to be a test which our heroes successfully pass. Tully hires the group for a quick job -- pop over to the Gray Waste and retrieve some misplaced Baatezu War Plans from a now-abandoned battlefield called the Field of Nettles. After negotiating half the jink up front, the gang gets outfitted with magical items and leaves the Teardrop Palace (but not before paying tribute to Sung Chiang).

The group heads up a long, steep road that will eventually bring them to a place along the Styx where a boatman can pick them up. On the second day of travel, the heroes are assaulted by a bunch of hobgoblin martial artists led by an Oriental rogue. A combination of magic and brawn saves the day, as hobgoblins are frozen, fried, and hacked while the leader is nearly disintegrated by simultaneous blows from Shale (using Kinetic Control) and Sinjin (using his big muscles and big sword). (Mayhem 7th)

Our heroes travel for several more days, encountering a hungry slasrath, a surprising lava eruption, and an inquisitive ultraloth who asks Sinjin's opinion of the Blood War. Finally, they reach Fo Ling Po, a beautiful but seemingly deserted city. Turns out the inhabitants all sleep in coffins. Near the city is a dock where a marrenoloth awaits payment before taking the group to the Gray Waste.

The trip on the River Styx takes several days, but eventually they reach the Field of Nettles. Unfortunately, the marrenoloth drops them off near the Tanar'ri camp, and the adventurers realize they must cross this enormous battlefield to reach the Baatezu camp on the other side. The Tanar'ri camp, like the whole Field, seems mostly deserted, with huge piles of rotting fiend bodies all around. A pair of crazed bar-Igura tanar'ri attacks the group -- mostly because they can "smell Baatezu" on the tiefling Sinjin. Our heroes, however, are triumphant.

The only landmark of note is a tower some miles in the distance. When they approach, they can see that a kind of spotlight shines from the tower down on various spots -- piles of dead bodies -- and draws forth bones to make the tower grow. The tower of bone finds a living being, though, a half-mad and all-diseased human. The party rescues him from the sinister light, healing some of his wounds and giving him water. He explains that he was fighting for the tanar'ri, but everything went horribly wrong. Our heroes take him back to the deserted Tanar'ri camp and rest the night.

The next morning, the human, full of the despair of the Gray Waste, takes his own life. Sinjin insists on a hero's burial. The party moves on past the Tanar'ri camp and the tower of bone, and starts walking toward the other side of the battlefield. (ends somewhere around the 14th of Mayhem)

It isn't long before a mysterious figure ambushes the group and takes Brawn hostage at spearpoint. This grim-faced githzerai turns out to be Drez, the sole surviving member of a rakkma band who was trapped on this plane with no companions and no way home. Sinjin, Sachmet, Shale and Brawn convince Drez that they mean him no harm, and he agrees to accompany them until they find a way off the plane.

Many hours of dreary walking later the party discovers a succubus perched atop a tall pile of decaying fiend bodies. She instantly attacks them, and mayhem ensues. Drez proves his worth by pole-vaulting onto the pile with his magical staff-spear and climbing up to engage in some fiend-wrestling, while the others are a little less effective at first. Sachmet and Sinjin learn that tanar'ri are either immune or resistant to many kinds of magical attacks, including electricity from a lightning strike, fire from a *fireball*, and magic in general. The most devastating attack comes from Shale, however, when he summons the planar energies of the Plane of Radiance and scorches the alluring tanar'ri. Brawn and Sinjin are unable to scale the slippery, tricky pile of bodies and never do make it into the fray. Sachmet finally casts *spider climb*, scales the pile, cures the retreating and badly damaged Drez, and finishes the succubus off with a frosty spell.

The wandering continues for a few days more. The party encounters a lonely two-headed hag who sells them some potions, the same curious ultraloth that they encountered on Gehenna, a pair of armanites that the tanar'ri-hating Sinjin slays single-handedly, and a bloody patch of quicksand. The most mysterious encounter occurs while the party is resting one night, however: Shale encounters and briefly speaks with what could very well be a future version of himself. This older, battleworn "Shale" attempts to warn the present-day Shale of some future problem, but is whisked away from the current time as quickly as he came.

Finally, weary of gruel and of walking and of life on the Gray Waste, the party comes in sight of the Baatezu camp, dominated by rows of honey-comb like barracks and the ruins of a huge mobile fortress. [Ends somewhere around Mayhem 18th]

Our heroes approach the rows of Baatezu barracks and discover that they've been deserted by all except for a wound barbazu named O'ja. This fiend agrees to help the PCs find the battle plans on the rolling fortress -- called *The Dominator* -- in exchange for their protection so he can return to the fortress and retrieve his personal possessions. According to his information, the plans are in the rear castle of the fortress -- an area he claims is currently held by tanar'ri.

The group battles a small band of hordlings who have taken up residence under *The Dominator*. One bat-headed hordling becomes *invisible* and bites Sachmet with a poison that slows her reflexes, while Drez and Sinjin are pummeled by a lobstrosity and a no-headed freak wielding silver halberds. Drez, severely wounded, climbs to safety on one of the rollers of the fortress, only to slip and fall while climbing back down, knocking himself unconscious. The group finds treasure under *The Dominator*, and returns to the Baatezu barracks to rest.

The next day, the party returns to the mobile fortress and is led to the rear castle where the plans are supposed to be. Our heroes are assaulted by a group of hired Xaositect warriors and several hellhounds, and then attacked by a half-tanar'ri cambion baron wielding a viscous sword and a half-tanar'ri alu-fiend with magical powers. Everyone lends a hand to help destroy the foes: Sachmet with some well-placed lightning strikes, Sinjin with his tanar'ri slaying sword, Shale with his kinetic control power, Drez with a lot of getting wounded and running away and coming back and getting himself nearly killed, and Brawn with steady attacks from his hand axe.

O'ja recovers his personal effects and shows the PCs where the plans are kept -- in one of ten tall urns, nine of which are trapped with a strong hold person spell, and one of which is not trapped and contains the plans. Sinjin has a clever idea and uses his *potion of gaseous form* to explore the insides of urns. The group finds the plans, and after looking them over learns that the battle on the Field of Nettles was just a feint by the Baatezu -- a few million of their most expendable to distract the Tanar'ri for a few days. [Ends around Mayhem 19th]

Our heroes spend yet another night on the Gray Waste, this time in *The Dominator*. The next day, they proceed

to the banks of the River Styx where a marrenoloth agrees to deliver them back to Gehenna for a fee. As they are floating along on the raft, however, the marrenoloth changes shape and reveals its true form: that of O'ja the Barbazu. O'ja *gates* in six black abishai, and our heroes would surely have been slaughtered but for clever spellcasting on the part of Sachmet: a well-placed *abjure* spell sends the treacherous baatezu back to Baator. Without their leader, the black abishai are soon driven off. Still floating on the raft, the PCs surely would have gotten lost if not for a hydroloth who shows up to push the raft to its final destination: Fo Ling Po (where?) on the first layer of Gehenna.

Another few days of walking and our heroes finally make it back to the Teardrop Palace. They meet up with Tully, who is more than happy to pay them the rest of their gold. Brawn takes his money and departs, citing irreconcilable differences but wishing the heroes good luck. Tully reveals that he is in fact a cuprilach rilmani interested in maintaining the balance of the Blood War. He tells them if they ever want more work of this sort to contact a fellow rilmani named Burnished who lives near the base of the Spire on the Outlands.

"Realm of Thought" -- The group spends a couple of days in the marketplace outside the Teardrop Palace, replenishing supplies and resting up. The party's ultimate goal, right now anyway, is to get to Sigil. They meet with a "travel agent" -- a rogue modron named Two Squared -- who sells them information on a portal to the Outlands; from there they figure they can find a portal to the Cage easily enough.

The portal is in a nearby ruin, and the key is a snappy comeback. A couple of days of walking later the party makes it to the portal, opens (and closes and opens again) the portal, and steps through...

...into a slimy refuse pile in a dark cavern. Rising from the muck is a neo-otyugh that pummels and grapples the group. A few sword slices and fire spells later, the creature is added to the refuse. With a few moments to look around, the heroes notice their surroundings: they are in a slimy system of tunnels. Worse, the PCs can all hear horrid whispering sounds in their heads: hundreds of voices chanting about the domination of all races. Drez becomes very worried and is convinced that the party has ended up in Ilsensine's Realm of Thought. The idea of meeting the mind flayer god doesn't appeal to him.

To get out, though, the PCs must traverse the tunnel. They spy daylight in one low-ceilinged cave, only to have their hopes dashed when it turns out to be an illusion created by a pack of cranium rats. A *web* spell from Sachmet and a *wall of fire* spell from Sinjin turn the rats into toast.

Farther into the tunnel the heroes are assaulted by a horde of zombies. The strange thing about them is their heads keep exploding. As each zombie's head explodes, a psionic power effects the group. First the party (except Shale) is contacted, then Sinjin is dominated and ordered to run away, the Drez is convinced that the next time he's hit he'll die, then Shale's magic long sword detonates, and finally Sachmet is slammed up against the tunnel wall by some telekinetic force. Between Shale's attacks with his spiky fists and Sachmet's magic missiles -- and the zombies' habit of self-destructing -- the zombies are destroyed and the psionic effects wear off. Sinjin and Drez, in particular, are able to relate that the zombies were merely conduits of some greater power.

The tunnel goes on -- and up. Around another corner the party is attacked by a pair of umber hulks. One hulk does massive damage to Sinjin, but Sinjin deals the same right back at the monster. Drez spends a lot of time successfully parrying blows, while Shale retreats to fire arrows. Sachmet's spellcasting causes problems, though -- her *foothold* spell entraps Sinjin and Drez in stony hands projecting from the floor, but doesn't do much to the remaining umber hulk. (To be fair, she did warn everyone to move back and Sinjin and Drez didn't do as she asked ... that'll learn'em!) Sinjin's mighty blows and Drez's spear finally dispatch of the last umber hulk.

Our heroes decide to press on, but after walking for a few more hours and finding a dead end, they change their minds and hunker down for several hours' rest. During this time, Sachmet begins to form an unhealthy compulsion or attraction to the pink bulges in the walls.

The next "day" the party resumes their efforts to leave this hideous realm. They find a large chamber with two exits -- one is guarded by dozens of thick black tentacles. This chamber is home to about a dozen of the psionic zombies the party had encountered before. Sinjin blasts eight of the monsters with a *fireball*, but he also damages one of the pink bulges in the floor -- and as punishment from whatever evil intellect rules this realm, his mind is blasted and his intellect and willpower are greatly reduced. A couple of rounds later, the other zombies are destroyed by the PCs.

Opting to avoid the tentacle-covered exit, the heroes continue on and up. A few miles of tunnel later, they can see torch-light up ahead. Drez scouts and discovers a meeting between a pair of ogre mages and their henchmen (five half-ogre warriors) and a mind flayer and his guards (a pair of umber hulks). They seem to be haggling over the purchase price of a dozen human slaves held by the ogre mages. Drez returns and reports. The heroes formulate a battle plan.

Drez (hiding in shadows) and Shale (phasing himself out with psionics) sneak up to the entrance. Sachmet again casts her *foothold* spell, hoping to catch the ogre mages and the mind flayer in the grasp of the stony hands rising from the floor. The ogre mages and one half-ogre are caught, but the mind flayer manages to get away. The ogre mages immediately turn *invisible*, and the mind flayer retreats, while Drez continues to sneak around in the cavern. Unfortunately his luck runs out, as he first is spotted by a half-ogre guard, drops his spear, and is savaged by an umber hulk -- Drez is unconscious for the rest of the battle. In the mean time, Sachmet casts *fiery cube* on the spot where she guesses the *invisible* ogre mages are and fries them a little bit. Shale waltzes through the battle still out of phase, and starts to gather electrical charge using his static discharge power. In the meantime, Sinjin trades blows with half-ogres and umber hulks while Sachmet continues to cast spells. Shale shocks the mind flayer, who promptly teleports away. The ogre mages take *gaseous form* and escape the stony hands, rematerializing in time to blast Shale with a cone of cold. Sachmet summons an animal spirit -- a lion-like animal -- to help battle the half-ogres and umber hulks. The mind flayer re-appears on the other side of the cavern. Shale initiates his time shift power, sending himself two rounds into the future. Sachmet takes flight and decimates the mind flayer with her *gloves of lightning*, but then has to deal with two flying ogre mages with sharp pole-arms. By the time Shale arrives back into the time stream, he sees that there's basically only one umber hulk to deal with (as the ogre mages and remaining ogres and slaves have begun to retreat), and positions himself behind the creature and helps slay it.

Sachmet isn't finished yet, and follows the two retreating ogre mages and three half-ogre guards. She casts *hold person* on the half-ogres, paralyzing two of them, then battles the pair of ogre mages. Shale does some remarkable archery and helps pick off some enemies, while Sinjin force-feeds Drez a couple of *healing potions* to revive him. Ultimately, between blows with her staff and spells, all enemies are killed except one ogre mage who manages to fly away *invisibly*.

After searching the bodies and questioning the half-ogre who was still stuck in the *foothold* spell, the heroes decide to herd the remaining prisoners out of the lair and onto the surface of the Outlands. The prisoners are grateful and take their leave, while our heroes rest for a couple of days, hoping to re-enter the Realm of Thought to see if the mind flayer might have some treasure worth retrieving.

Our heroes intrepidly return to the horrid caverns of Ilsensine, retracing their steps until they reach the scene of their most recent battle, then following another long, slimy, dark passage to an area of alcoves and small caves that make up the mind flayer's home. Drez, feeling a little paranoid with all of the sinister voices in his head, chooses to scout ahead, then hides and waits for something to happen. After Drez doesn't return, the other three march forward, setting off a bunch of shriekers, who awaken four slumbering umber hulks. Sachmet silences the shriekers with magic, but a fight breaks out anyway. Sachmet zaps one umber hulk with lightning then weakens another with a *ray of fatigue*, while Shale has trouble initiating his psionic powers and finds himself battered to unconsciousness. Drez steps from the darkness and backstabs an umber hulk, teleports (via *dimension door*) back into the shadows, then performs another successful backstab. Sinjin takes and gives a lot of damage with his two-handed sword, but one severely injured umber hulk manages to completely savage Sinjin in its dying moments, slaying our tiefling hero. Sachmet, meanwhile, obscures herself with a sanctuary

spell and revives Shale with healing magic. Shale's axe, Sachmet's magic missiles, and Drez's spear finish off the monsters.

In a nearby alcove, our remaining heroes find prisoners: a comatose human male and a faerie-type woman named Erynha, who claims to be a proxy of Titania. In another room, apparently the mind flayer's sleeping quarters, Drez successfully removes some traps and picks the locks of a few chests, in which lie magic potions, scrolls, a wand and some cash. The greatest treasure of all is in a third chamber -- a gigantic version of the glowing pink nodules the party has seen all over the Realm of Thought. The glowing pink nodule mentally calls out to the heroes, promising knowledge. They all partake: Sachmet and Shale learn some secrets and receive new skills appropriate to their areas of specialization; Drez isn't so lucky and while he learns some secrets too (including the location of a nearby portal to Sigil), part of his intellect is drained away temporarily.

Our heroes and the prisoners they rescued lug Sinjin's body back to the surface, where a grateful Erynha raises Sinjin from the dead as a reward for their kindness. (Ends around the 2nd week of The Rotting).

Interlude: "Demonbane" -- Our intrepid heroes start down a long trail away from the entrance to the Realm of Thought. On their second night, Drez is on watch and finds himself paralyzed by magic. He stands and watches helplessly as a black-clad oriental woman sneaks into the camp, steals Sinjin's magical sword *Demonbane*, and leaves. Drez eventually is released from the paralysis and awakens his companions, but it is too late -- Sinjin's precious tanar'ri-slaying sword has been stolen. Sachmet uses divination magics to seek guidance, but only learns that a "tiger-man" and a "snake-woman" are involved in the theft. Drez reveals that one tidbit of knowledge he learned from Ilsensine's realm was that someone named Raja Khan wanted to steal *Demonbane* for his mistress, Kaliva.

After another day's travel, the party comes across a leaning tower. A mind flayer emerges from it and his head promptly explodes. The heroes enter the tower and find another dying mind flayer, whose last words are that Maanzecorian, the other mind flayer god, has been murdered. This, too, was foretold by Ilsensine in the Realm of Thought.

A few more hours of traveling later and the party arrives at a travelers' inn called the Green Bramble. The tired heroes spend a wonderful evening here, feasting and cleaning themselves up. The next morning they leave for Sigil through a portal in the out-house.

The Sigil end of the portal opens into the Lady's Ward, right next to the Temple of the Abyss. Six bulezau tanar'ri, carrying a large crate on a pair of poles, smell Sinjin's baatezu heritage, drop their burden, and attack. Sinjin is mobbed by four of them, and without his tanar'ri-slaying blade he is much less able to deal out the damage, instead using Sachmet's magical staff. Sachmet uses a flying spell to rise into the air, but she is temporarily deafened by a magical *shout* from one of the bulezau. Shale successfully uses his kinetic control power and absorbs a great amount of damage from the bulezau's huge pole-arms, then deals it right back with his battle axe. Drez very much holds his own with his magical spear. Sinjin is slain by the mob of hateful bulezau. Between *magic missiles* from Sachmet and lots of weapon blows from Drez and Shale, the other monsters are defeated, though one manages to escape into the Temple of the Abyss.

Our heroes check out the crate the tanar'ri was carrying and discover that it holds a heavy altar. Drez spends a few minutes prying gems from the altar, and finds a trapped secret compartment. Sachmet opens the compartment and discovers a book, which she takes. A pair of evil-looking priests and several more tanar'ri appear at the door of the Temple, and our heroes grab Sinjin's body and escape.

Drez knows a great place to stay, a little inn called The Cauldron. The party gets a room there and plans to spend several days doing errands and looking for a way to raise Sinjin from the dead. During this time, our heroes learn several interesting tidbits and have short encounters with various folks, including:

- the Modron March has started over a hundred years too early;

- the Society of the Locked Door drops off a hand-bill, advocating the closing of all of Sigil's portals;
- Shale talks to a bard who sings love songs about the Lady of Pain;
- Shale talks to a beautiful woman, Lissandra the Gate-Seeker, who asks him about portals he's been through recently;
- Drez informs the Athar of the news of Maanzecorian's death -- this is taken rather skeptically by the Athar;
- Sachmet and Shale do some trading with Akin the Friendly Fiend, getting some mid-powered magical weapons and potions in exchange for some scrolls and psionic-related treasures;
- Sachmet tries to *identify* the book she took from the tanar'ri altar, and though she identifies it as a *book of infinite* spells, she is very suspicious about it -- Akin also confirms that it's a very evil book;
- Sachmet and Shale aren't able to find a priest who is willing to raise Sinjin from the dead without tons of jink.

"Umbra" -- One day, after running errands, the group finds a tiefling sitting in their normal seat in The Cauldron. He indicates that if they want their friend raised from the dead, they should meet with his employer, Inimigle, at the Black Sail, and that they should bring the book from the tanar'ri altar.

At the Black Sail, Inimigle turns out to be a strange fellow -- he has sharp teeth, wing-like ears, and one huge arm and one tiny arm. He offers them a deal: rescue a girl named Umbra from the home of a Harmonium member named Durkayle, and bring her to a temple called the Zactar Cathedral. It seems that Inimigle is the "night watchman" at the temple, and that Umbra is a "child of prophecy." Once she is brought to the temple, Inimigle will be freed from his duty and can return to his home on the Lower Planes. Inimigle indicates that, in exchange for the tanar'ri book and this service, he can arrange for a priest to bring Sinjin back to life and also tell them where Sinjin's sword, *Demonbane*, is. Finally, Inimigle tells the party that if they want to know about Durkayle's tower, they should talk to Zaraga in the Screaming Tower in Sigil.

Our heroes go back to The Cauldron and wait, as instructed. A few days later a priest arrives and has Sinjin raised from the dead. Though Sinjin needs a little rest to get back to full strength, the heroes should be ready to meet with Zaraga any day now. (ends on the 4th day of Ironskies)

Our heroes leave the Cauldron the next morning for the Screaming Tower, which turns out to be a tall, ramshackle tower that seems to be home to dozens of gargoyles. Despite the charred remains of a bariaur on the front steps of the place, Sinjin waltzes up to the door and knocks. This causes a chain lightning spell to strike each member of the group for some serious damage. Sachmet speaks with the departed spirit of the bariaur and learns a little rhyme called "The Lady's Oath" which can be used as a password to enter the Tower.

The "floor" of the tower turns out to be a gaping portal to the Plane of Air, but our heroes are able to start climbing a winding staircase that hugs the walls of the tower. As they climb, a sudden gust of wind from the portal catches Drez off guard, and he plummets into the portal! Assuming they'll never see him again, Shale, Sachmet and Sinjin continue up to the top of the tower. Guarding the stairs is a four-armed margoyle who pesters the PCs, but Shale uses his phase power to walk past undetected and enter Zaraga's chambers. Sachmet and Sinjin are able to convince the margoyle to let them past, too, but only after telling the monster why they are there.

Zaraga, though initially displeased to see intruders, delights in the chance to help the PCs hurt her enemy, Durkayle of the Harmonium. She gives them a rough map of Durkayle's tower and information on where guards are usually stationed. Shale, still phased out, provides a moment of comic relief by using his phase object power on a cage holding Zaraga's food supply (a pair of frightened gremlins); Sinjin attempts to grab one of the fleeing gremlins and accidentally squishing him to a puddle of mush. He doesn't know his own strength...

The three heroes return to the Cauldron to heal up from the chain lightning disaster and to formulate a plan. Sachmet casts fly and invisibility on herself, and flies through the dark streets of Sigil until she arrives at Durkayle's Tower. She flies to a window on the top floor and sees an empty room that might work for the next

part of her plan: using a dimensional folding spell to teleport the group right inside the Tower. She returns to the Cauldron, and our heroes rest that night and the next day.

That night, the group teleports into the top floor of Durkayle's tower. They make their way to the second floor down, where they find a hallway and a number of closed doors. Shale again phases himself out, and sticks his head through a few doors to see if he can locate the girl, Umbra. Instead, he attracts the attention of a bespectacled fiend who can apparently see the phased Shale. The fiend calls for a guard, and a battle ensues. Sachmet and Sinjin battle a barbazu guard while Shale enters a nearby locked room -- it is Umbra's room. He phases out and scares away her pet imp, which really irritates her. She doesn't cooperate with Shale at all until she reads his mind and discovers that he's there to take her to the Zactar Cathedral. Though she doesn't know exactly what it is, she knows she wants to go there. Shale drinks a potion of flying, and the two of them fly out of the Tower's window, and head back toward the Cauldron.

In the meantime, Sachmet has blasted the barbazu with lightning, and the bespectacled fiend, an amnizu, attempts to parley with them. He says that if they promise to take Umbra away from Sigil that he'll arrange for the party's safe escape from the tower. He reveals that Durkayle is Umbra's father, and he assumes that the PCs have been sent by her mother, Karylin. Sachmet and Sinjin don't cooperate, and the amnizu starts blasting Sachmet with fireballs. She uses another dimensional folding spell to open a portal to the Cauldron, and she and Sinjin dive through and escape. (By this time, Shale and Umbra have already started flying toward the Cauldron but aren't there yet).

Waiting for them at the Cauldron is the tiefling Dirngrin, who informs them that there's been a change of plan and they're to bring the girl to the Black Sail instead of the Zactar Cathedral. Shale and Umbra arrive shortly after that, and when told about the change of plans, immediately smells something fishy. Our heroes are at a loss at what to do. Shale stalls as much as he can so he can recover some of his psionic strength. Sachmet wants to take her to the Cathedral and let Inimigle decide what to do with her. Sinjin, using his power to detect alignment, believes that Umbra is somewhat evil, and so doesn't care what happens to her.

Finally, the plan is this: Sachmet feigns being to damaged by the amnizu's fireballs to accompany the group. Shale and Sinjin go with Dirngrin to take Umbra to the Black Sail. Sachmet then flies to the Zactar Cathedral, hoping to find Inimigle on duty. No such luck -- he's there, but another yugoloth at the front door won't let her in without Umbra. She heads for the Black Sail.

Meanwhile, a pony-cab trip later and group has arrived at the Black Sail. Sitting in an alcove is a beautiful woman and a handsome man. The woman, Karylin, says she's Umbra's mother, but Umbra doesn't want anything to do with her. Karylin reveals her true form -- that of a succubus -- and tries to charm Umbra. A fight breaks out. Sinjin finds that his weapon is ineffective against Karylin, and so concentrates on the traitor Dirngrin, while Sachmet pummels the handsome man -- a warrior charmed by Karylin's evil ways. Sachmet shows up at an opportune moment and manages to snag Karylin in a web, but she teleports away. Dirngrin and the charmed human are slain.

Our heroes decide they've had enough and head for the Zactar Cathedral in the dead of night. They are greeted by a guardian who doesn't hinder them but doesn't help them much either. They wander through the decrepit church looking for a secret way into a tower they can see from the outside but can't find from the inside. The four-armed margoyle from Zaraga's Screaming Tower ambushes them along with three gargoyle henchmen; one of the gargoyles gouges one of Shale's eyes out in the ensuing battle. Finally, the heroes open the secret way into the spire and find Inimigle in a circular room flanked by three stone statues surrounding a green glowing pool of light.

Umbra enters the pool and fulfills her destiny. The statues come to life, revealing that they have been waiting for Umbra for centuries and that Umbra will be a great prophet. Umbra delivers a disturbing prophecy:

A shadow held in Law's grip

sought by a chaos-mother as a sacrifice
comes full circle to the hall of sight
only to cast the City of Doors into night.

The door-god slain
by the woman of pain
still has children who do his will.

Even now they conspire
to bring Aoskar ever higher . . .
but blood will spill.

War in the streets will rage.
Blood through the gutters pours,
As they try to burst the Cage
and open up its doors.

But every portal, door and way
will cease to function on this day.
Beyond this point in history
comes a time I cannot see.

Heed the shadow-girl!
Now is the time to fight!
The plan, half-done, remains undone
Until you set it right!

ALL
DOORS
CLOSE !

Umbra and her three guardians stand against the wall of the tower and turn to stone. Inimigle, overjoyed at being released from his duty as night-watchman of the Zactar Cathedral, gives Sinjin the chant about his missing sword: Rule-of-Three knows the dark of it. Waving ta-ta to the group, Inimigle steps into the pool of light to transport himself to Gehenna. He sinks into the pool, then suddenly the smile freezes on his face, and he topples forward -- minus his lower half. Our heroes rightly interpret that this means that all of the portals in Sigil have closed.

About this time, Durkayle and some burly Harmonium guard arrive. Sinjin plays his trump card, promising not to spread word of Durkayle's affair with a tanar'ri in exchange for his freedom. With the troublesome Umbra out of the way (for now, at least), Durkayle grudgingly agrees.

Our heroes pick up a pony-cab back to the Cauldron. They find that Drez has found his way back from the Plane of Air only a few hours before. The folks at the Cauldron have a worried look on their faces -- one well known portal in the Cauldron's main room has disappeared. (ends on 7th of Ironskies)

"All Doors Close" -- Regarding the events of this adventure, **Sinjin the Tiefling** [played by Matthew Sippel] writes:

We awoke at the Black Cauldron the next day. The gate to the astral plane, the one the githzerai have always used, was still gone. Umbra's prophecy still held. People looked perplexed, but I don't think that they knew what we knew - the portals were shut. They merely assumed that something odd was happening. Something out of the ordinary, again, as usual, in Sigil.

There was nothing to do about that, so we went to the [Styx Oarsman](#) in search of the Rule of Three, who was supposed to know all about my stolen sword, *Demonbane*. We went in, after bribing the doorman, to a room that was pitch black and filled with the scum of the multiverse. I am sure Shale and Drez felt most at home. After some asking around, we discovered from some minotaurs that Rule of Three was out plane-hopping. Chances were, since the portals were all down, he wouldn't be back soon. We left. On the way back to the Cauldron, Sachmet mentioned that she had a waking vision -- a white flower that turned into the Lady of Pain and back into a white flower. Personally, I think the thin air of Sigil was getting to her...

We spent much of the next week asking around about the portals, gathering rumors and information. We also had two hunches as to certain factions who might know the dark: Shale favored seeking out The Society of Closed Doors, while I urged searching for members of the Will of the One. We also thought to speak with Lissandra the Gateseeker, the one who keeps records of all portals in Sigil and who interviewed Shale on that subject not long ago.

During that week, Sigilians became more and more uneasy without portals. Food was starting to become scarce, as was water. Thankfully, I had my steady supply of magic gruel and water -- from the magical spoon and magical decanter I'd purchased in the marketplace outside Sung Chiang's palace just a few weeks ago when I first met my current companions.

We chased down several rumors picked up from the street. We sought out Ramander the Wise, a spellcaster who was reputed to "own" the majority of portals in Sigil. Upon arriving at his place in the Lady's Ward, we discovered an angry mob had already thought of questioning him as well. Apparently, he had no answers for them either. They'd lynched him and left his body hanging at a tree with his insides exploded out.

We heard that a lot was happening in the Hive Ward -- people were disappearing, the food-pantries were running short of bread, houses were being set ablaze. Since the festering stretch of water known as the Ditch was no longer being washed by the river Oceanus periodically, water was scarce and the poor were especially suffering. While investigating in the Hive, we found Harmonium soldiers rationing out meager supplies of water, and their barrels were almost empty. I used my *decanter of endless water* to fill them. They asked me to come again tomorrow and I informed them that I would try.

Since we were near-by, we stopped by the Shattered Temple and visited the Athar. If anyone would know about the Will of the One and if they were behind this scheme, the Athar would. They and the Will of the One had been at odds since the Lady of Pain had shattered Aoskar's temple. Caylean, a representative of the Athar, didn't have much of value in terms of the portals, but he did mention yet another god -- Bwimb, the Lord of Ooze -- had perished as well. With Maanzecorian dead, that made two gods that had died in the stretch of a few weeks -- if the rumors were true. Caylean also tipped us off about a spell slinger named Origax, who was funding the Will of the One with money. He might know what was going on.

We also tried to contact Lissandra, but had to leave a message since she was an Anarchist, and thus likely hiding out. Shale left a message at Interplanar Importers that he wished to speak with her.

Before heading back to the Cauldron for sleep, the bladeling wanted to follow up on a rumor about a female of his race, Adamok Ebon. We went to the Fat Candle which was her haunt and he interviewed her. Adamok, a bounty hunter, was not particularly interested in talking to Shale, and kept to herself. Our mind-bender did, however, ask her to bring in the wizard Origax for us. She agreed and we returned to the Cauldron.

That night I crept from the Cauldron and refilled the barrels at the Ditch with water from my decanter

again. I asked of the Athar that the barrels be kept at the Shattered Temple, and that it would be good for their cause in that it took individuals, not clerics of false gods, to bring the masses water and alleviation. I myself believe in the gods, but not to the point where I would let it get in the way with finding a reason for the Athar to help. I did not involve my companions as I knew such things did not interest them, and I did not want to deal with any harassment from them about it. I continued doing this nightly. By now, prices for food and water in Sigil had skyrocketed and famine had touched all but the richest of the Lady's Ward.

Lissandra arrived at the Cauldron and told us what she knew. It wasn't much, but she did give us a lead about her dating an Anarchist bard who had a friend in his band who was dating a girl who knew of a wizard who was working on research with portals. Or something like that. I care little for their unsavory lifestyles. We took the bait and headed to the House of Griffin, where this band, a Revolutionary League Cell known as "The Bards," often entertained crowds with their unique music. Beforehand, Drez went to purchase mind influencing drugs in order to have some persuasive merit with the bards. Also on the way, we went to the address of Origax. Several guards lay on the ground impaled with bladeling spikes. The mind-bender's friend, Adamok Ebon, had beaten us to him.

We arrived at the House of Griffin listened to the music performed by The Bards, which was fine, although it sounded a lot like a different group of bards I have heard before. Regardless, after the show we introduced ourselves and began asking them questions. The thief offered to share his illicit bounty and the band-members eagerly invited up to their chambers to "talk" further. They were quite radical and were very open about their willingness to "party."

We learned from one of the band members that she dated a fellow named Belzin, who was a spellcaster who specialized in dimensional magic. She said that he was working on something with the portals, and that he thought he was being followed. At one point, she said she thought she saw a yellow man made of gems watching them, but she wasn't sure if it was because of the drugs she was on, her imagination, or reality. We got Belzin's address -- an apartment in the Hive. At this point the Harmonium raided the tavern and we fled back to the Cauldron using Sachmet's handy portal spell (which sadly couldn't remove us from the Cage but could transport us within Sigil itself).

Back at the Cauldron we found our bladeling's female counterpart again, with Origax bound and delivered. Shale paid Adamok and she went about her business. We questioned Origax and he informed us that he merely gave the Will of the One money, and was not officially part of the organization. We eventually released him, although there was some initial dissent with the darker ones of our group wanting to kill him.

As we headed for Belzin's Hive Ward apartment the next day, we noticed that the streets in the Hive were becoming a lot emptier. On the way to the apartment, we viewed an odd sight. A dog was running out of an alley way, in fear of something, when suddenly it was sucked back by some force. We ignored the event for the time, making our way to the apartment.

The apartment was ransacked and burned, and Belzin was gone. We did find his familiar, though, a homonculous called Pariah, who eventually revealed to us that a man draped in chains took him and that they were keeping him somewhere at the Foundry. This finally made sense, now. From before we had discovered that Belzin was working on a project in which all of the portals would be made operable without keys, although it involved initially shutting the portals down briefly. His work had been interrupted. I was reminded of the chilling words of Umbra's prophecy:

Heed the shadow-girl!
Now is the time to fight!
The plan, half-done, remains undone
Until you set it right!

ALL
DOORS
CLOSE !

We made way to the Foundry. I allowed the familiar, who initially appeared as a twisted and evil imp, to ride on my shoulder as I had used my powers to detect that he was a creature of good. We investigated the alley where the dog was lost, but found nothing.

After some inquiries at the Foundry, we discovered that there were some empty warehouses in the back half. Pariah, the familiar, used his bond with his master Belzin to help us locate the warehouse. We did indeed find it, but the familiar could not tell much as his master was not conscious. The imp flew above, looked down through a skylight, and informed us of the situation. Belzin was in a pool of water. There were two human-shaped creatures made of gemstones -- one of topaz, the other, opal - and they were accompanied by a few human guards, some of whom were sleeping off in a corner. They were also accompanied by the man wrapped in chains.

We decided to attack from different angles. Sachmet would paralyze the sleeping guards with her magic at one end of the building. I and the mind-bending bladeling would enter the front, with Shale using his psionic powers to engage is kinetic control to absorb physical blows and then using his ability to phase and walk through the walls. I would use the front door while Drez the Sly-One would enter through the back.

The bladeling entered the building out of phase and unseen. Listening through the door, I heard what he heard. From the discussion, it seemed the gemstone creatures -- they called themselves "tsnng" - had somehow come back in time to destroy Shale before he became powerful. In their conversation, they mention that he was the greatest enemy of their entire race because he had somehow caused them to become enslaved. I was not fully surprised by these accusations, he already has the potential for evil. They bickered about logistics of this time travel, and how it was a paradox to kill him before he even was powerful enough to time travel like they could. Or something like that. At that point, I lost track of the conversation and became confused. Such difficult concepts are for the grey-beards to figure out.

It didn't matter. The bladeling appeared to confront his would-be assassins, as I could tell by their gasps of shock. At that time, I entered as well and I could hear Sachmet cast her magic. I fought the guard at the door and the mind-bender began to assault the gemstone creatures. The opal one, a female, engaged him while the other used magic to raise a loose pile of gemstones into a mineral elemental and then quaffed a potion, which was obviously, by his hastened reactions, a potion of speed. Sachmet of Thoth engaged the chain-wrapped one with magical missiles while the battle ensued. Our mindbender Shale was slowed by one of the gemstone creature's spells, and then subsequently ensnared with a wizard's web. I dispatched of my foe and used the skills of my fiendish heritage to project a wave of fear on both of the tsnng.

At the same time, the mind-bender was fireballed by the opal gemstone creature. Her companion summoned for more aid, but I saw no conjurations appear at the time. My fear power worked upon them, though, and they began to flee right after. The elemental stayed to fight our bladeling. I deduced that the Sly-One, Drez, had climbed up to the roof of the building, as I saw him drop in from the skylight above. He used his theifly training to crash through the glass, tumble onto the ground uninjured, and grab the unconscious Belzin. He then used his own dimensional powers to teleport the two of them out of the fray. Sachmet continued to assault her chain-wrapped foe and nimbly dodged his brutal punches her power to magically fly.

Sachmet abandoned the chain-wrapped man and chased after the tsnng, who fled out the back of the warehouse. Two creatures also emerged from barrels, obviously the ones called forth by the topaz

gemstone creature. They were pale and sickly white, with large, vacuous mouths. Shale continued to absorb the attacks falling upon him by the elemental with his kinetic control. I once again used my bloodpowers to fireball the gaped-mouth creatures, killing one and wounding another.

At this time the bladeling left, perhaps to find Belzin and the githzerai, and I found myself alone. Why my companions always choose to abandon me I do not understand. The vacuous-mouthed creature used its own powers to create a sucking vortex; I could only hold on to a support beam to avoid being pulled into its jaws! The chain-wrapped man and the elemental descended upon me. In a coup de grace, I let go of the support beam and pulled my sword, intending to strike at the creature before it inhaled me. I managed to hit the creature, and as it was already wounded from my fireball, I killed it with a mighty blow to the head. The mind-bender also returned to help me and began attacking our foes. Between the two of us, we quickly dispatched of the chain-bound man who evaporated to all but a pile of chains upon the final blow. As the mind-bender used his powers to further absorb damage from the elemental's pummeling, I took the chains left and bound the two remaining paralyzed guards. I returned to the fray and smashed the elemental with my sword. At that moment, a portal appeared, teleportation magic I recognized as that of our wizard-priest's, and one of the gemstone creatures re-appeared with Sachmet following.

We attacked the wizardly gem-man and slew him, but not before he could polymorph Shale into a rat. The wizardress informed us that she had hunted down and destroyed the other tsung with acidic blasts. She attempted to return the bladeling to his true form, but her magic failed her.

Near the main Foundry, the githzerai was able to awaken the dimensionalist Belzin, but only to discover that his memory had been completely wiped. Apparently, the pool in which he was held captive contained the memory-draining waters of the river Styx.

At that point, we all stood among our defeated foes and pondered what to do next. (Ended around the 17th of Ironskies)

Our heroes, unsure of what to do next, head back to the Cauldron with the amnesia-stricken Belzin in tow. Before the heroes go to sleep for the night, Sachmet is able to use her arcane talents to return Shale to his normal form, much to his relief. That night, Sachmet again dreams about the Lady of Pain and a mysterious white flower. When the group wakes up, they find that the door from their room leads not to the comforts of the Cauldron, but to a maze created by the Lady of Pain. Seeing no other alternative, our brave heroes venture forth into the maze.

A few hours of wandering later, the heroes learn that they are not alone in the maze. They discover a very tall robed humanoid whose face is hidden by his hood. The man hints about being a captive of the Lady of Pain and not being as dead as everyone seems to think he is. When asked if he knows of a portal out of the maze, the man cries, "I am the doorway" and throws open his robe -- inside isn't a man at all, but an empty void reminiscent of the Astral Plane. Our heroes jump through ...

... and find themselves in Ankhwugat, Set's realm on Baator. The sand is blood red, the sky is like roiling smoke, and no matter which way they look they can always see a menacing black pyramid in the distance. Sachmet, as a priestess of another god of the Egyptian pantheon, knows this place but still does not know why they've been brought here. A short ways off is a crumbling statue of a sphinx. Behind it, built into a cliff, is a building covered with hieroglyphics and half buried in sand. Sachmet deciphers the writing and determines that the building is a holy place of Set and that it is designed to protect something valuable.

The heroic four enter the half-buried building through an upper story window that is now ground level. The first room is two stories high and filled with sand. Under the sand are several desert zombies which attempt to grab on to our heroes and drag them to their deaths. Our heroes ultimately prevail.

The next room in is a pillared hall crawling with snakes. In an adjoining library, a menacing crocodile attacks Sinjin, but turns into a handsome Egyptian warrior whose sacred task is to guard this place. This minion of Set is soon joined by a companion, but our heroes slay one and drive the other off after Sachmet blasts him with lightning.

The library seems to hold only religious scrolls, so our heroes press on. A nearby crypt is the resting place of a shadow priest of Set. Our heroes dispatch of him after a short battle. Finally, the four discover a secret door leading to a room holding only one thing -- a white flower. Sachmet realizes this must be the fabled desert night's bloom, which is the only cure for losing memories to the River Styx. With this bloom in hand, our heroes make their way back to the portal leading through the mysterious prisoner in the Lady's maze, and then through a new doorway back into their room at the Cauldron.

Belzin responds to the smell of the desert night's bloom -- he is instantly aware that his experiment with the portals has gone wrong. The heroes escort him to the Trioptic Nic'epona, a well-known portal in Sigil. Belzin waves his arms and mutters some magical words, and slowly, all portals in Sigil open and stay that way.

By the time the heroes have returned to the Cauldron, many of Sigil's citizens have discovered that the portals are now working. A small flow from the River Oceanus now constantly cleanses the Ditch in the Hive, providing clean water to the poor there. Within a few days, food from Arcadia and Arborea is flowing into the city again.

However, only a few days later, the portals all revert to their normal state -- closed, but openable with the right key. Belzin is at a loss, but vows to continue to search for a way to keep the Cage unlocked. (ended around the 2nd of Forlorn).

"Nemesis" Redux -- Over the next couple of weeks, Drez begins to form contacts with a few fellow rogues in Sigil. His new informants -- followers, if you will -- include some fellow githzerai as well as a sprinkling of other races.

Sinjin learns that Rule-of-Three has returned from the Outer Planes, so our tiefling and his companions make their way to the [Styx Oarsman](#) to discuss the whereabouts of the missing sword, *Demonbane*. Jarkman Vries lets them in after accepting a bribe. Shale bravely orders a special drink from a deformed giant -- the special drink is cheap, it turns out, because the antidote is expensive. The patrons of the Styx Oarsman are decidedly on the seedy side -- the phrase "a wretched hive of scum and villainy" would be very appropriate. Many types of Tanar'ri can be found -- bulezau, vrock, chasme, nabasu -- as well as some other oddities (slaadi, various Yugoloths), but no evident Baatezu.

Rule-of-Three is found on the lower level in a private booth, assuming his typical smiling old githzerai form. He is accompanied by a trio of menacing minotaurs. Rule-of-Three comes clean with the dark on *Demonbane*. It is being held by the maralith Kaliva on an island on the 531st layer of the Abyss, known as Vudra. The fiendish informant notes that one way to get to Vudra is to travel to the first layer of Elysium, find a portal at the bottom of the River Oceanus, take a short swim through the cold waters of Stygia to another underwater portal, which will lead to the waters of Vudra, right next to Kaliva's Island. Our heroes grill Rule-of-Three some more and learn that Vudra is a poisonous plane.

As our heroes depart, a rude bulezau purposely trips Sinjin, knocking him flat. Drez immediately starts walking quickly for the door, but the others end up in a battle royale with a pair of bulezau and a vrock. Alas, if Sinjin had only had *Demonbane*, he'd have cut through this scum with ease. As it is, he and Sachmet almost become corpses. Fortunately for them, Shale pulls an amazing coup de grace and uses the energy stored up with his kinetic control power to obliterate the vrock at a key moment. All the while, Drez strikes up a conversation with a group of nearby khaastas, and wins 100 gold coins wagering that his friends would defeat the demons! (Ended about Forlorn the 18th).

As our heroes slink out of the Styx Oarsman, Drez overhears an old grizzled man say, "That's the third time Rule-of-Three has told berks to look for their missing swords on Kaliva's Island." Drez questions him and learns that Rule-of-Three told a tiefling named Turia and a dabus to seek their respective magical swords on the layer of Vudra. Drez pumps him for a little more info, then our heroes head back to the Cauldron for some much-needed rest and recuperation.

The next morning, the gang heads for the Black Sail, where Turia works. She's a gruff tiefling, but warms up when Sinjin offers to help her with her problem -- her twin brother Llissian, it seems, set out to find his baatezu-slaying sword, *Devilhammer*, and never returned from Kaliva's Island. Turia doesn't care a whit about the sword -- she just wants her brother back, or confirmation that he's dead. She promises that if this is accomplished, she will join Drez's growing gang of informants. She also offers a couple of tidbits of information: first, there's a naturally-occurring substance on the islands of Vudra that can counteract the vile poisons of the air of that plane; and second, that Llissian carried with him a magical *arrow of tanar'ri slaying* -- sure to be useful in killing the maralith Kaliva.

While Drez, Sachmet and Sinjin visit Akin the Friendly Fiend to get some water breathing potions and some poison protection, Shale seeks out a dabus and asks what it knows about Kaliva, magical swords, or the Abyss. The dabus "asks" Shale to seek a sword called Midnight. In return, it offers to sell some city-owned property for a very reasonable price -- namely, the former home of the wizardess Derioch. She apparently left a lot of her books and laboratory equipment there, and the place is in good repair. Shale agrees, and takes the news to his companions.

After a couple of days of rest, our heroes begin their quest. They leave Sigil and arrive in Ecstasy, the gate-town to Elysium. While strolling through town, they hear Trolan the Mad give a little sermon about how much he loves the Lady of Pain. Our heroes find the portal to Amoria, the first layer of Elysium, and pass through (opening the portal with a transcendental thought).

Elysium is every bit as restful and peaceful as our heroes had heard. Unfortunately, our heroes have no idea where the River Oceanus is. Sachmet uses her priestly powers to call forth a flock of birds, but they refuse to speak to her, instead flying off and bringing back some muscle -- a veritable horde of guardinals. These animal-men don't like the fiendish looks of Sinjin (and the looks of Shale in general), and haul the group before a sort of court. Sinjin explains that they are trying to keep a dangerous weapon out of the hands of the tanar'ri, and that explanation is good enough for the guardinals.

But when Sinjin mentions that they need to find a portal at the bottom of Oceanus, the whole court laughs -- turns out Oceanus is infinitely deep. The leader of the court, a leonal named Mane, offers to arrange for one of the whales of Oceanus -- the great balaena -- to transport the PCs to the underwater portal by carrying them in its mouth.

Two days later, the heroes arrive at the River Oceanus and are greeted and picked up by one of the balaena. They ride in its mouth for several uncomfortable hours, then are telepathically instructed to drink their water breathing potions. When they swim out of the whale's mouth, they see that they will be accompanied into Stygia by a pair of delphons, the shark-like fish of Oceanus. Our heroes use a shell as a portal key, and swim into Stygia.

The waters of Stygia, unlike the warm, clear, sweet waters of Oceanus, are frigid, dark, murky, and vile. Our heroes can barely see 10 yards ahead. Fortunately, they can hear the song of the delphons, and so can follow them through the waters. Sinjin is tough enough to endure the cold, while the others are protected by Sachmet's magic. Sinjin's armor causes him to start to sink, however, but Sachmet uses a *levitation* spell to allow Sinjin to swim more easily.

Our heroes swim for about 45 minutes, when suddenly the song of the delphons changes into something panicky, and the delphons swim ahead, disappearing. Moments later, a crossbow bolt blasts from the cold

darkness into Sinjin's chest. Sachmet quickly casts *free action* on Sinjin while Shale uses his psionics to go out of phase. Soon our heroes are embroiled in a battle with six sahuagin -- one with a crossbow, two with nets, and three with tridents.

The sahuagin are masterful swimmers, and the ones with nets immediately net up Drez and Sachmet, while Sinjin takes on the crossbowman. Shale, impervious to attacks while out of phase, uses his phase object power to remove the net from Sachmet. Drez uses *dimension door* to escape his bonds. Between *magic missiles* from Sachmet's wand, bursts of electricity from Shale's static discharge power, and mighty blows from Sinjin's freely swinging sword, the sea devils are slain or driven off.

By this time, only one delphon is singing, and weakly at that. Our heroes swim blindly toward the song, and enter a huge cloud of bloody water. One delphon has been torn to bits, while the other is barely alive -- but in better shape than the huge shark that attacked them. The delphon instructs them to gather some of the shark's blood, and guides them for about 15 more minutes to a ring of coral that is the portal to Vudra on the Abyss. The shark's blood is the portal key, and when the portal opens, a gout of blood-red water gushes into the dark waters of Stygia.

Our heroes bid farewell to their delphon companion and swim through the portal. They immediately sense that the red "water" of Vudra's ocean is warmer, but it is also vile poison. All but Sachmet manage to avoid swallowing enough poison to kill them, and Sachmet is forced to eat some *Keoghtom's ointment* in order to neutralize the effects of the warm, red water. They can see light above, so our heroes swim up and up until they reach the surface of the bloody ocean.

Our heroes can see two islands -- each with jungle foliage and a lone mountain peak. Neither looks especially inviting, but one is marginally closer, and more importantly, going the other way would take the PCs closer to a number of gigantic jellyfish that have taken an unhealthy interest in the heroes. Sachmet casts *fly*, and to her horror a pair of grotesque bat wings sprout from her neck to carry her aloft. She learns that alteration magic, when cast in the Abyss, can have unsettling effects! From the relative safety of the air, she casts *water walk* on the rest of the group, and Drez, Shale and Sinjin sprint for the closer island.

Our heroes find themselves on a red sandy beach. They note that the red haze above the ocean prohibits them from being able to see the other island from where they rest. Breathing heavily, gasping for breath, our heroes sit on the beach and wonder how long they can breathe the poisonous air of Vudra before they perish. (Ended around Infernus 4th)

Within minutes of leaving the poisonous waters of Vudra, Sinjin, Drez and Shale find themselves retching in pain. The heroes attempt to tend to their wounds and illness, then head inland toward a steep slope, atop which is a small village of huts. When they are closer, Sachmet *flies* up and spies two dozen or so shaggy, cat-like humanoids with crude spears. She is spotted by them, and a dozen rush to the edge of the escarpment and hurl spears at our heroes. Drez and Sinjin rush up the slope while Sachmet readies spells; Shale, however, does something uncharacteristically non-hostile and pulls out a magical item that will help him decode the cat-people's speech. He hears the cat-men saying, "Begone, you foul demons! We will defend our homes! Why do you torment us?" But by this time, in Shale's estimation, it is too late to parley -- so he whips out some weapons and joins the battle.

Our heroes slay a couple of the cat-men, but the cat-men get some good hits in as well, even breaking Sachmet's delicate hand in a critical hit. Soon, the leader of the cat-people joins the melee, and blasts Sinjin and Drez with a *lightning bolt* from a magical staff, causing grievous wounds to Drez. Sinjin grabs his wounded companion and uses his wings to glide down the escarpment to safety, and binds Drez's wounds. The cat-man leader calls his people back up the slope, and they gather 'round their leader.

Sachmet heals her hand with magic, then uses a spell of language comprehension to speak with the cat-people.

She learns that the cat-folk assumed that the heroes were tanar'ri, come to torment them. The leader offers to help the group if they drop their weapons and submit to closer questioning. Seeing no alternatives, the heroes agree.

The party is led to the village. The cat-folk leader, a lion-like man, introduces himself as Mrowr. His people are the rakasta, a race of cat-folk originally hailing from the Beastlands. Every member of his pride back home had to go through a rite of passage into adulthood -- they would enter a special cave and face their fears. It was said that those who could not master their fears would be devoured by them -- and would never return from the cave. In fact, some of the cat-folk would disappear from the cave and appear on this layer of the Abyss, on this island, through a near-by portal. Mrowr was the first to disappear from the Beastlands. During his first few hours here, he raced against time to find some way to stay alive in the foul, poisonous air of Vudra. He found a cave at the base of the lone mountain-peak on this island -- a cave with an unseen horror, but also holding a source of Shaktari's Ichor, the magical fluid that allows mortals to survive the poisonous air and water of the plane. Over the next five years, several more rakasta appeared on this island, and became a member of Mrowr's pride. Each one believes that he or she has failed the rakasta rite of passage, and is on this island as a punishment for cowardice.

The rakasta face not only poison here, but occasional raids from a group of lizard-like men who emerge from the cave that holds Shaktari's Ichor -- dubbed "The Caves of Fear" by Mrowr. They also struggle to feed themselves, as there are not many animals that provide meat -- just a few kinds of nasty giant insects.

Sachmet uses her language magic to explain why they are on this layer of the Abyss. Mrowr has no knowledge of Kaliva, and is in fact unaware that there's even another island just within a few miles. He did see Llissian, Turia's missing brother, entering the Caves of Fear a few weeks ago. The party decides that they want to investigate the Caves of Fear, but Mrowr is unwilling to let anyone but a member of the pride enter the Caves. Sinjin proposes that the heroes join the pride. Mrowr agrees and sets the tests -- they must gather meat for the pride, and they must enter the Caves of Fear and return with a supply of Shaktari's Ichor. Then they will become members of the pride and will have free run of the Caves.

That night, Sachmet uses magic from scrolls to protect the party from the poisonous air for the next day. The next morning, the group is led by a female rakasta called Shreeaw to a place at the far end of the island where a number of horrible giant ants live. The heroes are expected to bring back six of the critters for food.

The ensuing battle is hard-fought. Sinjin sends a *fireball* into the middle of a group of the gigantic, pink-and-red mottled ants, and Sachmet shoots an *acidic blast* at them. The ants, it turns out, are impervious to fire and acid, and spit acid at the heroes before chomping them with their fierce mandibles. Sachmet discovers that they are particularly vulnerable to cold and ice. Shale is unable to activate his psionic powers and has to resort to fisticuffs. Drez tries to cast *magic missiles* from scrolls, but blows it both times. Sheer brute force wins out as Sinjin hacks and slashes his way through many ants. The heroes gather up all the ant carcasses they can carry and return to the camp for another night's rest. (Ended around the morning of Infernus 6th)

Guided by the enthusiastic Shreeaw, our heroes make their way the next morning to the entrance to the Caves of Fear. They immediately face a magical glyph carved over the entrance which frightens all but Shale away. Sachmet uses her priestly magics to help remove this fear, then uses a spell of *stone shape* to warp and cover the glyph.

Inside the cave is a horror -- a dark, smoky being with horrible claws and an evil-looking white mask. The creature wreaks all sorts of havoc -- causing walls of flame and jets of cold to appear, then making the very walls close in and the ceiling collapse. Drez and Sinjin are the first to discover that many of these effects are mere illusions, and the others are soon convinced as well. Drez is mentally dominated by the creature and backstabs Sachmet, nearly killing her. Finally, a combination of magic and might brings the creature down.

In the back of the cave is a small supply of Shaktari's Ichor. The group gathers up enough for Mrowr's tribe in water skins, and each hero partakes of the poison antidote.

The room, which had no exits before, suddenly has several exits which were apparently covered by illusionary walls created by the creature. One nearby room stinks of troglodyte and has a glowing glyph on the floor that shocks Sachmet when she touches it. Another nearby room is home to a slow-moving roper -- a few fiery spells lay waste to it. Yet a third cave holds treasure -- potions, gems and scrolls. The fourth exit is a tunnel leading off into the darkness.

Along the tunnel is a side room holding the remains of a long-dead paladin. Notes on his body indicate that he had been searching for a creature called a "visage" -- an undead tanar'ri, obviously the creature the heroes defeated in the previous room. The paladin's belongings include a magical helm and mace.

Drez scouts farther down the tunnel and finds a room with a mound of treasure (he's smart enough to know an illusion-covered pit when he sees it) and another glyph. Drez uses his language reading skills to decipher the writing on the glyph, and notes that it mentions teleportation and Raja Kahn. Drez returns to the group.

Armed with this new knowledge, they are able to decipher the other glyph they found earlier -- it's apparently a teleporter to Kaliva. Our heroes don't know how to activate the glyphs without getting shocked, however, so they return to the rakasta village with Shreeaw.

Mrowr is suitably impressed with the heroic actions of the PCs and announces that they are now part of the rakasta pride. The heroes rest for a full day and night, and during this time they decide that the glyphs in the cave must be activated by command word, perhaps by speaking the name of the relevant being (Raja Kahn or Kaliva).

Again accompanied by Shreeaw, the heroes return to the Caves of Fear. They decide to activate the portal to Raja Kahn first. Speaking his name, they step into the glyph one by one...

They appear outside, at the entrance to a large courtyard. Behind them and above them is the deadly swirling red mist. Ahead is a small domed temple with several towers. All around them are severed heads impaled on spikes. A quick survey of the carnage reveals that one of the heads is that of Lissian, the tiefling brother of Turia.

The heroes enter the temple and battle a stone two-headed tiger. During the fight, Shreeaw mysteriously disappears. They find a cage nearby with Lissian's body decaying inside. A secret staircase leads down to the lower level. Sachmet uses fiery magic to clear away a horde of nasty giant centipedes, and the four make their way into a well-furnished room. Shreeaw is there, surrounded by four other female rakasta. Shreeaw shimmers and changes form, revealing the fearsome Raja Kahn. He laughs and orders his *charmed* females to attack.

Sinjin punches out a pair of the females while Sachmet puts hers to sleep with a *color spray*. The toughest part is dealing with Raja Kahn, as he is immune to most spells. *Magic missiles* bounce off of him, fire doesn't hurt him, weapons don't do much damage. Worse, Raja Kahn has magical powers of his own that grant him great speed and the ability to drain life from his opponents. Things look grim, but the psionicist Shale uses his extraordinary powers to summon the energies of the Plane of Radiance. Two bolts of searing energy blast Raja Kahn, nearly killing him. He runs from the room, but Sinjin hurls the mace he retrieved from the dead paladin at Raja Kahn and kills him.

Our heroes help the female rakasta to recover, tend to their own wounds, and search nearby rooms. They find Lissian's magic bow and tanar'ri slaying arrow -- unfortunately, the arrow is broken! Other treasures are there for the taking as well. Finally, they discover yet another glyph that leads Kaliva. Our heroes decide to rest here for a while before taking on the wretched maralith. (Ends around Infernus 8th)

After resting the night in Raja Kahn's palace, the party prepares to enter Kaliva's lair via the magical glyph on the floor. They each speak Kaliva's name, and appear in a dark, stuffy cave. Our heroes make their way to a magically sealed door, and as they are examining it, four juju zombies with crossbows and poisoned bolts fire at them from alcoves high in the cave wall. After unsuccessful attempts to harm them with normal arrows, magical lightning, and magic missiles, the party backs off and Sinjin toasts them with a *fireball*.

Sachmet uses a *stone shape* spell to form a small opening next to the magically warded door, and the group passes that obstacle. In the next area, they find a wide grotto where tortured spirits of the damned have taken the form of manes and dretch tanar'ri. Drez starts to sneak up on the demons, but is surprised and backstabbed by a horrid babau tanar'ri. The babau says that is defending *Demonbane* in hopes of gaining Kaliva's love.

A mighty battle ensues. The babau *teleports* away but returns momentarily with a magical halberd. Drez also *teleports* a short distance away, pulls the sword out of his back, and gets some healing from Sachmet. Sinjin takes on the horde of lesser tanar'ri, while Shale uses his kinetic control power to absorb the babau's mighty blows, then momentarily stuns the babau with a critical hit to the head. He notes, however, that the babau's skin is covered with a corrosive slime that might damage his precious battle axe. In a moment of sheer madness, Shale throws aside his axe and grabs the halberd out of the stunned demon's hands. Drez, now healed up, sneaks up on the babau again and tries to stab it with the very sword that had been used on Drez, but the sword melts upon contact with the acidic goo. Shale then obliterates the babau with its own weapon.

Meanwhile, Sinjin has wiped out the lesser demons. During this battle, Sinjin has had a familiar sensation in his mind -- that of an old friend calling to him. He doesn't know what to make of it.

The group spends a few minutes recovering and searching the ground for any interesting treasure or clues. Shale rejuvenates some of this psionic power. The party continues on and finds a huge cavern that holds a large lake of black goo, in the middle of which is an island. On the island is a tall cathedral-like building. Our heroes walk across a small bridge, circle the building, and find a pair of doors. Drez climbs on top of the building to look for secret doors, but finds none. Upon examining the doors, it turns out that they are not doors at all, but merely carvings in the stone of the building.

Sachmet guesses that Kaliva, as a tanar'ri, would not need true doors since she can *teleport* at will. Shale, though, has discovered that the stone of the cavern (though not the cathedral) seems to prevent direct teleportation in and out.

The group is momentarily stymied, as they can find no entrance to the cathedral. But in a moment of dementia, Sachmet devises a scheme. She casts *stone to flesh* on a section of wall, transforming the rock in to a pink, pulsing mass of skin and muscle. Drez then carves a grotesque passage into the cathedral.

Before entering, Sachmet casts some magic in preparation for battle. As she casts a *stoneskin* spell on herself as protection, something goes awry. As she has noted all along, the Abyss has a tendency to corrupt spells of the Alteration School. Except for a few occasions she had lucked out in the past. But now her luck had run out. She casts the spell, and in a matter of moments has transformed from a human into a lifeless stone statue!

The other three heroes are shocked, but then they hear a woman's laughter inside the cathedral that lures them in. They see a pair of balconies, and Kaliva is at the far end of the cathedral. She indicates that this whole affair has been so disappointing -- she is disappointed that our heroes don't seem very scary, she was disappointed to learn that she could not hold or even be near *Demonbane* after going through so much to acquire it. But that doesn't change the fact that she is determined to slay the party!

As Drez and Shale rush into the cathedral, though, Sinjin has a flash of insight -- that "old friend" mentally calling to him is *Demonbane*! He's already under the effects of a *fly* spell (cast before the unfortunate demise of Sachmet) and a *potion of speed*. He quickly urges his companions to wait for him, but it is too late -- their fate is already sealed. Sinjin *flies* back to the rocky grotto to search more thoroughly for his demon-slaying sword.

Drez's plan is to rush Kaliva and grab one of her three magical swords from her hands. As he runs, he is blasted with a *fireball* from a gigantic skeleton standing on one of the balconies. He leaps for Kaliva -- and falls to the floor as the *projected image* of her disappears! He gets up, and Shale joins him, and they face down the real Kaliva as she emerges from her lair farther back in the cathedral.

Shale's and Drez's last minute alive is not a pleasant one. Drez is hit by one of Kaliva's swords, one that can move at a blinding speed. Then both he and Shale are blasted by two more *fireballs* from the gigantic skeletons. Shale is instantly killed, but Drez is still partially alive. He tries to grab a sword from Kaliva's clutches, but fails, and is struck down by her.

In the meantime, Sinjin has arrived in the grotto and has found a secret passageway covered by an *illusionary wall*. Beyond it is a glass pillar, inside of which is *Demonbane*. Sinjin tries magical fire and brute force to smash the pillar, and though it looks like glass, it is as strong as steel.

As he works to free his sword, he hears the sound of two things being thrown on the ground behind him. He whirls around in time to see two severed heads -- those of Drez and Shale -- rolling toward him from beyond the *illusionary wall*. The heads have been animated by necromantic magic and are cackling with laughter.

The *illusionary wall* disappears, and Kaliva stands in the doorway. She seems to be having a good time. Sinjin bravely challenges her to a duel if he can use *Demonbane* -- weapons only, no spells -- and Kaliva agrees. She releases *Demonbane*, and a savage battle begins.

Sinjin is still enhanced by the *potion of speed*, and so gets in as many strikes as his six-armed opponent. She hacks at him with *Devilhammer* (a baatezu-slaying sword that causes Sinjin great pain), *Midnight* (the sword the tiefling Lissian had sought), and *Flazablur* (the sword of great speed). He returns the blows only with *Demonbane*. Between his great strength and her toughness, the battle is quite even. Finally, Kaliva cheats and engulfs Sinjin in a globe of *darkness*. But despite his blindness, he lands a critical hit on Kaliva, slaying her!

The campaign concludes thus: Sinjin manages to bring the bodies of his dead and petrified friends back to the Rakasta village. Mrowr informs Sinjin that they've now discovered a way to open the portal to the Beastlands. They used a portal in the Caves of Fear to attack the troglodytes on the other island; there they found a giant beetle with a huge horn. Mrowr had had visions of this for some time, but since he didn't even know the other island existed he had no way of acquiring such an object. The beetle's horn turns out to be the key that opens the portal. Sinjin and the cat folk return to the Beastlands. It turns out that the key from the other side of the portal is one pure moment without fear. So Mrowr and his band, rather than being the cowards they thought they must be, turn out to be the bravest of all of their kind because they alone had one pure moment without fear during their rite of passage ceremony. Sinjin thanks the Rakasta for their help, and with a little more of their help makes his way from the Beastlands to Faunel on the Outlands, and from there to Sigil. With a little of the treasure he acquired from Kaliva he arranges to have Sachmet restored to flesh, and she in turn beseeches Thoth to restore life to Shale and Drez.

Thanks guys for another great campaign! Your characters aren't dead, at least not any more, so who knows -- maybe our heroes will find more adventures across the planes!

-- Eric