

Episodes 10½ to 11+: After adventure into Dervish Hold and Caves, and subsequent travels to Guardraw, Selleze, and back to Guardraw

Episode 10 ½: (After adventure on way back up to Fortress, night Monday, February 12)

Half Orc Fighter: Bouncing around he apparently regains consciousness, and his first reaction is to want to walk for himself to avoid his head banging on each step as the bear drags him along. Or something like that.

"Me know important. Make deal. Tell you and me go free, gimme that? Best now. Not later." (His knowledge of Common obviously is very limited.)

Oliver: He can tell us and then we will decide if he will go free or not. If he won't take that deal, then we will just continue with our original plan and drag him back to Guardraw

Fighter: "Them be captures. Tradesman and girl. You leave, gobblers will eat. Maybe money. Ransom. Find now. Back at camp." He points back down the steps. (By the way: this big fighter guy seems to have some orcish bloodline.)

Oliver: So what this prisoner is saying, is that the merchant and daughter from Circe are captured and being held back at their camp. Is that what I'm understanding? If so, it does seem important for the party to go rescue them. Additionally, Oliver wants to know what this group was doing in the fortress hold and why they keep coming here?

DM: When you mention the "daughter" and use the word "camp," the fighter shakes his head and says "Yes. Yes. Yes!"

As to your question about the fortress hold, he shrugs and says, "Just guard. Nasties no bother. She say." He points to the unconscious cleric.

Oliver: Got it. Sounds like we can make the deal of having the fighter bring us back to camp for the merchant and his daughter, let him go and keep the brains of the operation (the cleric) and take her back to Guardraw. One less prisoner would make the trip easier anyway

What does everyone else think?

DM: To Oliver, Yes. The guy is offering a pretty good deal, actually. He's going to be potentially difficult to manage if he wants to be.

Oliver: A trade of a probably worthless guard for a merchant and his daughter from a far-away land that will owe us a favor sounds like a good deal. By worthless, I mean that he won't have much info to further our mission. I believe our party is already too big to try and add another NPC. Or Oliver would ask if he wanted to work with us.

DM: OK. Whatever you decide concerning whether you release him or not, can I assume that you go back down into the caverns (nearby at the time) and rescue the merchant and his daughter? [**Oliver:** I would like to do that.]

DM: Rescuing the merchant and daughter should be an automatic. You all do it. They are in the dead-end passageway south of the pool cavern. You would also find some various minor items

from the bad guy party since they were using that for storage - things like tents, packs, rations, spare ammunition, some stolen weapons, and like stuff. (Misc. adventure gear worth ~15 gp.

DM: The merchant speaks, “I am very grateful for your rescue of us this day. I regret that I have no reward or even resources by which I might travel home. From what I heard, the thieves have already left with the fortune in pearls that I was carrying. These several remained to attempt to obtain a ransom for us. They did not expect an answer for several more days.”

The girl speaks briefly, but in a language you do not understand. You would suppose she might be fifteen, old enough to be a woman, but still of obvious youth.

“My daughter gives her thanks as well,” the merchant says. “Are we somewhere near that big fortress, the place called ‘Dervish’?” he asks.

“Yes, right under the fortress, in fact,” Veylann replies. “Come. If you can walk, we will return there.”

Both the merchant and his daughter can walk, but they are unsteady from being tied up and immobile for some days. They had apparently not been abused. Someone, Doil? hoisted the body of the evil cleric or the thief and carried them with the rest of the party back up the steps.

The half orc fighter says, “I go? My sword?”

Oliver: Oliver tells the half orc that he may go, but the sword wasn't part of the deal. He will give him a dagger (non mw) and his studded leather armor back, so he's not defenseless on his way out. If he's as big he sounds to be, he should be fine.

DM: When you get back to the door to the basement store room of the tower, the door was closed and barred. A guardsman on watch there in the room responds to your pounding and removes the shoring and opens the door for you.

What are these? He asks, upon seeing the two bodies being carried (possibly three if you still have the half orc fighter) and the two freed prisoners.

“You need to go see the Captain!” he tells you.

It does happen to still be night. Still before midnight. The sergeant keeping watch in Headquarters (ground floor) is reluctant to disturb Captain Wishhook. “It can wait until morning,” he says.

Morning of Tuesday, February 13th: Bad weather – rain and wind from the northeast.

The merchant says his name is Thizmour. Of the bandits, he says there was a gang of a dozen or so, including the four who held them prisoner in the caverns, and a handful of gnolls. A few of the bandits had left to carry a message to a contact in Selleze, named Stradmour. He is the man to whom Merchant Thizmour had been traveling, both with a cargo of pearls, and his even more precious daughter, expecting that an arrangement for marriage would be fulfilled.

At that point the daughter says something, and Merchant Thizmour “translates,” saying, “My daughter says she is unenthusiastic about that marriage, and merely wants to go home.” The two of them, father and daughter, have a short conversation in a foreign tongue, at the end of which, Thizmour says, “She says that without a dowry, I can expect no help from Stradmour. But, I have done business with Stradmour before. He will surely accept, pending a return, to make good what had been lost to these thieves. Perhaps I may obtain a loan from you so that I can afford suitable accommodations as we travel on to Selleze. 100 of your Sovereigns, perhaps. I will repay in the future with whatever interest you choose, once I have reached Selleze.”

Melodeous: Melodious wants to get the girl back home safely. I think the group can spare 100 Sovereigns to help them travel. I wanna do an insight check to try and detect any deception.

[**DM:** I'm assuming on Thizmour.]

Oliver: Oliver wants to make a point of telling the sergeant that the party found entry into the Hold through the caverns underneath, and the secret passage connecting them. We have prisoners that we found inside the hold. If the Captain doesn't wish to see them tonight, then we will need somewhere secure to keep them until he does. I'm sure he will have questions.

I don't know if we have 100 sovereigns yet to loan him, but Oliver agrees that we can provide that once the items we have found and don't want are sold.

It sounds like the merchant is heading to Selleze, and Oliver obviously has interest in going there himself, once we make it back to Guardraw with the prisoners and collect our reward for getting to Orctown and back. Maybe we can offer to travel with the merchant once we've concluded our business in Guardraw. [To the rest of the party] What do yall think?

DM: Merchant Thizmour is delighted that you might be willing to escort him to Selleze. He will do his best to see that you are well rewarded. If you will do that, he doesn't need 100 right now. Ten or twelve maybe, and he will see if the Merchant Guild contact in either Guardraw or Tonstol will advance some money to help him the rest of the way. The charge for a room at Dervish is a ridiculous 5 Sovereigns. Normally that would be a trivial annoyance not worthy of notice, but under present circumstances... (Obviously he's planning to spend the night in the room with his daughter.)

The big half orc fighter says, "Fair. You get the bodies, I get gone." (He does. Looks like he's headed toward the cave exit.)

The sergeant says, "Keep them with you in the store room until morning. When my relief sees the Captain, he'll tell him you people want to see him, and you have some prisoners."

Melodious, I'm going to make a d20 Insight check for you (rather than wait for the back and forth; hope that's OK): d20=5 (+2). That's not going to do it. Your perception is that he is typically slimy for being a merchant who caters to wealthy clients. No particular reason to think he is dishonest, but he is going to try to please to get what he wants. You can tell that the daughter doesn't seem enthusiastic.

DM: FYI, the party was pretty well short of funds. If you add all the money for everybody together without taking into account future expenses, you can expect to get to Guardraw with about 120 gp. total. That's not counting what you just picked up from pilfering the three enemies you just defeated. You have about 75 gp. of loot in coins that you just collected. You don't want to be selling stuff in Dervish, or even Sundown. Guardraw is the place to sell the weapons and stuff to earn best prices. Or Selleze. If some one person lends 10 or 12 to Thizmour, that will make the bookkeeping easier. (But, it's not impossible that he will have to come back and ask for more.)

DM: Reviewing: You are already obligated to escort 4 wagons and 4 drivers with a load of ashlar to Guardraw. (And, then be paid.)

You accepted Effate into your company to help her get back to Guardraw. (She's paying her own way from her remaining resources. She hopes to get a job at the tavern when she gets there.) She's using the store room for bedding down like the rest of you.

You just acquired two prisoners (thief, cleric) that Captain Wishhook is going to refuse to accept responsibility for, telling you, "Take them to Guardraw and give them to Lord Grantt!"

You also now have, traveling with you, the merchant Thizmour and his daughter, assuming you agree to let them come with you to Guardraw and perhaps all the way to Selleze where Thizmour expects to be received well by Stradmore, who is to marry his daughter. Thizmour wants some money to pay for rooms appropriate to one of his standing.

DM: I can resolve Dervish to Guardraw ahead of time and what happens at Guardraw if you wish. Any special provisions for the prisoners? Does Thizmour receive a loan (so he can pay for lodging in Dervish, Sundown, Guardraw)?

DM: Bandit accoutrements found in camp (prices for sold in Dervish. Prices ½ nominal in Guardraw): 4 backpacks (@5s), 16 waterskins (only 4 are full; the empty ones are in a sack.)(@5 cp), 4 bedrolls(@2 sp), 2 mess kits(@5 cp), compass(@5 gp), 2 tinderboxes(@1sp), 5 flasks of oil(@4sp), hooded lantern(@12 sp), bullseye lantern(@2 gp), writing quills, bottle of ink, and scroll case with several sheets of parchment in a box(1gp together). Worth about 15 gp in Dervish all taken together. Inside the box with the paper and ink is a pearl (100 gp).

Episode 10 3/4: Tuesday, February 13 daybreak Dervish: Storm- rain & snow mix. from NE Thizmour and daughter (and prisoners?) are taken to see Capt. Wishhook. (Separately, likely.)

Oliver: When the party does talk to Wishhook, even if he isn't interested in speaking to the prisoners about what they were doing in the hold, we want to make sure we mention the secret passage that we found and hopefully they can get it barred up and secure it so its no longer usable from the cave side.

He would also like to see if they could have a couple sets of manacles to secure these prisoners about little better. We want to make a point of keeping the cleric's mouth gagged as well.

I'm sure Melodious and Oliver can help out with 10-12 gp to Thizmour.

Oliver would like to try to speak with this cleric prisoner, to see if she speaks common, or responds at all. If she does, perhaps Melodious can charm her so we can find out what she was after in the Hold?

DM: When the cleric comes to, she is determined to remain silent. You don't know how long she has been conscious. The thief also seems to be unresponsive.

Captain Wishhook was taken aback at discovery of a passage from the Hold to the Caves. "No, of course not. Surely not here. We had no idea that they were in those caves off to the west. No idea at all. We are here to serve the caravan trade on the Circe Road, not bandits that prey on our good merchants!"

Veylann asked Thizmour, "Do you recognize either of these? This cleric? This thief? Do either of them stop by, perhaps as a traveling party or convoy escort people, and lodge in the tavern or get food or supplies there?"

Merchant Thizmour said, "I never saw either of them before."

Slippa says, “The point is, they didn’t just materialize from nowhere. They came from somewhere, and have returned to sell Thizmour’s pearls to somewhere. Those that didn’t stay to collect a ransom.

Thizmour said, “The ransom plea was sent to Stradmore. In my hopes he would credit us for the extra expenses, until I can make those good. I would suppose that those going to convey the message also took the pearls to be sold in Selleze. They are quite valuable there.”

Captain Wishhook said, “I’ll send a messenger over to the tavern. We’ll see if any of the tavern staff recognize these two, the cleric and thief, that is. We could question the cleric, I suppose. Just what religion is she?” he asked. “That might give us a clue.”

[DM: Who examines the still-living body of the priestess? Slippa is willing.] Slippa will not be particularly gentle, stripping off this and that to search thoroughly. “Those bracers may well be magic,” Slippa comments, as they were removed from the cleric’s wrists. “That ring, too.” [DM: Groa takes the ring and the other necklace to here, we can suppose.]

“Well, will you look at that!” Slippa says, after retrieving a pendant, one of two. “This must be her ‘Holy Symbol.’ What god has a dog for a holy symbol, or holy animal? Or wolf, maybe.” Nobody knew. [DM: This may be when you find the other stuff she is carrying, coins too.] “There are also some symbols on this (the dog pendant), but I don’t recognize any,” Slippa says. But I may have seen some of these. Elsewhere. I want to ask in Sundown.”

To sum all of this up and conclude it, nobody of the sergeants watching the gates or the kitchen or tavern staff recognize the cleric. Some of them thought they might have seen the thief before. Maybe as a convoy guard. But, if so, not recently. “Those furtive thief types pretty much alike to me,” one of them said.

Thizmour is happy to accept a loan of 12 Sovereigns from Oliver. He uses 5 of those to rent a room in the tavern for himself and his daughter.

Tuesday, February 13: daytime: Rain & snow mix continues, not as much wind (“windy”), NE
DM: You do need to periodically let the priestess and thief somewhat loose for food and water, but I’ll assume you make a point of always having six or more present for that. She is resistant, and won’t speak, but doesn’t attack anyone. The thief likewise. But, you have the sense that they are waiting for opportunity.

Oliver’s Issue: Does the Fortress have a set of manacles? Maybe. I’ll roll high=yes. d6=4. So, yes. More than one? d6=1, no. You are given these to use as you wish.

If Melodious is going to attempt to persuade or charm the priestess, I need to know exactly how he is going about doing that. (Including help, if any.)

Oliver: I believe it was Slippa who previously mentioned that the clerics language sounded a lot like the language of the priestess' in Sundown.

I think we need to have multiple people guarding these 2 at all times. I think it’s important that their hands, feet, and mouths are bound while we travel between towns. I think that is their best opportunity to escape, and when we need to have the most eyes on them. Oliver doesn't know how loyal that fighter is to this group, or the other thief that got away, but they could have told someone, and Oliver is mentally preparing for an ambush on the road between towns. He will share that with the party and remind everyone that we don't know for sure, but the gnolls could also be working with these people, and they can attack from quite the distance away. We need to be hyper aware of our surroundings as we travel. Oliver also makes a point of discussing this out of ear shot of the prisoners.

Are the wagons we are taking back to Guarddraw covered?

DM: The wagons were not covered (ashlars don't care) but the drivers may have asked to keep the tarps needed for the trip north. I'm making a die roll for that (you want high). $d6=3$. OK: some tarps but minimal, what you'd lay flat over a wagonload of goods.

With the weather as bad as it is, none of the drivers want to set out. Sleeping under the wagons, even in the wagons under what little protection there is, is going to be miserable, and it is winter. Thizmour isn't going - he's not eager to be miserable, and he isn't going to subject his daughter to this either. She's had a bad enough time lately as it is. So, can I assume you wait a day? (That could allow another foray into the Hold but you'd be leaving the two prisoners much less guarded. Yeah, some of the guardsmen could keep an eye on them every so often.) If you do set out, you could get to Gold Mine Camp, but it would be a grueling trek. There'd be a couple of constitution rolls for exhaustion, and no "long rest."

Belfor (Outlander background, druid, observant) has the feeling that this weather isn't on the edge of getting any better.

Captain Wishhook may have a "brig" that he'd allow you to use if you don't move on down the road today. he certainly doesn't want that thief or evil cleric running loose in his fortress. $d6=2$. OK, no prison cell as such, but a more secure room that can be locked with a key. Two doors, but the other isn't used. It's in the basement level of one of the upper gate towers. (If you trust that arrangement, I'll assume you put the manacles on the cleric?)

Melodious: Yes, Melodious will try to charm the priestess, go at it from the good cop angle, tell her we just want to get her back to her people safely

Oliver: Oliver would prefer to let the weather be at least reasonable enough for Thizmour to be willing to travel, as he is worried about that ambush, and the road from dervish to Sundown is probably the most dangerous portion of road as it relates to such, so he would prefer to stick together with the merchant. We will manacle the cleric. If we have to have an extended stay in dervish, we will take Wishhook up on the bright, but Oliver feels obligated to keep watch, and hopefully taking turns with other party members. I don't think we need another delve into the Hold while trying to keep these prisoners secure. Perhaps we could persuade Thizmour to move on if the weather is going to be as bad as you've made it sound for more than a day or 2

Melodious: Yes melodious will try to charm the priestess, go at it from the good cop angle, tell her we just want to get her back to her people safely

DM: On charming the cleric: Melodious, you cast "Charm." The priestess gets a saving throw, and this is clearly an adversarial situation like combat. (With no cleric, I don't think there's anybody in the party to give "guidance.") Here goes: $d20(\text{advantage})=6!$

[**DM:** Wow. Well, that changes the script! Didn't expect that!]

It lasts for an hour. I assume that you did this after coming up from the caves, right? Or before, or after, meeting with Wishhook? So, she is friendly, and seems willing to talk, and maybe even more.

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probably the most dangerous portion of road as it relates to such, so he would prefer to stick together with the merchant. We will manacle the cleric. If we have to have an extended stay in dervish, we will take Wishhook up on the bright, but Oliver feels obligated to keep watch, and hopefully taking turns with other party members. I don't think we need another delve into the Hold while trying to keep these prisoners secure. Perhaps we could persuade Thizmour to move on if the weather is going to be as bad as you've made it sound for more than a day or 2

DM: Oliver, You can try to persuade Thizmour to go bad weather or no. And the drivers, who will probably go along if you insist.

Your passive intelligence roll indicates that ambush is actually less likely in bad weather. The nasties (at least intelligent ones) will assume you wouldn't be traveling. Of course, very intelligent ones know that and might figure that's exactly when you'd travel. I guess we need to see how Melodious does with his new girl-friend first!

Oliver: Yes we will wait for that, but Oliver is itchy about the prisoners. He doesn't like the responsibility of getting them where they need to go hanging over his head lol

Melodious: (Charm on priestess): After the caves and before meeting Wishhook.

DM: (re. priestess) So, this will be after you get a bit of rest after coming back to the store room and being told you can't see Wishhook now.

She's very friendly, and can speak Common, though not perfectly. "You're nice? Why you with these others?"

Melodious: "Ah they're good folks! Give it time"

DM (Priestess): "So, what and I do for you, sweetie? And maybe what can you do for me?"

Worth about 15 gp in Dervish taken together. [Later, all this was sold in Guarddraw, for 28 gp, 7 sp.] Inside the box with the paper and ink is a pearl (100 gp) [to treasure].

This is where the preliminary online exchange "**Episode 10³/₄**" ends, and the in-person online **Episode 11** adventure begins.

Episode 11: Early morning, Tuesday, February 13:

1. Melodious has charmed the priestess. He continues to be solicitous of her, even lending her his cloak and doing a Healing Word. Her name is Urleigh, and she is from the Kingdom of the Sun. She is a priestess of the god Seth, the leader. Others of the party left to go to Selleze to sell the 200 or so pearls from the merchant and perhaps extract a ransom for the merchant's release. The attack on the merchant was really an opportunity that couldn't be missed. The others were god of trickery, disasters and destruction. Asked why she is here, she explains that it is her job to manage the undead coming into the Hold. She answered to a high priest who is elsewhere, and his purposes, and when he might launch his undead on an attack, are not known to her. The thief Gohard (there in the room bound up Lydite and Bulltow. She happened to mention that she came through a portal. Getting to it required a long journey through the barren waste and then searching in from the coast. It was hard to find because someone cut down all of the trees.

While she was talking, she noticed that she was not wearing her ring or "the necklace." Then, "Where is my Holy Symbol!?" Melodious suggested it had fallen when she had been in the camp down below. Her feet were untied so she could walk, and went with the party back down into the caverns where the camp had been. She and the party searched around, of course not finding it.

After a bit of this, the Charm spell wore off, and she suddenly started running toward the exit of the cavern toward the entrance despite her arms still being in manacles. Oliver was alert and shot her down with his crossbow. She was stabilized, and carried back up to the store room to wait with the party for the chance to talk to Captain Wishhook.

The priestess is of somewhat darker than usual skin with the eastern appearance typical of the kingdom of the Sun. She wears a semi-translucent gauzy outfit somewhat like a modern pants-suit with baggy sleeves and pants, and wears a heavy cloak over that for warmth as well as normal boots suitable for rough going and a decorated wide belt.

2. The party talks to Captain Wishhook, who insists that he does not want the captives, and demands they be sent to Guardraw. The party decides to remain in Dervish the rest of the day (and in doing so gets a "long rest" as well as "training.")

Wednesday, February 14: breeze and partly cloudy. The party leaves in morning or sometime before noon. Travel at 2½ mph by wagon, so 8 hours = 20 miles, to Gold Mine Camp

Thursday, February 15: storm again, snow. Push through to get to Sundown.

3. **In Sundown:** When the party got to Sundown, Slippa went to see Captain Trudue at the Mayor's Residence. Others too, including Merchant Thizmour as well as his daughter.

Captain Trudue is very pleased to find that the party had rescued the captured merchant, and offers to give Thizmour some funds, 20 Sovereigns, to help him get to Selleze. Thizmour and his daughter then leave to go to the tavern, where they take a room.

That left the issue of the bound evil priestess. Slippa and others described the spellcasting employed against the party. This priestess was a major danger, even tied up

this way. She was no doubt conscious, and even while bound might be able to work magic. Slippa suggests that the priestess especially be put somewhere secure, under guard, while the situation was discussed. Trudue accepts that. Priestess and thief were put in the stable, tied up, guarded.

“Here’s the interesting part,” says Slippa. “This seems to be her holy symbol. None of us has any idea what the face of a dog might mean. But, look at these symbols here. They seem vaguely familiar.”

Trudue agreed. He sent the messenger girl to get a Priest Limnis and Father Benaiah.

Limnis is not of the Way of the Cross. He wore peculiar bright yellow, or gold, robes. Hastily put on. He had a sash, several pieces of jewelry, and a holy symbol that might represent the Sun. Limnis said he wasn’t familiar with the symbols, and couldn’t read the writing, but maybe Priest Calypso could. He had made a point of studying the ancient writings more. So, the messenger girl was sent to fetch Calypso. Limnis studied the piece without saying more.

Father Benaiah came in. “What is this about an evil priestess?” he asked.

The party explained. Slippa then asked Limnis, “May I have that? I’d like to show this to Father Benaiah.”

“It’s not his. His religion. It is of the Sun. I don’t know why, but it is,” Limnis protested, holding the symbol and its chain tightly. “He can’t have it.”

Trudue said, “Let’s wait. I think we will find Priest Calypso to be more reasonable.”

“This may be a danger,” Father Benaiah says. “Some of these evil unholy symbols are magic. They can pervert those that hold them.” He seems willing to be patient though, while Limnis eyed him suspiciously.

Calypso eventually came in. He seemed to be in a good mood, as if he had won a large bet and followed that with a celebration in the tavern. “A mysterious treasure, I hear!” he said. “Priest Limnis, may I see that?”

Limnis reluctantly surrendered it.

After a brief look, I heard Calypso say under his breath, “Oh my! My heavens!”

“What is it?” Benaiah demanded.

Calypso continued to examine it for a moment, then turned to display it in his palm, with the dog face up and showing. “It is the holy symbol of Seth,” he said. “The god of trickery, disasters, and destruction.” Pausing, he asked, “By what fell circumstances came this into our midst?”

The story is repeated. “Do you want to see her? The priestess?” someone asked.

“She’s alive? No! I am content to merely see this. Not content, I mean.

Troubled. I don’t doubt that she is dangerous, dangerous beyond my ability to comprehend. You see, we here, those of us of the Old Priesthood, worship Ra, the Sun god. But the full pantheon of our religion from antiquity includes numerous other gods. They have not regularly been honored, not by us here. We have, nevertheless, never been troubled by them. This god Seth is one of them. An evil god of troubles and trickery and deceit. I have never, in my whole life, encountered a worshiper of Seth. The dog representation would make this identification a wild guess, but these symbols here confirm it. “Belonging to Seth,” it reads. There can be no doubt.

“If there is this one priestess of Seth, who has been found here, rather, at Dervish, must there not be others? And if others, also followers?” Father Benaiah asked.

Calypso shrugs. “It’s hard to imagine even one. Yet, here is the evidence. How can there be just one? You are right. Yet, where have they been until now? This is most troubling. I have no answer. I am just a scholar of old documents, trying to ensure that our practices here are consistent with traditions handed down. I wouldn’t know how this might be.”

Limnis said, “Now, give me that back!”

“Why do you want it?” Calypso asked. “Should it not be destroyed?”

“It’s of our faith. Our faith in a greater sense. I insist.”

Calypso reluctantly handed it over.

“Wait a minute. I want to check that for Evil,” Father Benaiah said.

“Of course it’s going to be evil!” Calypso and Limnis both said that at the same time. Then looked at each other somewhat in surprise.

“How about a check for magic?” Trudue said. “Wouldn’t that be what we are worried about? Can one of you do that?”

Father Benaiah said that he could prepare to do a “Detect Evil” for the morrow.

So, it seems that the party would have to wait for the next day.

Father Benaiah said, “I think it is dangerous to leave this symbol, for the night, in possession of a cleric. Any cleric. I suggest you hold it, Captain Trudue. Locked up somewhere secure, not on your person.

Priest Limnis was most unhappy with that, but Calypso talked him into accepting that, “at least, just for tonight.”

The party perhaps shows the various other items taken from the priestess and thief or from the others. Trudue said he had seen that sword (from the half orc) before. In fact, it had been in the possession of a big half orc convoy guard, several months ago, he thought. The half orc looked like he could be big trouble, so Trudue took special note of him. None of the other items were particularly identifiable.

“So, what are you going to do with the priestess?” Captain Trudue asks. “You can’t leave her here. You simply can’t. We cannot take responsibility for her.”

Party: “We’ll take her to Guardraw and give her to Lord Grantt. She can be his problem. If he doesn’t take her, turn her loose. What else? Not going to just murder her.”

“I think she should go to the Bishop. See what he deems appropriate to do with her,” Father Benaiah says.

The agreement eventually was: Offer her to Lord Grantt. If he doesn’t take her, she goes to the Bishop. If he doesn’t want her, turn her loose in Selleze.”

“No! Not Selleze!” Captain Trudue exclaimed. “Why, she will probably find Sun worshipers, and maybe more of her kind there! Or, think of what she might do to help the thief guilds. Or any evil endeavor. There’s plenty of those in Selleze. Why, half the population in Sundown is from Selleze, one way or another trying to escape the evil that lurks there. It would be better to turn her loose in Tonsol, at least several days away, then Selleze.”

“Tonsol, then, We’ll let the Bishop know that, too.”

That was pretty much the end of the meeting. Arrangements were made to keep a guard over the priestess throughout the night.

4. **Friday, February 16:** windy but clear. still NE wind. The party traveled on to Dragon View Camp, with the 4 wagons, mules, drivers, Effate, Thizmour, his daughter, and the thief and priestess carefully bound and silenced.

On **Saturday, February 17:** rain storm. The party continued to Guardraw, arriving after dark due to the nasty weather.

5. **In Guardraw:** Night of February 17 The party trooped over to Guard Headquarters carrying the still-bound priestess and thief. Merchant Thizmour and his daughter came too. (The drivers and wagons continued to the tavern., as did Effate. Sergeant Hood right away sent for Lieutenant Dipstick, who appeared quickly. “What is all this about?” he asked.

You end up telling the story several times. The merchant being attacked and taken along with his daughter and the bodyguard killed. How the driver reached Sundown and the party happened to come to Dervish. That, at Dervish, the party had found, underground, some of the bandits, had rescued the merchant and daughters, and captured these two bandits. The priestess turned out to be a pagan priestess to a Sunnite god of destruction and mischief, capable of some pretty strong magic. She was part of an enemy plan to stock the Hold at Dervish with undead for a later attack, the undead being supplied through a portal from the Kingdom of the Sun. The issue at hand was, what is to be done with her? She’s complicit in the death of the bodyguard and the theft of goods from the merchant, who with his daughter was being held for ransom. She is obviously dangerous, and has refused to speak, except briefly when charmed.

Lieutenant Dipstick said, “This is serious. It’s above me, what should be done. Captain Heinrich needs to decide. So, Captain Heinrich was sent for, and after a while appeared. You go through the story again. “This is a judicial matter, Happened in or near Dervish, eh? That’s outside my jurisdiction. Mister Urtles is going to have to decide what’s to be done.”

So, all trooped over to Lord Grantt’s Keep. On the way Lieutenant Dipstick happened to mention that Lord Grantt was not in Guardraw, having needed to go to Aahfundit. Mister Urtles normally handles most important matters anyway, so Lord Grantt needn’t be bothered. The party eventually found themselves in what amounted to a meeting room, though likely used for dining as well, on the first floor of the keep. Mister Urtles and a scribe were there, as well as the Captain Heinrich, Lieutenant Dipstick, Sergeant Hood, and four guardsmen who had carried the prisoners over. There was of course your party, plus the merchant and his daughter. Quite a large assembly. “What’s all this about?” Urtles asked. Haven’t we got troubles enough?”

“I judged that this was a matter of importance, but outside my authority,” Captain Heinrich responded. “Hence, it must be a matter for your consideration. If I may allow these people the opportunity to explain?”

“Go ahead,” Urtles said.

You go through the story again. When you finish, Urtles asked, “Merchant Thizmour, is it? Are you sure that these assailants were not nomads?”

“They did not dress in the matter of nomads, had no horses, and used crossbows. Their company included half orcs and gnolls. So, no, they were not nomads,” he answered.

Urtles says, “They could have been nomads pretending to be others.”

Someone says “The half orc in the fighting was recognized by a particular masterwork two handed sword. Hardly a nomad weapon.” “This priestess, also among those holding the prisoners, does not look like a nomad, and was bearing a holy symbol of Sunnite origin, a deity of deceit and destruction, whose worship among the nomads is unknown.”

“Oh, all right, I’ll accept that they were not nomads,” Urtles conceded. I can’t imagine who they might be, then. There are no bandit gangs south of Orctown along the Circe Road.”

Right then the door swung open, and in swept a rather striking woman with a somewhat imperious manner. “What is all this about, Urtles?” she asked.

Urtles stood and uttered, “My Lady,” and bowed his head briefly. “It seems there was a robbery near Dervish, and this priestess was among the robbers. She’s been brought to us.”

(Lady Aliathah, Lord Grantt’s wife, you figure. Who else?)

Urtles gestured toward the party. “I’ll let them explain.”

Lady Aliathah looked at the party and asked, “What is this?”

The party again reviews what had happened, the finding the bandits and prisoners, the revelation about the Seth holy symbol at Sundown, and the decision to present the matter to Lord Grantt. If he would not decide, the priestess could be taken to the Bishop.

“What does she have to say for herself?” Lady Aliathah asks.

Urtles points out that the prisoner, the priestess, had not had opportunity to speak, what with being bound and gagged, and held blindfolded. The thief was similarly bound and had manacles on him as well.

“Undo the bonds on her, and the rest of that,” Lady Aliathah commands. The woman couldn’t stand up, and was allowed to take a chair dragged over from a corner.

“Speak!” commanded Aliathah.

The woman sat there, staring back at Lady Aliathah, and remained silent.

“Do you understand that I can command you to be freed? Or held for a sentence of death commanded by Lord Grantt? You defy me, even though your words might set you free?”

The priestess remains silent with a determined defiance.

Aliathah turned to Urtles. “So, complicit in murder, kidnapping for ransom, which itself threatens death, theft of goods from a merchant conducting legitimate business, and now defiance in court. Yes, I think that’s worthy of death. That’s not even considering membership in a cult dedicated to evil and destruction. Have we a suitable cell where we can be very sure she can be held safely until Lord Grantt returns?”

“We might forward her to the Bishop,” Urtles suggested.

“Urtles, this is our responsibility. The civil offenses are enough. We are charged with the safety and conduct of business along the Circe Road. I don’t care about the religion angle. I doubt Lord Grantt will either. If the Bishop wants to come see her, we can tell him where she is.”

“Perhaps we can get a Divination on whether this is a wise?” asks Urtles.

“Act first. Lock her up. You can restore the blindfold, gag, and bound hands. I understand about that. No telling what a cleric of a destruction god might do. Keep a tight watch. Just make sure she doesn’t die on us before Lord Grantt gets back. Once that’s done, sure, go ahead and get a divination, if you think that’s worth 25 gold. Let me

know when all that's done. I have other business to take care of." Lady Aliathah sweeps out of the room, closing the door behind her.

Urtles turned to Captain Heinrich. "Is anybody in the secure solitary cell?"

Captain Heinrich turned to Lieutenant Dipstick. "Do we have anybody in the maximum cell currently?"

Lieutenant Dipstick turned to Sergeant Hood, "Is that cell open, or occupied?"

Sergeant Hood answered, "It's open at the moment, Lieutenant."

Dipstick replied to Captain Heinrich, "Available, sir."

Captain Heinrich turned to Urtles, "Mister Urtles, the cell requested is open, sir."

"Then make it so, as Lady Aliatha declared," Urtles said. "You are dismissed."

Everybody started out of the room, including the priestess, who rose and seemed to try to blend into the crowd. She was lot to sight for a moment. Then, there she was, near the wall. She turned, waved at everybody and smiled, thumbed her nose, and then stepped right into the wall and was gone. The two guardsmen rushed over to the wall, and found it solid. Urtles stood up and walked over, confirming that, yes, it was a solid wall.

The party rushed out into the hallway. Seeing nobody, at the front door somebody asked the guard there if someone had passed that way. Nobody had, not recently. Others follow from the room and more guards are summoned. To make a long story short, the priestess had literally disappeared. Nobody found her, and a search of the town by the guard that evening was futile as well. Not just that, while the search was going on for the priestess, the thief must have been forgotten, and somehow disappeared from the conference room as well.

During the town search, which was limited to outside, the party was all back over at the tavern. There were a lot of people in town, of course, with it being a Saturday night. So even late in the evening, which this now was, there were still lots of people there. The Saturday night party entertainment had moved on to the strip acts conclusion. Still, the party managed to find a place where all nine crowded in around a small table.

Effate said she was going to remain in Guardraw and see if she could get work as a singer with the entertainment girls. From what she had seen and heard, she thought she ought to be helpful here. She hoped that she wouldn't have to do things like that strip act though.

Note: Oliver's 12gp. loan to Thizmour that's repaid later; I'm leaving it off the books.

6. **Sunday, Feb 18** light breeze, clear – Travel to Rivendown:

Thizmour was told, "We would like to travel fast, and get to Rivendown. That's about twice the distance per day than the wagons made. Are you and your daughter prepared for that?"

"I can walk," he said. "She can too. But can you not buy horses for us?"

"No, I can't," he was told. (It wouldn't have been just horses, of course, but also saddles, saddle bags, feed, and all the complexities.)

Merchant Thizmur could hike probably as well as any of the party, but the daughter was slow, and tired easily. In effect, she set the pace for our whole company. It took four hours to get just the ten miles to Tonstol, which the party passed through about noon.

For the first time, daughter spoke, in heavily accented Common, “Can’t we just stay here in this town tonight?”

“No,” Doil answered. “If we can’t get to Rivendown today, we must get at least half way. We are behind schedule. We won’t be able to get to Wagonstop at this pace. So, camping tonight. With no prepared shelter. In goblin infested woods.”

The girl’s father talked to her for a moment in what must have been the tongue of Circe. Apparently he was admonishing her to continue, and do so energetically.

We did manage to get to Wagonstop, about twenty miles in all. The pace gradually slowed. Rivendell was only another several miles, but we stopped.

Wagonstop is rather like Dervish. There’s only one inn, and the prices are likewise high, five gold per night for a room. They do have a men’s bunkroom, but bunks there rent for 15 sp. per night, triple the usual rate. This was going to be an expensive night.

Thizmour was shocked at the prices. “To the Abyssal Conjunction with this!” he said. “We must just keep going.”

“I just can’t go on,” the daughter pleaded, using Common.

“I’ll carry her. Like a sack, over my shoulder,” Doil said, rather disgusted at this.

“That would be undignified,” Merchant Thizmour complained.

“Yep. It would,” Slippa agreed. “Maybe she can walk after all.”

After a rest at Wagonstop, and rations, the Sun was starting to set. The party continued on, and got to Rivendown in a bit over three hours. It was getting dark when they arrived, and we were all very tired when they got to The Mad Cow tavern. That was an inn with bunkroom accommodations at the ½ gp. rate that was most common and reasonable. Party members were able to get a helping of stew, and in the morning some bread with honey would be served for breakfast.

Merchant Thizmour protested that his daughter should not have to sleep in the women’s bunkroom.

Room would cost three gold. Slippa commented, “Besides, you sleeping with your daughter, I mean, people notice. What do you suppose they are thinking? It would be better for you not to share a room with her. That may be the custom in Circe. I don’t know what fathers and daughters do in Circe. But here, it’s frowned on.”

Merchant Thizmour seemed to feel insulted, but then had to concede, “Had I my own resources, she would have a private room with her maid. And, I would share one with our bodyguard.”

Veylann, nearby, asked, “She had a maid? What happened to her maid?”

“She ran away in Orctown,” Thizmour said.

“Did she have her own money? What would she do in Orctown?” Slippa asked.

“How would I know?” Thizmour replied with some irritation. “She was a slave. Of course she wouldn’t have her own money. I filed a report, but quite honestly, I didn’t see that we really needed her. We could procure another when we got to Guardraw, I assumed.”

Slippa turned to Oliver and Melodious. “So, that’s likely how the bandits found out about Merchant Thizmour and his pearls,” she said. “The maid probably got, what, maybe ten gold for that information? Enough to get her to Gildegulch eventually. Or, maybe she stayed on in Orctown and found work.”

Mercahnt Thizmour was surprised. “Why, that never occurred to me!” he said. “I think you are perhaps right about that. I’ve been asking myself, ‘How would they have known?’ That must be the answer.”

7. **Travel on to Selleze:**

Monday, Feb 19 storm, stay in Rivendown (at the Mad Cow) Training.

Tuesday, Feb 20 storm, stay in Rivendown (at the Mad Cow) Training.

Oliver (?) privately explained to Merchant Thizmour, “Partweigh is twenty four miles from here. If we can keep up a good normal pace, we can get there without having to do what we did on the way here.” He could explain that to his daughter.

Wednesday, Feb 21 breeze, travel to Partweigh

Thursday, Feb 22 windy, travel to Selleze

Veylann suggested the party stay at the “Wagon’s Rest.” It was a tavern and inn that catered particularly to traveling merchants. Importantly, it was very near the north gate by which the party was entering. It had both men’s and women’s bunkrooms, both fairly large, for the merchants’ drivers and guards mostly. Yes, merchants of consequence and their kin never used mere bunkrooms, at Thizmour commented. But the party did. They would all need the night’s rest, then accompany Merchant Thizmour and his daughter to see his friend Stradmore.

8. **Friday, Feb 23 Wind and rain;** In Selleze.

The party was in Selleze primarily to bring Merchant Thizmour of Circe and his daughter to meet Master Gemsmith Stradmore. Their intention had been to deliver a cargo of pearls as well as Thizmour’s daughter for marriage. The merchant’s trip was interrupted by bandits. But the party had rescued them, and had brought them with them from Dervish. Merchant Thizmour expected his friend and associate Stradmore would help him until he could return to Circe.

Both Slippa and Veylann knew where Stradmore’s was. Slippa was impressed that we should be bringing someone to a very important and wealthy personage of Selleze. Of course, this took the party into the wealthy quarter, where a number of guards eyed them suspiciously. One asked where we were going, and then whether we knew how to find Stradmore’s. Of course, the happy answer was “Yes.”

There were actually two buildings. One was a residence, a great manor house. The other was a well presented building that had a more utilitarian design, though with ornamentation to announce its importance. That was marked as Stradmore’s Gems and Jewelry. Thizmour said we should call at the residence first.

A servant answered the door. In response to Merchant Thizmour’s inquiry, the servant formally replied, “Guildmaster Stradmore is not ‘in,’ sir.”

“When might he be in, please,” Thizmour asked.

The servant’s response was, “I really couldn’t say, sir.”

“Might he be at his business?” Thizmour continued.

“I really couldn’t say, sir,” was the only response.

“Very well, then. I thank you. I shall inquire at his business,” Merchant Thizmour said.

The party walked over to the business where another servant in different livery answered the door. Again, Thizmour introduced himself, and asked about Guildmaster Stradmore.

“I am sorry, sir, but I regret to say that the Guildmaster is not in.”

Merchant Thizmour kept his composure and didn't let his irritation show.

“Would you please tell me when he will be in?” he asked.

“I really couldn't say, sir,” the doorman replied.

“May I at least leave a message for him?” Thizmour inquired.

“Certainly, sir. Guildmaster Stradmore will respond appropriately at his earliest convenience. Do you have paper and perhaps a quill and ink?”

Thizmour had to admit that he did not.

“Then, sir, if you, and you alone, will step inside, there is a small desk and writing materials here for such purpose. Your note will be forwarded as we have been directed.”

I could hear Thizmour, just inside the door, ask, “And, may I ask, when might this reach the Guildmaster?”

The predictable answer was, “I really couldn't say, sir.”

Well, that ended the business. All returned to the Wagon's Rest. Thizmour decided to spend a bit of his remaining money for a private room for him and his daughter. That would be more appropriate for one of his station, should Stradmore send someone to find him here. His daughter was a bit upset at not having had a chance to properly bathe and wash her only set of clothes for a while. The two of them must have been doing that kind of thing the rest of the day.

The party had business too. The first stop was at Bangalore's arms and armor. This was a big establishment that dealt in all sorts of things in this line of business. An evaluation of the half orc's masterwork greatsword was given, and some other items to be sold. The workman doing the evaluation seemed to know what he was doing, and expressed no surprise at any of what was showed to him. “Good greatsword. That's 175. Those longbows, dwarven made, but that's an unfamiliar mark. Never seen one of those. 25 each, 300 for the six. Those morningstars are ordinary and rough. Two each. That all?” It was

The party met in order to discuss the disposition of the treasure. (That's going to be listed separately later.) The money and items were distributed.

The magic Necklace of Fertility was be sold, at a price that included the merchant's costs of having it identified. Once it was determined what it was, nobody in the party considered retaining it. The magic shop owner said that the usual clients for such a device were nobility anxious to ensure an heir. Other miscellaneous items from the bandits' camp were sold either earlier at Guarddraw or here.

With that, our main business in town was done. One last issue: we still had the priestess's holy symbol. What was to be done with that? Slippa suggested that the Church might pay to take it out of circulation, or maybe give the party money for having found it and given it to them to be destroyed.

As it happened, no messenger came for Thizmour. Thizmour and his daughter came down to the common room also that evening. They were not in a jovial mood, understandably, with their situation remaining ambiguous. Thizmour told us that, if he did not hear from Stradmore in the morning sometime, he would seek an audience with Guildmaster Tornson, Head of the Merchants' Guild. Veylann knew where he was, too.

9. **Saturday, Feb 24 Rainstorm** In Selleze.

Merchant Thizmour waited until noon to see if he would receive any communication from Stradmore. He didn't.

Thizmour told the party, "I'm going to see Guildmaster Tomson. He's the Merchant's Guild master. If I understand rightly, he'd be in a position of power above Stradmore. I'm a member of the Merchants' Guild of Circe. Surely he will treat me with some courtesy and consideration." He asked the party to accompany him, perhaps as a way of helping indicate his importance. Of course, the party did so, all seven of them. His daughter stayed at the tavern.

At the Guildhall, and Merchant Thizmour did gain admission. The party was not invited in, so they more or less lounged in the area. That got some suspicious attention from some guards, but it was explained that the party were escorts for a merchant from Circe visiting Guildmaster Tomson. They didn't give any trouble after that.

Soon Thizmour emerged. "We are going to see Guildmaster Gamma," he said. He's the master of the Gemcutter's Guild. He doesn't deal in pearls, of course, but he works closely with Guildmaster Stradmore, and may be of help." By this, it could be assumed that Tomson had not been very helpful, but had deflected Thizmour to another lesser authority. The party followed to Gamma's mansion. Here, after Thizmour entered, a servant beckoned the party to enter. They were conducted to a lounge and were given tea and other inexpensive beverages and small cakes while waiting.

Eventually Merchant Thizmour came into the room and said, "We can go now." He didn't say anything the whole way back. At the Wagon's Rest, Thizmour asked if we could meet in his room. Once there, he told us that he had not gotten much of any help from Tomson except a referral to Gamma. Gamma said he would check on some things and contact him in the morning. No, tomorrow was Sunday. The morning after next. He hoped that would be the case. Gamma seemed genuinely concerned about the robbery and the general situation. If word didn't come back, then, he was ready to leave Selleze and make his way back to Circe as best he could. Once he got to Orctown, he was confident that he could obtain a loan from the Circe representative that was supposed to be there.

So, the party was going to be in Selleze another two nights.

Sunday, February 25th: snow and wind (Good day to find a cleric. Nothing happening.)

10. **Monday, February 26th: rain and wind:** In Selleze

That morning Merchant Thizmour received a message from Guildmaster Stradmore, asking that he meet with him at Stradmore's residence. The party escorted him there. Thizmour was conducted in, and the party was left to wait outside. The daughter remained at the Wagon's Rest. Apparently she wasn't invited. That wasn't a good sign. The meeting was not a long one. When Thizmour came out, he was furious.

"We are going to see Guildmaster Gamma," he said. "I'll tell you about it later."

In silence we went to Gamma's place, not far away. Again Thizmour was received. Unlike our last visit here, the rest of us again waited outside. He was in there longer than he had been at Stradmore's. And he was no longer so angry when he emerged.

"We need to go to a place called, "The Duchess's Jewels," he said. "Seems an unlikely name. Does someone know where that is?"

Veylann did, though he expressed surprise. “It’s not in this district,” he said. “It’s near the Naked Duchess. In that quarter.” So, we followed as he directed, until we came into what obviously was not one of the better parts of town. There it was, “The Naked Duchess,” obviously a house of prostitution. Nearby, indeed, was a shop labeled, “The Duchess’s Jewels.”

Merchant Thizmour didn’t look happy. But he withdrew a sealed letter and went and entered the place, the door apparently not being locked. We all wait outside. Slippa said, “If you don’t mind, please sort of bunch up so that, well, I had some enemies when I left Selleze, and I wouldn’t want to be recognized. Not that it’s likely.”

Veylann commented that he left a few enemies behind here too, and had already been doing his best to appear nondescript. So, the party sort of formed a ring discussing this and that among each other, as Slippa tried to stay small and out of sight. The party did get odd glances. A guardsman eyed us suspiciously, but then moved on.

Thizmour eventually emerged. He looked more satisfied than before. He said, “I think I have a satisfactory understanding. Gamma was kind enough to make a small loan that should help me get to Orctown. This unlikely shop seems to be a satisfactory destination for selling my pearls in the future. Now, if you deem it possible, I would very much like to leave this besotted city. If we could get to Partweigh today...”

Getting to Partweigh today was no longer possible, so the party stayed at Wagon’s rest another night. Thizmour stayed mostly silent, but said, “I’ll explain about all this once we are well away from here,” Thizmour told us.

11. **Tuesday Feb 27: cloudy, breeze – Returning from Selleze**

About half way to Partweigh the party stopped in a roadside inn for a short rest. There was almost nobody there, so the party found a table where there would not be any ears nearby.

Merchant Thizmour told what happened at Stadmore’s. “Apparently the bandits made a ransom demand, and he made a minimal payment. I say ‘minimal,’ in that the bandits demanded a quite unreasonable price to deliver me and my daughter in ‘good’ condition. He was unwilling to pay that. He didn’t see how I could have been delivered to him by the bandits so soon, and in so much better condition than expected. In fact, he accused me of colluding with the bandits! He said I was either a false representation and not the real Merchant Thizmour, or was part of a conspiracy. Not only would he not help me, but he had no interest in my daughter, and desired no further business with me. He would not even pay me a balance still due from a previous shipment, that I had not carried personally. I told him that I hoped jackals would fornicate on his mother’s grave. There may be something stronger I could have said had I better command of what you call the ‘Common Tongue.’ But he apparently understood, and I removed myself from his presence, and peed on his doorstep on the way out.”

Veylann whistled.

“I think he understood you,” Slippa commented. “There is an expression in Common, but yours is more colorful.” She giggled a bit.

“I went to see Gamma. He had been quite helpful. It was his doing that I had the chance to meet Stradmore at all. Gamma gave me a loan which should help us get to Orctown. Once there I think I’ll be able to get help from the Circe Embassy. They know who I am. Gamma also said that he knew a certain man who trafficked in gems and

jewelry who would likely be a willing buyer of my pearls, should I continue to participate in the Trade. Of course, I make a living selling pearls, so this was most important. I had a good discussion with Whitehead. We reached an agreement on price, payment methods, and expectations for delivery. Not as good as the arrangement I thought I had with Stradmore's, I'll admit. But, sufficient. At least in the short run. I must admit that I'll have to look seriously at alternatives to the Circe Road, though. I can't afford another disaster like this trip."

The daughter spoke. "I am very happy to be going home," she said. "I do not like Selleze. I do not believe I would have liked this Stradmore."

Thizmour looked at the rest of the party. "I will say now, and sincerely mean it, that you people have helped me greatly. Both getting here and being with me as I made these visits. Without your presence escorting me, I don't think I would have been taken seriously, even by Guildmaster Gamma. You were noticed. I will find some way to give you recompense once I am back in Circe, and in command of my own resources again."

His daughter then said, "I say thank you as well. You have been very kind."

The party managed to make it all the way to Partweight that night. Effate was there! She was greeted enthusiastically. But, why was she here?

"I was dismissed from The Guardraw Tavern," she said. "I suppose my singing could have been better, but I think maybe I wasn't accommodating enough with some clients. I'm not going back there. I'm going to Selleze for now, but then maybe Aahfundit. I know I wouldn't find things so much better in Selleze. But I sold that necklace for a good price, and can afford, now, to look for the right situation." She did say that she had no interest in being an "adventurer," and really did think she had the talent to be a performer, and was pursuing that.

12. Continued travel to Guardraw:

Wednesday February 28th: windy to Rivendown

Thursday March 1st: storm stay in Rivendown

Friday March 2nd: light breeze: To Tonsol

The party got to Tonsol The following day they had an easy march to Guardraw.

Saturday, March 3rd: To Guardraw. Party for Saturday night. Anticipation of the Equinox coming up.

In Guardraw, I rather expected to see Fargo. I didn't. Thizmour asked if we would be willing to go with him as escorts as far as Orctown. He figured he could get other escorts there. There was no convoy preparing to leave Guardraw northbound, and that would have been slower anyway. We all talked about it.

Expenses, Payments Dervish to Selleze and back to Guardraw:

Feb W 14th: all rations/bunkroom: .5gp Oliver -12 gp loan to Thizmour

Feb R 15th : all rations/bunkroom: .5gp except Slippa, Veylann -1gp Sundown

Feb F 16th : all rations/bunkroom: .5gp

Feb S 17: bunkroom .5gp except Slippa, Veylann 1 gp.

Fargo pays 48 gp each (OMGVDSB) Bonus for info on evil priestess, bringing them: 10 gp.

(U and others at Hold considered "portal" doubtful. Need evidence. But first go with Thizmour to Selleze if you want to.)

Feb S 18th: bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp) to Rivendown

Feb M 19th: bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp) Rivendown
Feb T 20th: bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp) Rivendown
Feb W 21st: bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp) to Partweigh tolls at river -1gp each
Feb R 22nd : bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp) to Selleze
Feb F 23, S 24, S 25, M 26 bunkroom .5gp /day (SV room -1gp/day) in Selleze
Feb T 27th : bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp) to Partweigh
Feb W 28th : bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp) to Rivendown tolls at river -1gp each
Mar R 1st : bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp) to Guardraw

Most characters: -8 gp. S,V: -14.5 gp.

Pay for Orctown mission: +48gp.

Bonuses for priestess, thief and information: +10 gp each

Sale of undistributed treasure in Selleze (Yet To Be Determined):

Tasking from Fargo (March 1): Get Thizmour and daughter to Orctown, then go to Dervish and find that portal, if it really exists. Urtles and others have serious doubts. There is no evidence except the second hand words of a priestess of deceit. Report back. Bring evidence or at least reason to believe that story the evil priestess told. The party has already been with Thizmour to Selleze. They might as well help him get to Orctown. Payment of 48 gp. each for the mission after return.

13. Expected events:

Sunday March 4th light breeze - to Sundown

Monday March 5th windy – to Gold Mine Camp

Tuesday March 6th light breeze – to Dervish

Wednesday March 7th light breeze, cloudy, rain – stay put.

Thursday March 8th calm, cloudy – to Freshwater camp

Friday March 9th breeze – to Upwelling

Saturday March 10th windstorm – blowing sand – to Orctown

So, the party got to Orctown. Each had to pay a toll of one gold Sovereign to enter. The party secured bunkroom beds at Dusteater's Tavern.

The party had reached Merchant Thizmour's destination. He was escorted over to the palace. On the party's last trip to Orctown, they had not gone over there. It was a large building, apparently fixed up somewhat after Lord Grantt won the city, but obviously not of orcish build, rather from who knows how far back into antiquity.

Thizmour did find the Circean representative, who was someone he knew, and obtained a loan to help him get back to Circe. He was generous enough to share some of that with us of the party. "I know this is less than your expenses on my behalf, but it is what I can afford at the moment. Please take this." He gave each party member ten Sovereigns, and returned an additional 12 to Oliver for the loan he had made. "I asked for Aarbat coin denominations for this purpose," he said. "What I retain is mostly Circean Reals. That's what I will need from here to Squa." The party expressed appreciation, and back at the tavern celebrated somewhat his getting to this point. Orctown is not quite the border between Aarbat and Circe. That's further west at Myelin manor. But this was half way to Circe, Thizmour figured, and the rest of the way would be more familiar to him.

It being Saturday, there was a good bit going on in the tavern there anyway, so the party's celebration somewhat merged with a more general party atmosphere. They don't have the larger scale entertainment productions that you'll find at Guardraw or, more so, certain places in Selleze. But there was singing and a lyre player, both young women, and a bit of dancing. The tavern served a reasonably good meal. The special was grilled antelope steaks, apparently in an abundant supply, and good. What passed as vegetables were not very appetizing though. The quality of the mead left a bit to be desired, but the overall meal was satisfactory.

Sunday March 11th sandstorm stay put

Monday March 12th breeze, pt cloudy –

Half way to Dervish to save a day? With no wagons, and no merchant's daughter, the party ought to be able to get to Dervish in two days instead of three. There was still the mission of looking for that Portal ahead. The weather had cleared. There was good weather for traveling. The party bid goodbye to Merchant Thizmour and his daughter, and wished them safe travels back to Circe.

Now to Dervish. Travel fast and try to get there in two days. So it was that the party passed Camp Upwelling in the afternoon and kept going. Right about then Veylann spotted something on the road coming up from behind. It was chariots! There were six chariots, each pulled by a horse, with a single rider in each. They were moving quite fast; much faster than the party was. Of course the party got off the road to avoid being run down. The soldiers in the chariots all were wearing uniforms with a distinctive blue sash, armed with shortswords and bows. Two of them seemed to be women. Two spare horses followed, each behind one of the last two chariots. Their column charged past the party and continued at a very fast pace. I guess they needed spares if they were to maintain that kind of pace. They would likely get to Dervish this very day at the rate they were going.

The party found a reasonably good camp site, protected on one side, thanks to Belfor's expertise with being in the wilderness. Nothing during the night.

Tuesday March 13th breeze, pt cloudy – to Dervish

The next morning the party continued at a fast pace, and with a bit of a forced march, got to Dervish before the Sun went down. All were tired, but had saved a day.

The Guard sergeant at the gate was asked about the chariots.

"They stopped here overnight," he said. "A detachment of the Blue Ribbon Light Horse Company, based in Orcetown. Sergeant Dahling said she had important messages for Guardraw. They move fast. Fifty two miles might not be impossible for them. If I was a betting man, I'd be on the side that says they're in Guardraw already."

The party camped out in the courtyard, and had the place all to ourselves. Someone did comment to the bartender that there didn't seem to be as much traffic on the Circe Road as there had been earlier.

"You are right about that!" he replied. "I think word has gotten out about the bandits. Then there was that time during the winter when orcs wiped out two whole convoys. I know you remember that! So, those kinds of things discourage travel. Besides that, summers are hot and brutal. I hate those sand storms. We don't get them as

much here, but out on the open road they can be nasty. The sand gets into everything. And, I do mean everything.”

He asked if any of the party wanted to make a deal to rent rooms. That would be Slippa and Veylann, still romantically entangled. Oliver(?) told him that he thought the rest would just camp. The night was pleasant, and nobody were especially wanting for privacy, what with the whole courtyard vacant.

“I hear you,” he said. “If someone wants a room for one of your girls, I’m here.”

Party members were preparing for the night. Normal three watch sections. (?) After all, there had been zombies right inside those doors to the old fortress keep, that exited right to the courtyard.

14. Anticipated schedule after Dervish:

Wednesday March 14th breeze, pt cloudy – explore, look for portal (**pending**)

Thursday March 15th calm, foggy to Gold Mine Creek

Friday March 16th light breeze to Sundown

Saturday March 17th light breeze to Guardraw, report to Fargo, party in progress.

Sunday March 18th calm, clear

Monday March 19th calm, clear

Tuesday March 20th snow storm!

Wednesday March 21st light breeze, partly cloudy Equinox PARTY!!

Expenses, payments Guardraw to Orctown to Dervish:

Sunday March 4th : bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp)– to Sundown

M Mar 5th : all rations/bunkroom: .5gp - to Gold Mine Camp

T Mar 6th : courtyard .5gp (SV room -2½ gp)– to Dervish

W Mar 7th : store room .5gp (SV room -2½ gp) – stay put.

R Mar 8th : all rations/bunkroom: .5gp – to Freshwater camp

F Mar 9th : all rations/bunkroom: .5gp – to Upwelling

S Mar 10th : bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp) and -1gp entry toll– to Orctown

S Mar 11th : bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp) - stay put

M Mar 12th : all rations/bunkroom: .5gp – Half way to Dervish

T Mar 13th : courtyard .5gp (SV room -2½ gp) – to Dervish

Most characters: -6 gp. S,V: -13.5 gp.

Expected party movement Dervish back to Guardraw:

Wednesday March 14th breeze, pt cloudy – explore, look for portal

Thursday March 15th calm, foggy to Gold Mine Creek

Friday March 16th light breeze to Sundown

Saturday March 17th light breeze to Guardraw, report to Fargo, party in progress.

Expenses, payments Dervish back to Guardraw, to Equinox:

W Mar 14th : courtyard .5gp (SV room -2½ gp) explore, look for portal at Dervish

R Mar 15th : all rations/bunkroom: .5gp to Gold Mine Camp

F Mar 16th : bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp) to Sundown

S Mar 17th : bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp) to Guardraw

S Mar 18th : bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp) in Guardraw

M Mar 19th : bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp) in Guarddraw
T Mar 20th : bunkroom .5gp (SV room -1gp) in Guarddraw
W Mar 21^h : bunkroom 1.5gp (SV room -2gp) in Guarddraw (Equinox Party)
 Most characters: -5 gp. S,V: -10 gp.

Treasure from Dervish to Selleze:

Distributed: (Strength of magic items all assumed to be +1; none have been “identified”)

- Oliver: +1 Ring of Protection (to AC, Saves), Masterwork dagger
- Melodious: +1 Magic Leather Armor, Masterwork rapier
- Groa: Bracers of Defense +1 (to AC), +1 Dagger
- Veylann: Masterwork light crossbow
- Doil: Masterwork longbow
- Slippa: Masterwork dagger
- Belfor: ??
- Retained, carried by who?
 - Potion of healing, Potion of antivenom, Seth Holy Symbol (magic)
 - Pearl(100) found at camp in writing materials box

Sold:

- Masterwork greatsword: 175 gp
- 6 x dwarvish manufacture longbows (@25) : 300 gp
- 3 x gnoll morningstars (@4) : 12 gp.
- Magic Necklace of Fertility: 1000 gp.
- Total: 1487 gp. [It is assumed that this remains undistributed party loot.]

Coins:

- Gnolls: 36 cp, 11 sp; Ftr 110 sp, 40 gp; Thf 12 gp, Prstss 11 gp, Gnolls 16cp, 27 sp
- Total: 52 cp, 147 sp, 63 gp = 76.793 gp => 76gp, 8 sp.

Camp gear: (sold in Guarddraw or perhaps Selleze)

- 4 backpacks (@1gp), 16 waterskins (@1sp), 4 bedrolls(@5 sp), 2 mess kits(@1 sp), compass(@ 10 gp), 2 tinderboxes(@2sp), 5 flasks of oil(@1sp), hooded lantern(@2 gp), bullseye lantern(@5 gp), writing quills, bottle of ink, and scroll case with several sheets of parchment in a box(3gp together)
- Total: 28 gp, 7 sp sold as a lot together.

(Inside box with the paper, ink was a pearl (100 gp), in “undistributed treasure” above.)

It is assumed that the Coins, proceeds from Camp Gear (Guarddraw) are distributed =105.5 gp
 Divided by seven that is 15.1 gp each.

Experience:	Oliver	Melodious	Groa	Veylann	Doil	Slippa	Belfor
Previous Character Totals:	3454*	3360*	3010*	1492	1503	1539	1376
Info.priestess 600 (MOG(VDSB))	100	200	100	50	50	50	50
Recapture prsts 100 (Q(MG)(..))	50	25	25	13	13	13	13
Info to SS,GD 300 (OMG(VDSB))	60	60	60	30	30	30	30
Thiz. to Selleze 600 (OMG(VDSB))	120	120	120	60	60	60	60
Totals for Episode 10+	+330	+405	+305	+153	+153	+153	+153
Totals:	3784	3765	3315	1645	1656	1692	1529

Training: The interval covered, Dervish to Guardraw to Selleze and back to Guardraw included 7 days of “training” when, due to bad weather usually, the party did not adventure or travel. (The first day in Selleze did not count since buying, selling, escorting)

Oliver: Has 12 days toward 4th level (needing 18). Can trade 30xp per day, 180 xp’s to do that.

Melodious: Has 10 days toward 4th level (needing 18). Can trade 240 xp’s to do that.

Groa: Has 10 days toward 4th level (needing 18). Can trade 240 xp’s (30 per day) to do that.

Doil: Has 8 day toward 4th level (needing 18). Not enough xp’s yet.

Veylan: Has 8 day toward 4th level (needing 18). Not enough xp’s yet.

Belfor: Has 7 days toward 4th level (needing 18). Not enough xp’s yet.

Slippa: Has 12 days toward 4th level (needing 18). Not enough xp’s yet.

Note: Pending mission to escort Thizmour back to Orctown and then travel to Dervish to look for the portal will allow 2 more days of training before going into the search for the portal. If all goes according to projected schedule, there will be a further few training days in Guardraw before the Equinox.

Some buying and selling to try to make weight (and be unencumbered).

Party data:

Oliver	F4	S10 D15 C14 I10 W12 Ch12 AC16 36hp.
Melodious	B4	S12 D14 C13 I10 W12 Ch16 AC14 21hp. still needs to advance to L4
Groa	S4	S10 D14 C14 I12 W14 Ch16 AC12 20 hp. still needs to advance to L4
Veylann	T3	S11 D16 C10 I14 W14 Ch14 AC15 18 hp.
Doil	F3	S17 D8 C16 I10 W13 Ch12 AC19 31 hp.
Slippa	T3	S10 D16 C12 I13 W14 Ch14 AC14 21 hp.
Belfor	D3	S10 D14 C14 I12 W16 Ch10 AC16 24 hp.