

The Gods Treasure II Norway 1009 AD

St Brice's Revenge



he evening was cold and damp with the heavy aroma of steaming odorous sweated bodies and ale wafting around the vast courtyard packed with thousands of warriors who had gathered outside the Great Hall to hear the long awaited news the King was about to bestow upon them.



After what seemed an eternity, the huge oak doors of the Great Hall flew open and Forkbeard appeared as if he were an apparition, the warriors erupted and the sound of a thousand voices chanting Minn Konungr, Minn Konungr resonated in the now transformed electric atmosphere; with raised hands he acknowledged their rapturous greeting, waiting for the scene to abate.

In moments the subdued silence of expectancy was deafening.

In a voice that emanated from the bowels of the earth Forkbeard proclaimed "Fólk" (Warriors) the time is now upon us to take true revenge for the St Brice's Day Massacre, firstly to pay retribution for the slaying of my dear sister Gunhilde, and secondly to overflow our coffers, but this time we will not be paid off, send worship this night to Magni for great Viking strength, to Thor that you may battle fearlessly and to Odin to bring victory over our foes; sharpen your swords, prepare your gjálfmarr (steeds of the sea) for a battle that will be recorded in the annals of history."

The warriors exploded again in an uproar of frenzied excitement, chanting "Sigr, Sigr, Sigr,

"Go fulfil your pleasures now my Fólk as you will need all your energy in the coming weeks"

Amidst hearty roars of affirmation he raised his hands, turned and entered the Great Hall, the Oak doors slammed behind him shaking the whole structure. With the mood elevated it was the perfect time to address his Warrior Leaders who had already assembled in the Great Hall.

" Magnus" Forkbeard thundered, Magnus slowly rose; his battle scarred face unemotional, revealing his colossal 7ft frame which appeared as if it would burst the very walls of the Hall.

"My King" he replied, in a deep gravelly tone befitting his stature.



"We are going to lay siege to England....but this time we shall sail to a small Island named Wyvern establishing our base there, it will provide us with food, safety and protection, and by approaching from the South East it will make our landing inconspicuous, we will of course level the Island and all about" His lips partly concealed by an unkempt beard showed a hint of pleasure at the thought of the conquest, as a Lion would lick his lips to devour the last remnants of its prey.



Forkbeard leant forward pointing his outstretched finger at Magnus in an imposing way "What knoweth you of this Wyvern."

Magnus cautiously replied,

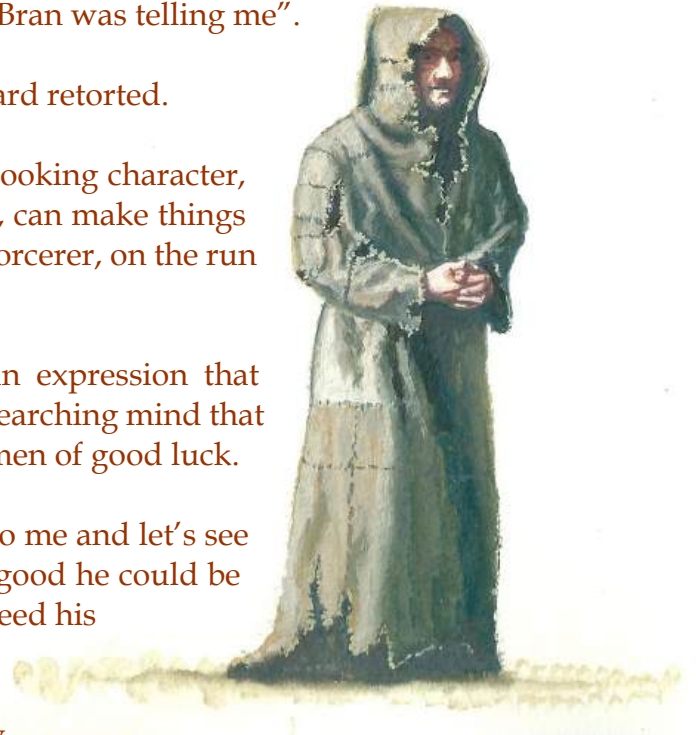
"I hear tale it is only full of peasants sire, although it do have a few manors and a castle for rich pickings so Bran was telling me".

"Who is this Bran you speak of" Forkbeard retorted.

"He be one of these Druids sire, funny looking character, always carries a staff and who, they say, can make things disappear, bin told he is some sort of a sorcerer, on the run for his life, and comes from Wyvern".

Forkbeard raised his eyebrows with an expression that disclosed his delight, confirming in his searching mind that Bran had been sent by the Gods as an omen of good luck.

The King quipped, "Fetch this sorcerer to me and let's see what tricks he has up his sleeve, if he's good he could be worth his weight in gold, if not he will need his magic to survive this day"



Magnus later returned with Bran in tow, a more different pair you had never seen, they resembled an upstanding Oak and a wiry sapling, as they entered the Hall you could hear the stifled sniggers of the men at this contrasting spectacle.

Bran knelt before the King at the appropriate time encouraged by a meaningful slap on the back from Magnus which nearly laid him out flat on the floor, to the amusement of all, including the King.

He certainly was an unusual looking character, his face was at least 200 years old, with enough lines on it to map out the world. Nevertheless, he had an aura of mystique surrounding him, supported by a strange staff he grasped in his left hand, giving the impression that if you tried to take it you would have to cut his hand off first, he raised his head and focussed his piercing blue eyes on the King, Forkbeard recoiled in response, a little surprised by his latent energy.



"I believe you are the sorcerer Bran of *some* repute?" questioned Forkbeard.

Bran again stared directly into the eyes of the king and spoke quietly but assertively.

"I am but a poor Druid sire, I have been travelling the world trying to recapture what is rightfully mine as decreed by my parents, by whatever means my powers will permit."

"And what powers would these be", scoffed the King "are they such that could be utilised to win a war, for instance?" The warriors responded to the Kings comments with muffled jeers.

Bran pulled himself erect to his full 5ft 6" before replying, knowing that his next answer could determine whether he lives or dies.

"All I can say sire is that I have never, repeat, never been on the losing side of any battle, take from this what you will."

King Forkbeard paused in momentary deep thought then, his face softened as he said, "well, in that case, we had better make sure you are on our side at our next battle, I am told sorcerer you know the Wyvern well?"

Bran's face, showed signs of relief, "like the back of my hand sire." was the quick reply.

The atmosphere began to ease, as the king leaned forward saying, "that's good to know as you might lose it, if you tell me wrong"

I will need to have a long meeting with you and my senior warriors to discuss the best route, and most advantageous point to land."

The King waived his hand dismissively permitting only the Warrior Leaders and Bran to remain, a solemn tone descended over the hall; now only lit by a few candles as the group formulated their plan of attack.

The following seven days were exhausting and finally it was announced that they were ready to set sail for Wyvern.

Bran ran panting to the King, dropping to his knees proclaimed "Sire, I beg your leave, last night I had a vision that Sol, Goddess of the Sun threw balls of fire across the sky which landed on Wyvern or as some know it as Wiht, I have plotted their course in my mind and made an unwritten secret note as to where they lay which will show us the way to great treasure, I will disclose all when we land so I may help the king find his fortune.....saving perhaps a small gift for my troubles?"



These words were like gems to the Kings ears, his face showed his pent excitement, but he also acknowledged that Bran's life was now safe and secure, if not even precious, and thought *it seems there is more to this Bran than meets the eye,* "this omen pleases me Bran we must this night worship Njörð God of the sea to ensure our safe passage, is there anything else that troubles thee?"



Seeing an opportunity to further the Kings favour Bran went into his humble mode.... "I will protect you diligently throughout the battles Sire, and only ask that I have your approval to revisit several holy places on Wyvern to renew my vows and regenerate my Druidic powers, this is crucial to enable me to perform my magic and transformations that you will have to see to believe"

The King also now wanting to keep the Druids favour whispered

"If by maintaining your powers it means our raids are successful and my protection is ensured, I will gladly grant you these requests, with something extra for your guidance,"

Their eyes were transfixed on each other's with the vision of power, glory and wealth until a voice broke the spell, it was Magnus calling

"We are ready to set sail Sire,"

At this, Forkbeard was escorted aboard the Kings Ship with Bran in hot pursuit,

"Set sail for South East Wyvern and Culver Baye it is time for war" Folkbeard bellowed.....

**Look for the dragon
She is so divine
Don't be shy, get closer
She will not bit u
Her colour is brilliant
She could hold the answer
All green and red
Seek and you will find**

Where is it?



1 The Viking Tale 1009 AD

Fingers of Mist over Wyvern



he Long ships hoisted their sails, which captured the gusting Easterly winds, unfolding like the crack of a whip reverberating across the ocean from all directions, quickly followed by the tumultuous sounds of waves crashing across the many boughs.



It was a foreboding sight, like 20 Sea Dragons surfacing from a watery grave in unison, their figureheads being lofted towards the Sun God before plunging below the turbulent waves, the spray construing their fiery breath; the voyage had begun, with revenge their objective.

“How are your sea legs Druid?” scoffed Forkbeard, they had barely set sail and already Bran had nearly disappeared over the side to loud jeers from the crew.

“We don’t want to lose you just yet, you had better get down below” without reply Bran staggered to the comparative safety of the hold in the hope of a few hours sleep.

The ship was being tossed about like a cork and a Viking sword would barely cut through the retching black atmosphere of animals heaving breath, sweat and muck, which would overcome all but the hardiest of sailors and Bran was certainly not one of these, he slunk into a corner, tied himself to a beam and prayed for safe passage.

Morning came all too soon, Bran had managed to close his eyes but for a few minutes when Magnus craned his neck round the hold and called “Should be less than a two day run Bran, if we can keep em steady at 5 knots that is, d’ya think you’ll make it?” he chortled.... Bran half opened his eyes and barely acknowledging Magnus with but a single nod before slumping once again into oblivion.

With a shake like a terrier breaking the neck of a rabbit Bran was woken from his pit, “The King wants to see you now, follow me” said Magnus, releasing the grip of his huge hand from Bran’s shoulder.

Still in shock Bran fumbled, and untied his harness and groaning pulled himself to his feet, he immediately noticed the ship was steady, no more bruised bones from its demonic frolics.

Stepping over lifeless bodies, animals and debris he followed Magnus who bulldozed everything in his path, with grunts, and curses to compliment.



As Bran's head rose from that cesspit, he gulped at the bracing air, his lungs sucking in this nectar like a massive pair of bellows fuelling a furnace with oxygen.

He shaded his eyes and squinted at the comparative blinding light as the Suns golden rays broke the horizon.

Quickly looking towards the North he could see an outline of his Wyvern Island nestled between extended fingers of mist which seemed to enchantingly caress the coastline, his contorted face abated as his mind momentarily reflected on his adolescent memories, when Magnus's voice bawled

"Are e still asleep Druid, or do ya not know the meaning of NOW?"

Magnus impatiently grabbed Bran's kirtle and trawled him before Forkbeard.

His majesty was intensely scrutinising a map of Wyvern Island, which Bran had previously drawn for him, 9 other warriors stood around the slab of Oak used as a table in eerie silence.

The King gave Bran a cursory glance and said "Welcome Druid, the men you see before you are my Warriors of Odin"

Bran felt his stomach knot, these were the Kings Berserkrs who hold the reputation for being totally foreboding and invincible, having the ability to transform into wolves and are impenetrable to fire or swords and will in fact slay without hesitation or conscience ANYONE or ANYTHING that steps in their path friend or foe!!

"Make yourself known", said the King in an almost dismissive tone.

Bran knew that if there was ever a time in his life to show his worth, now was that time.

He looked at his audience who seemed totally unaware of his presence, so he began.

"I foretell, with the King and his elite Warriors leading the Norse attack there will be no doubt of victory", they banged their flagons on the table in approval.

Bran took an assertive pose, using his staff he emphasised the points to which he wished them to pay attention.



"I am Bran of Wyvern I held the highest position of Arch Druid of the Wiht. My name was gifted from Bran the Blessed, God King and Protector, I was born from the spirit of Dagda the ruler over *life* and *death* and leader of the Tuatha Dé Danann, a master of magic, a fearsome warrior and a skilled artisan, possessing super- human strength".

He paused then passed his staff slowly over the heads of the warriors, as if to anoint them, or read their innermost thoughts and fears, the warriors faces changed, they were fearless of what they could see and slaughter, but the magical powers possessed by the Tuatha Dé Danann could have them all cursed by a *íviðia* and damned to the Helgrind

"Dagda came together with Morrigan the Phantom Queen, Goddess of Battles, War, Death, Strife, and Fertility who also belongs to the Tuatha Dé Danann"

He paused again, and then banged down his staff on the oak slab, the warriors physically jumped back trying desperately not to show their fear, but it was there for all to smell. "She can also change into a Raven, and, if a warrior sees her before a battle he will die".

"So as you will understand I have been blessed with the same powers as my spirit guardians and can determine life or death, transform myself into a Wyvern or whatever suits the occasion, I can also be the protector of the soul and provider of wealth, for those of course that protect me"

Those gathered were now far more attentive and receptive to his words so it was time to put them in his favour, Bran knew that the moons phase would allow him to energise his staff, so raising up his magical wand he thrust the ground point high towards the Sun Goddess calling "Sol give me a sign that you are with me to protect the King and his warriors throughout our battles, so our victory will be complete".

Whilst distracting all heads to be facing towards the Sun Goddess Bran enhanced his incumbent powers to project a spirit beam through the head of the staff, which he moved in a circular motion whilst all were looking up to Sol, the projected beam was strong enough to burn a circle in the Oak table representing Sol herself.

On lowering their eyes there was a simultaneous sharp intake of breath by all and a look of awe towards Bran, who calmly whispered, " Sol has given us her sign" followed by "how may I now serve you my King?"



They all sat around the table like long lost friends, discussing their plan of attack hanging on Brans every word, as he would surely now have a free reign to apply his will, Bran had once again secured his position and status.

Whilst the energy was with him Bran thought it a good time to bring another equation into play,

“Sire” he said in an assertive but humble tone, which, in the light of his recent elevated status, he knew would place the King temporarily in his pocket,

“Once we have established a base”

“Don’t you mean levelled every damn thing in view sorcerer”, interrupted the King,

“Of course, of course your majesty, Ethelred will regret he ever ordered that unprovoked massacre of your Norse kin folk”

The King rising to the occasion cursed with a look of thunder and hatred in his eyes, “By the time I have finished with his noble marionettes, his land, his wealth, and his women, he will rue the day he drew his first English breath”

Bran realised he was losing control and needed to bring the King back on subject

“Sire, once Sandome is levelled It is of the utmost urgency that I find and meet with a Druid Warrior I confided in many years ago as she holds the secret to the **Cauldron of Eternal Life**”

Up to this point Forkbeard had been readying his warriors for the assail and not really taking any note of Bran’s words, when he startled

“She, you said, she, and a warrior; who is this infamous female you wish to pleasure?” the King sarcastically questioned.

“She is named Badb sire, and it is said she takes on the spirit presence of her namesake Badb, War Goddess sister of Morrigan, who is of the wisest, and through vision quests can prophecy the future; on the side of the King she could be a formidable ally”.

Just as the King nodded in agreement the ground shuddered beneath the ship, and the thunderous battle cries of 500 warriors reverberated into the atmosphere in one deafening crescendo, at last Sweyn Forkbeard will seek his revenge.



The whole momentum and focus changed in an instant, the Beserks were screaming orders, alight with rage and foreboding, their physical bodies about to explode with violence and aggression.

The water was a sea of turbulent bodies thrashing their way towards the beach, with swords flashing in the early morning Sun, like thunder and lightning rolling across the ocean.

High on the Culver Cliff Puffins were shooting to safety like colourful arrows from a bow; as a fire blazed on high warning the Eyjarskeggi they were in for trouble; more than they would ever contemplate.

Bran momentarily reflected on his assertive address to the Warriors earlier, and was very grateful indeed to now be looking at the back of their tunics disappearing up the sandy beach.

The Kings plan was to invade Sandome and make that their first stronghold, bringing reinforcements in to hold their position, once established the band would separate with the Ground Fighters carving their way through the Island and the remaining Sea Force circumventing the Island levelling everywhere they landed, devastating all and sundry by whatever means necessary.

“Ulf, Take a hunting party to the further shoreline and seek out some fresh meat, we all are needy of a full gut tonight” Forkbeard commanded.

Bran had told tale of wild animals being penned nearby, making easy pickings for this raiding party.

The cliff fires had echoed the warning of invasion down the coast, and the men of Wyvern were quick in response; from the old Brading Roman Stronghold they bore down out of the Sun at speed with clubs and swords flailing over the steeds heads.

Magnus heard the threatening sound of horses hooves pounding the earth close behind “Riddari, Undir, Atgeir” he bellowed,

His Warriors grabbed their pole axes, and spun around now facing the enemy, and with mighty force, impaled whatever came first, man or beast, bringing them bloodletting to the ground.

The air was filled with the screams of men and horses as they were torn to shreds, impacting the earth with the force of a meteorite, carnage quickly ensued, with no men of Wyvern left standing or whole, and the Vikings jubilant and victorious with their first blood. Three horses survived and were quickly rallied out of sight to the back of a nearby barn.



The Warriors rampaged through the village, torching buildings without thought or remorse, until they came upon the local *Ale House* where they commandeered Ale and wenches to satisfy their needs.

Bran had long slipped away; dressed in his peasant clothing he was inconspicuous to the Eyjars'. Although he had not seen Badb for many years, he had an inner sentience of presence and guidance, a feeling of powerful alignment, which placed his every step towards an unknown destination. Several hours later he found himself in *Brading Haven*, then as if struck by a bolt of lightning he remembered how, when he was just a boy he was playing here with Badb and he tripped and fell down what seemed like a large pit knocking himself unconscious.

Badb knew that this pit was in fact the *Sacred Well of Gabhanodorum* holding the Water of Annow, even though she was only 10yrs old she summoned Elves to heal him and raise him from the well.

In his mind he could see everything that happened as clear as if it was being reinacted before his very eyes when an unfamiliar voice said "Bran?" It was Badb, her face gave the tiniest acknowledgement of recognition as he turned, Bran returned the gesture as they embraced in a ceremonial way, each plaintively examining the residues of life that had been embedded within the textures and contours of their sullen features and warped bodies.

"I embarked upon many vision quests to connect with you on your journeys Bran; did you sense I was with you?" your search for the lost treasures of Dagda has taken you to very distant lands has it not, and placed you many times in grave danger?"

Bran nodded, "I have always felt your presence, supporting and guiding me in my exploration of new worlds, especially in times of anguish and pain for which I give you much gratitude"

"And I for your forewarning of this invasion," said Badb earnestly, "All my family are in safe houses and far away from these Viking marauders" come inside the barn Bran, I have important news for you"

They scanned the surrounding fields to ensure their liaison was undetected and quietly slipped into the barn.

The Sun's rays broke through the twisted roof timbers as a million particles of dust danced on its warm welcoming beams, the pungent yet pleasant aroma of the hay created a nostalgic setting, lightening the previously gloomy atmosphere.



As they settled into the hay a knowing smile crept over Bran's face, "I remember this barn", he said looking at Badb, who lowered her head and looked in the opposite direction, "mmm so do I Bran", she replied, embarrassingly returning Bran's smile.

"By the God's Badb that must have been a hundred years ago" he quipped, they both laughed as memories momentarily flooded back, then left as quickly as they came.

"Bran, time is now against us both on our earthly plain, and, before our journey to the otherworld, the quest for the Cauldron of Eternal Life must be completed and sanctified."

Bran nodded thoughtfully saying

"Yes Badb, this is so, but it has been prophesied that a twelve pointed star shall light the way to salvation and each point holds the secret to the next, this task seems eternal"

"Yes Bran, but only those who have been bequeathed the knowledge and power of the universe can understand how this viper's coil can be unravelled without suffering poison and death.

As you know WE are blessed with these gifts and whilst you were travelling, in my dreams I had a vision of a dark place that gave forth light, when I reached into this place, a force pulled me into an abyss where a light brighter than the Sun shone, and there I saw the Last Ritual Scrolls of Bard Ollamh, which were written in Ogham on hallowed birch bark, and wrapped around the sacred golden branch, the writings are divined by Ovates and the Arch Druid professes that it has its own Nwyfre".

Bran was now on his feet with a look of excitement and renewed energy,

"Badb I beg do not keep the whereabouts from me any longer as I must have these in my hold before too many moons have waned"

Badb rose to her feet placing her lips close to Brans face she whispered

"It is to be found across the water in our place of sacred of worship at the crossing of the lay lines.

It is also written that a wingless dragon laid a crystal egg which has never been found, and when the sun strikes it at noon on the winter Solstice it resonates energy that transpose to symbols unlocking the final access to the sanctuary of the Undry but there are many secrets to fathom before the prize will lay at our feet"



"Badb, it will take all the powers the Gods have bestowed upon us to conquer the challenges that lie ahead, and although the journey will be fraught with danger, will you come with me, we can become one soul and with the hallowed wonders we have been blessed with we can delve the depths of mother earth and the otherworld and unleash the secrets held within."

"I will come with you Bran, our destiny was ordained by our spiritual guardians to seek and find the Cauldron of Eternal Life,what is your plan?"

Bran's character had grown both physically and mentally, Badb was surely the catalyst he needed to ensure their quest was successful.

"I must bring you before the King, as long as he feels you are with me to give him extra protection during the fighting he will welcome your presence, so we must make our way back to Sandome it will be fortified by now and a safe haven for us to stay, the Longships will soon be leaving as his majesty will be planning his next assault on Shanklin"

The evening sky was heavy with cloud, their dark silhouettes melted in to the skyline as they carefully made their way back over the fields to what was left of the small village.

Bran and Badb rounded the village several hours later, the flickering flames from the remnants of burned out buildings lit up the sky with thick smoke billowing from earlier plunders, they approached with caution, when, from out of the darkness the glint of a raised sword caught Bran's eye who screamed "It is Bran Sorcerer to the King" the guard stepped into the light, "Who is the whore with you?" he scoffed,

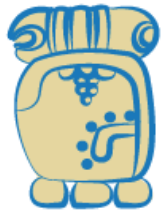
Bran, enraged, pointed his staff towards the raised sword which shot out of the warriors hand and embedded in the wood pile behind him,

"I think an apology is in order to my soothsayer companion, before she commands the sword to return to sever your head"

The guard, without taking his eyes off the sword started to bumble out an apology when Bran demanded "And where is his majesty I need to speak with him urgently"

"At the ale barn" he replied.

They left, chuckling to themselves as the burly guard cursed, desperately trying to dislodge his sword from a large block of wood.



The ale barn was a stage of noise and frivolity, with warriors and wenches wrapped in compromising positions, a large fire in the centre of the room gave off welcoming flames of warmth and comfort, the large wooden table was filled with the torn fragments of meat and wild mushrooms that had been cast aside from previous gorging, but still a feast for hungry eyes.

Bran found Forkbeard nestling into the bosom of the very delectable hostess, his eyes trying to focus on who was approaching him.

"What about this bit of magic I have conjured up sorcerer" he slurred in a jovial manner.

"It seems you have made an excellent choice for your pleasure" replied Bran trying to be enthusiastic.

"Looks like you came in late" the king said sarcastically casting a scrutinising eye over Badb.

Bran quick to take advantage of the King's good spirits laughed saying,

"Yes Sire, but with intention, this is Badb, my closest ally I spoke about privately to you, and she has agreed to act as protector, and guide your warriors through the Island paths, showing sacred places and the sites of hidden treasure.

"In that case Bran she is most welcome, show her to Magnus, he will make sure she can do her work without fear."

Their plan was in place; Bran would go back to the Longships and sail with the remaining warriors around Wyvern Island, meeting up eventually with Forkbeard and Badb at Cowes.

Badb and Bran sat wearily on the floor, eating and drinking their fill, before leaving Bran quietly said.

"We must try to make contact every day at sunset through the powers bequeathed us by the Gods, this way we can make our secret plans"

Bran explained to Magnus the importance of Badb's presence to the King and for him to keep watch over her; knowing she was safe Bran left for the Longships.

At sunrise the following morning the refortified King's warrior force gathered their spoils and provisions and began their assault on Shanklin, then Godshill en route to Newport the Capital, imposing their wrath and terror on all who stood in their path.



Bran and Badb, re unite
With memories keen to tell
A barn becomes their confessional
Their vision denotes a well

The Scrolls are written In Druid Text,
Depicting the Gods Treasure
To decipher where the Undry lies
May take some of your leisure

You will have to go back to school
And learn a language new
Then you must chant Ohm Ga twice
And a vision will come to you

What is it?



2. 1647AD The Quest Begins

Jed's Re-Polarisation

“



AARRGGGHHHH” Jeds’ body lay rammed between two large limestone blocks, the pain was excruciating, he had transported at VR 8 to get himself out of life threatening trouble, he wondered if he had made the right decision!



Slowly he turned his head to familiarise himself with the new surroundings, the noises emanating from his neck were a new experience for him,...in a bad way!

It was dark, cold and grey, the only illumination was from shafts of dust filled light breaking through the dilapidated roof structure, as his focus returned he could just make out a dark shadowy figure standing near the church entrance; prising himself from between the slabs Jed rolled onto the floor into a kneeling position his eyes transfixed on the inconsolable priest like image, he was in despair, hauntingly wailing in an act of utter desperation.

Jed stood up and bellowed “Who are you?” in a voice that portrayed bravado and absolute fear simultaneously; the faceless cloaked demon turned and came towards him, Jed froze, unable to move a muscle, he kept coming, then, passed right through Jed and disappeared through the fabric of the stone façade behind him.

Jed fell to his knees ‘In Gods name where am I?’ ...A shiver ran down his spine as he remembered the time frame and destination he had set on his Amulet, he was at the Duver, it was St Helens Priory Church portal, a place that reeked in tales of Devil worship, Black Arts Rituals, and workers lost at sea, had he just encountered the infamous Abbot Aymo?

“What ...is.... that?” he screamed, his eyes hypnotised by another black mass that was now writhing slowly across the cold stony floor towards the entrance,

Like a bolt of lightning memories hurtled back into Jed’s head,

Only a few minutes ago I had been in Dr Vinetti’s Lab, arguing about the secret polarising formula that for some unknown reason was not working, and it was from there that I left on an unknowing fools errand, conspired by Hopper of The Committee on my first quest to track and stop Arany, so many things had happened, meeting Joseph Turner the world reknowned land and seascape artist and recovering his painting in 1798, foiling the escape of Charles 1st at Carisbrooke castle in 1647, then assisting the locals in the failed French invasion of 1377.



Jed checked his Amulet, and only then realized that just 7 minutes had elapsed since he left the lab on his first quest, then, as his fuddled mind cleared he remembered that the Amulet could only teleport a human 7 minutes into the future or past although he could travel through thousands of time barriers.

"Arany" Jed shouted as he scrambled towards the figure lying prostate, bent and bleeding; grabbing him by the throat he cursed "You bastard, I trusted you, and all the time you were setting me up," there was no response, Jed pulled Arany closer to his face, he could see that Arany had barely made the torturous journey through time and was fading fast.

Then his mind flashed back, the cell, the jailors, the torture Arany was subjected to, Jed knelt beside him, and in a far more sympathetic tone asked "Arany what happened, why did you turn so viciously against me after all that we had discovered together?"

In a voice hardly discernable Arany groaned,

"They told me you were evil and had stolen the Translaser to use for your own gains, and sent me to recapture it, then, I became greedy knowing all the wealth and power it could bring me, for that I humbly apologise"

He paused to catch his breath....."The committee are malevolent tyrants, they will stop at nothing until they find all the God's Treasures for their own gains, whatever the cost," then after a long silence,....."They have cloned Professor Vinnetti, the one who discovered the VT link, and he is programmed to dispose of you once you have disclosed the whereabouts of the Holy artefacts; your only hope to stop him is to go forward to 2076 and dispose of him first."

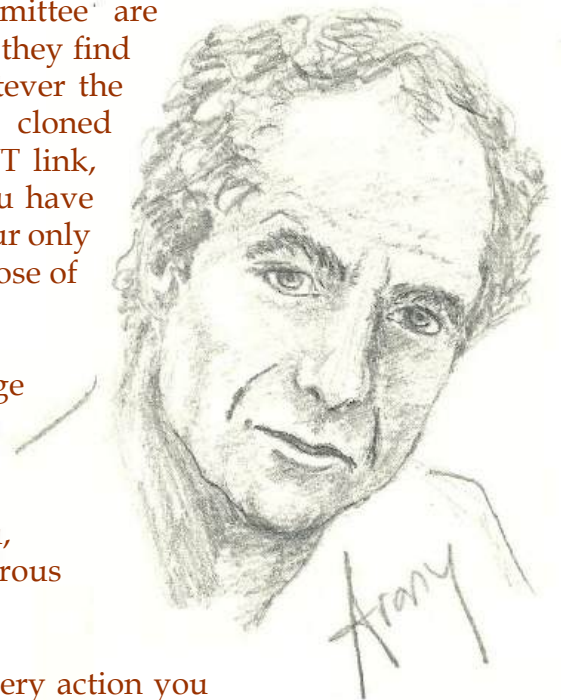
Arany coughed uncontrollably, emitting a large congealed mass of blood, Jed winced; the following quietness seemed eternal, then, Arany slowly continued, "I know I am dying, but when I do not report in they will send Vinnetti to find me, and you, so you must brace yourself for another treacherous journey and make it now."

Be aware your endeavours will only succeed if every action you take, right or wrong is balanced with another of the opposite, like Noah's Ark in unison and harmony, as black needs white, Ying needs Yang, the past needs the future, and one mind cannot fulfill the balance of two, if you do not take heed you will finish you quest alone and only half fulfilled."

Arany gripped Jed's arm, he still tried to speak although violently coughing; gasping for air he spluttered his last words "befriend Triany" before slumping lifelessly to the ground.

Jed couldn't leave Arany just laying there, he reached into his belt where he had concealed several Nano Booster Tabs, he injected one into the back of Arany's neck, programmed S.A. on his Amulet, he circled the activation dial to the same setting and Arany's body slowly vaporised into Suspended Animation.

Jed was in no doubt of the danger he was under; Professor Vinnetti when he *was* Professor Vinnetti was a brilliant Bio-electroscientologist, what cerebral programming had he been subjected to, and how would that effect an already malicious yet brilliant mind? Jed was soon to find out!



He sat there head in hands trying to absorb and understand everything that was happening, his mind contemplating the future, how to infiltrate and survive.

His thoughts expanded, *my great friend in that time zone is Brian Cunliffe a wild and wacky totally under estimated computer genius, whose basement resembled The World Central Processing Bank, but with more equipment!!*

Yes, he would be an admirable ally, very capable and more than happy to hack anything he shouldn't, a rebel without a cause.... perhaps it is time he had one?

He wiped the blood spattered Amulet with his grubby sleeve, before programming the coordinates for 2076 but this time at a gentle V.R. of 4, ensuring a much more comfortable departure and arrival.

Mmmm I can feel an agreeable but none responsive sensation, like being slowly immersed naked in water that was exactly body temperature; I can feel its presence wash over me but not exactly when it was going to drown me, then, heat like no heat I have ever experienced, as though I were being burnt at the stake, and the flames were burning internally upward through my body, its sole purpose to explode my head, thennothing, pure nothing, other than what seems like a moment of vacuum like silence, preceding the most gargantuan BOOOOM, making me think yes, my head has exploded!!

I have arrived; all is silent, where exactly am I? My head hurts like the day after the worst night ever before, I must focus on reorientation, haha, I can think that but don't ask me to say it.

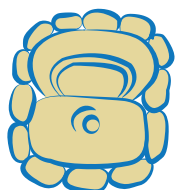
Oh God, I can hear voices echoing in the distance, where are they coming from, please do not let them find me already.

Jed opened his eyes, all was black, he had materialised in the stock room of Arany's Paris Trans Corporation,the voices he could hear were from the adjoining room, he stood there barely breathing whilst trying to stretch his tortured frame back into some resemblance of a human being.

He waited, at last after what seemed like forever their voices and footsteps faded into the distance down what sounded like an empty tunnel, he firmly gripped the door handle and rotated it with controlled endeavour, it released, he pulled the door towards him to expose the tiniest gap, he moved positions to achieve a wide angled view, the room was empty.

Jed needed to ascertain precisely where he was, if his coordinates were correct he should be inside the laboratory, he scanned the area with his laser and realised he was one floor too high.

From the images beamed back everything was as he remembered, after all in theory he had barely been away!!



He looked outside, it was getting dark, *great* he thought, *it's home time*, he then saw his reflection in the window and realised he was dressed in clothes that were shabby, disgustingly dirty, he looked like a tramp, and smelt pretty bad.

Standing with hands on hips Jed thought, *Need my personal data keeper so I can access my transporter, my condo, my security card, some clothes, cash and I need a plan!*

Then he remembered he had stashed his 'getaway' and 'come back tools' in his desk drawer, well, all except his clothes, which were hanging in the gym locker, next to the laboratory on the next floor down.

Fortunately the night shift cleaners coat hung by the door which he quickly put on, making him almost presentable and certainly less conspicuous.

He pulled up his sleeve and set the Amulet to emergency protocol, once triggered a beam would be emitted that would facilitate access to his office and associated departments for a maximum of one hour.

Jed pressed activate, and a very welcome green spiralling light indicated 'ready for use,' he opened the door into the hallway, turned left and was magically transported down to floor 7, but this time via an elevator!

He accessed his office, unlocked the drawer, grabbed all he needed, went through to the gym washed and changed, locked up and left via the emergency stairway to the ground floor.

As he reached the ground floor he peered through the door into the main foyer, he could see the back of a figure talking to a rather attractive female, come on, turn around he thought, then the gentleman kissed the lady on the cheek and began to walk out towards the main exit, just then a voice called out "good night Mr Cunliffe" it was Brian, Jed felt totally elated and marched briskly across the foyer calling back to the security guards "Good night gentlemen" walking freely into the night air.

He ran outside and shouted "Calling Mr E, Mr E please" at that Brian turned around with an 'I know who that is' expression on his face, he squinted then shrieked "Bugger my rotten socks, it's Mr Toogood," Jed had nicknamed Brian as Mr E because he was exactly that a total Mystery!

They greeted each other in a meaningful man hug, "Where 'ave you been you naughty boy?" enquired Brian with another 'I know what you've been up to' air.

"Mmmm long story Brian, "Can we go back to yours, as it is the one place on earth where I know our conversation will not be recorded....apart from by you but that's ok," they laughed and jumped in Brian's transporter, and programmed Home.



They arrived at Brian's house which stood on its own at the end of a row of flat faced glass buildings, from the outside it blended perfectly with the rest of the neighbourhood, but that all changed once inside.

As well as being a genius Brian had challenging OCD issues that sometimes made even the most mundane task a trial, but also allowed him to excuse himself from situations he was not comfortable with.

We parked on his drive and walked the short distance to the front door, there was no letterbox, handles, knockers, or bell; it was white and absolutely smooth and flat.

Brian stood in front of the door and with schoolboy excitement said, "You'll be impressed with this",
He coughed then continued, "Brian Cunliffe with friend, proceed with Security check"

The door seemed to come alive, it projected a holograph of Brian that he stepped into; it then took a whole body scan and said "Welcome Brian Cunliffe"

Brian then said, "Check guest," gesturing for Jed to stand in front of the door; this time the holograph engulfed and scanned him, then reported "Pulse rate, sodium and temperature elevated, indicating high stress levels, have disarmed Amulet, therefore no weapons, do I admit"?

Brian said "Admit", the 'door' then replied "Welcome Jeddariah Toogood"

Jed was certainly impressed, "Wow, that was some kind of entry system"

Brian chuckled, "Wait until you see what I have been working on out of hours."

The door slid silently to one side permitting entry; the house was very much as Jed remembered, everything regimented and exactly in its place, Jed smiled, "About time you cleared up eh?"

Brian washed his hands 3 times, dried them with the infrared heater and beckoned "Come and meet my baby"

He opened a small door in the hallway that led to a typical under stairs cupboard, which seemed quite tiny, "Amazing what you can do with mirrors" Brian quipped, he stepped inside then signalled Jed to follow, he thought, *two adults could not possibly fit in that space*, but of course they could.

The wall opposite had the same sinister look as the front door and sure enough the 'Security Genie' allowed them in, he followed Brian down a narrow staircase that led to another world.



The room looked like a mad professors playground, which was quite befitting Mr E as he stood there grinning all over his bronzed rugged face, his slightly overweight paunch wobbling as he tried to contain his laughter.

Looking at me over the top of his half moon spectacles, he brushed his eccentric long black hair from his dark brown Mexicano eyes, asking in his inimitable North American brogue,

"What do you reckon then?" pointing to machine upon machine stacked to the ceiling, blinking and whirring merrily along.

You could virtually slice the excitement oozing from his being, as he paced around the room ranting in an inherited [Mayan](#) dialect that portrayed and represented the mystique of the creative work he was embarking upon.

With arms folded and another wide cheeky grin on his face he smirked, "Say hello to my baby, this is WILMA my Welcoming Interactive Lady Manikin Angel."

The slender figure of blonde Wilma rose from the chair greeting them with "Hi guys would you like a drink?" Jed stood there open mouthed; *who was this beautiful mystical lady that Brian kept in the basement he thought?*

"Er that would be perfect" said Jed in a most flirtatious way.

Mr E cracked up laughing, "Now you're flirting with my latest creation"

Jed frowned, "What, I don't understand?"

"The committee had me working on what we call S.F.A, or Segmental Feature Attachment; do you know they have cloned Vinnetti? Jed nodded,

Brian continued "He was starting to become too headstrong therefore a threat, so they got me developing just part of a secret programme, code name Copycat, it was only when I had finalised the project that I realised what they were up to, by then Vinnetti was a programmable conforming brown nose."

"So where did Wilma come from?" asked Jed sipping his Scotch on the rocks.... "and, how did she know what I wanted to drink?"

Mr E sighed, "Well, Wilma is a copycat creation, by combining the Translaser principle of molecular de and re polarisation, plus S.F.A I have managed to create my own Angel who responds to my every wish" another large grin broke over Brian's ruddy features.

Jed stood there in amazement, "Ok Brian I need to explain what I know, where I am, what I need to find out and where I have to go"

Settling down in a soft sofa Brian retorted, "Sounds like a long night matey"



Jed unloaded details of his adventures, his fears, concerns, intentions and requirements upon Brian, who sat there relishing every minute of each saga, his mind virtually pulsing with excitement at the potential research and development possibilities that lay ahead.

After several hours of intent listening and evaluation Brian said in a tone bordering on sarcasm,

"Mmmm ok, correct me if I am wrong;

You are saying the committee wants to rule the world for every wrong reason.

They know the locations of the God's Treasures, and you need to find them first so you can change the natural course of evolution,

Save the world and Kate, whom you have fallen for, and her family who reside in some other time zone?"

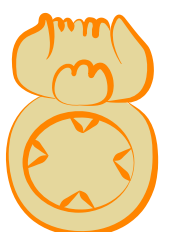
Jed's face questioned the validity of Brian's brief synopsis, then, without a change of expression nodded emphatically, saying "Yes that's about it"!

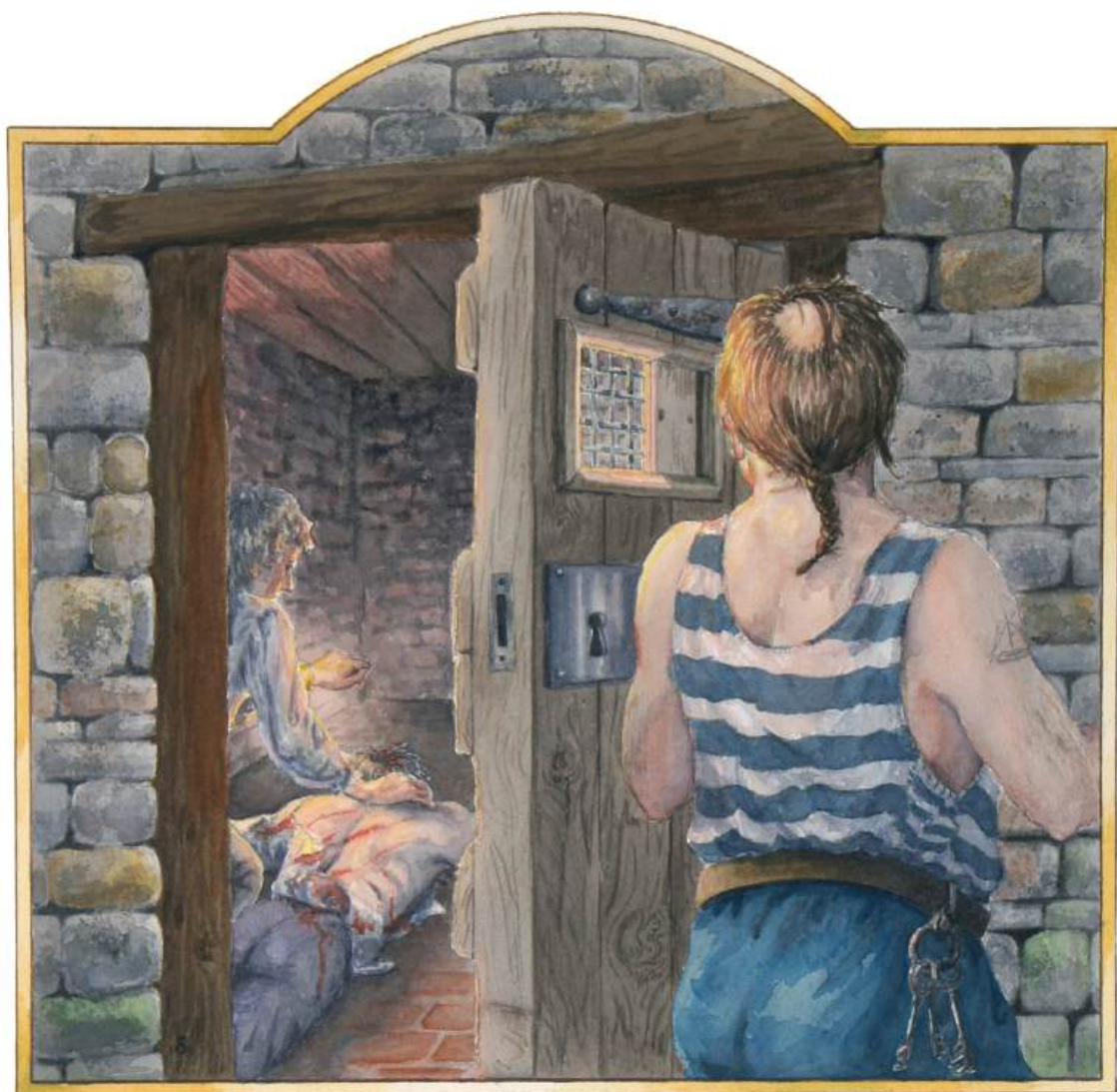
Brian stood up and paced the room, then stopped in an apparent enlightened moment, then paced again, this continued for some while, until this time he stopped mid pace and stood motionless, you could verily hear the activity inside his head as billions of neurons synapsed in areas he never knew existed, Jed was sure he could see a golden aura surrounding his head.

**If you're hunting around
In a place of much fun
And a motif you've found
That's just less than one
Take that number in one hand
And do not start to fidget
Just put it behind
That that equals those digits**

**You now have the answer
To open the doors
That exposes the clues
To make Goldie all yours**

How many are there?





3. 1305 AD The Knights Templar Persecution

Sir Ralph Returns from the Holy Land



It was the Autumn of 1305 AD, Sir Jacques de Molay, The Grand Master of the Knights Templar, confided in Sir Ralph de Gorges that Pope Clement V and King Philippe IV were in collusions to overthrow the Knights Templar and would spread malicious rumours and use what ever means possible to line the Papal and Royal coffers, and avoid the repayment of vast sums borrowed from the Order.



The Capetian monarchy were desperate to balance the books and, whenever poverty strikes the monarchy, there are always rich scapegoats to hang for the “ bien de la communauté” and to benefit the purse of the hanger!!!

De Molay knew this would be the beginning of the end for The Knights Templar movement and had clandestine critical business to attend to before he was summoned to face these false and criminal accusations.

Sir Ralph de Gorges was his closest ally, and had left Jerusalem, the Holy Land, to join De Molay in Cyprus after the demise of Acre, and brought with him 9 of his most trusted and loyal Knights representing the virtues of the “Nine Worthies”.

On October 16th the Knights arrived in Cyprus and made their way to Lemesos, to meet De Molay at a secret hideaway set deep in the bowels of Kolossi Castle, which was a Templar Knights sanctum. As they descended the stone staircase a glimmer of light could be seen flickering beneath an Oak strapped door, behind this was a small stone walled room, which was cold, and dank, smelling of stale water and mould, 9 candles lit the room,

“Welcome to the dungeon fellow Knights” a tall balding figure with a full forked beard bellowed, “I trust your journey was not too arduous”

It was the Grand Master de Molay, he embraced De Gorges first saying, “I am so relieved to see you brother, are you well?”

De Gorges replied with a grimace as he was embraced, his injuries from the Holy War portraying the truth.

“Have been better my Lord” was the stoic reply spoken with a wry smile lightening the comment; stepping to one side De Gorges introduced his stalwart companions.

“I am indeed honoured to receive you,” replied De Molay, “Sit you down; Sergeant, bring food and refreshment for my venerable guests”.



"I must apologise for the apparent lack of facilities, but our conversation is of the highest order of confidentiality.

You are all aware of the accusations being made and who is making them, this is to discredit the Order and allow the Monarchy to impound all our accumulated land and wealth, and, I can see no way at this time to avoid the conflict, already these aspersions are seeing our Knights privileges withdrawn, and our status demeaned"

Whilst the King may ultimately force his way, he may not have it all his way; when I was attending to affairs in Jerusalem, I came upon a devout Holy man who would not give his name only that he was a Nazarene, not to be confused with Nazareth he said in a questioning tone, from the place called Nazar, he then told story about a battle and prophesied "The Death of the Templar Thousands" which I fear is closer than we think."

He told me to take all that was precious to God and leave after the fall of Acre, so I gathered all the physical wealth I could and included all that is spiritually precious to our faith, which is now stored here in the castle.

He also placed in my protection artefacts of antiquity he termed the Bachal Isu, which means nothing to me, it was a small object embalmed in a blood stained shroud of sackcloth taking the shape of the Templar Cross which he stated most emphatically, was only to be gazed upon by the one who holds All The Gods Treasures and must be taken to England where the rightful beneficiary will come to pass.

I am now charging you with this duty, which I believe to be the most sacred mission the Templars have ever undertaken, I have arranged for your passage on a merchant ship which leaves Limassol Bay tomorrow night bound for England, I will contact our brothers at Malta, Lisbon and La Rochelle, so they can inform you of any developments that may effect your onward journey, which will be long and arduous my brothers, may God go with you"

Sir Ralph de Gorges and the 9 Templar Disciples understood the message written within the spoken words, their life's purpose had been foretold by their destiny.

They ate and drank well that night and Sir Jacques arranged for the local stevedors to load the Ulub Uran cargo ship destined for England, he bade them God speed and the ship departed for Malta with the armada in tow, which would take 7 days to arrive at this first port of call.

The weather and wind were kind, and the large Galley plodded its course to Malta, although the journey was tedious it gave the Knights much time to meditate and reflect on the battles, their belief systems and the threat to their empire and in particular the retribution of Sir Jacques de Molay.



The crew were mainly Turks and Cypriots, who scurried about their daily chores without apparently paying too much attention to the Knights, whilst they attended to the health and needs of Sir Ralph; then late one evening whilst finishing their meal Sir Jerar went below to check on the cargo and found one of the crew pilfering through the Knights possessions.

“What are you up to “ shouted the Knight, a young skinny and frightened Turkish boy of about 10yrs old ran from behind the mountain of wrapped and stacked chattels, he didn’t speak a word of English but knew what was being asked of him, he raised his hands as if in prayer and looking up to the Knight with terror in his eyes gestured to his mouth saying “Gida, Gida” which the Knight understood to be “food.”

If Sir Jerar reported the boy he would be severely punished, or even thrown overboard,

“Adin ne” Sir Jerar said firmly, the boy quaked, replying “Eren” the knight laughed, “Eren?” he questioned; the boy nodded, “mmm you are a saint or holy man are you?” the boy did not understand and responded to the lighter tone of the Knight with a half smile, held back by not knowing if he was doing the right thing.

Sir Jerar threw the boy a crust, then with a stern pointing finger said in his most affirmative Turkish, “Sen çalmak etmez miyim.....Bir aha asla” the boy fled from the hold bowing continuously, echoing Çok yaşa Çok yasa

The Knight smiled to himself wilfully, hoping he had made the right decision and the boy had learnt his lesson.

“What was that all about?” questioned Sir Aimon, “Oh just reiterating one of the commandments to the boy” replied Sir Jerar, The Knights simultaneously nodded and smiled as they settled down to a good nights sleep.

The days passed slowly, giving the Knights time to read the scriptures and consider their plight both now and when in Scotland, each day Eren would come and stand near to Sir Jerar in inquisitive anticipation, pointing to whatever book he was reading at the time.

The boys persistence paid off and when he was in between work Sir Jerar would point to words, make Eren say them and then copy them on parchment, over the period of the first journey Eren had learnt many words of the English language, now all he had to do was learn how to put them together in context!!!

The lookout pointed North shouting “Azari, Azari” as the headland of Malta crept over the horizon, there had long been Knights Influence there through the Hospitallers order of St John, with Sir Laurent de Baune now Grand Master of the Templar Knights.



The Sir Ralph and the 9 worthies busily prepared themselves to ensure their presentation was suitable to meet the renowned De Baune.

As they sailed into the port of Valletta, they could see a number of Knights gathered near the harbour wall waiting enthusiastically to receive them, the ship pulled alongside and weighed three anchor stones.

Sir Geoffery de Campion had been on a crusade with Sir Laurent and recognised his tall frame standing at the front of the welcoming committee.

Shouts of “Kavallieri Sinjur karşılama” rang from the quayside; Sir Ralph acknowledged their welcome, replying “l-unur hija taghna”

They cautiously stepped off the ship after 7 days at sea, disembarking with pronounced unsteady gait, their balance taking some time to adjust to the un-shifting dry land beneath their feet.

Everyone was so pleased to meet again, and were greeted with a heart warming welcome, there would hardly be time enough to catch up and find out what was happening in Cyprus and around the Templar Emporium, one thing was obvious, Sir Ralph was in very poor health.

Sir Geoffrey approached Sir Ralph directly “By the saints Sir Ralph, who is attending to your well being?” but without pausing for breath he continued, “We are on very good terms with the Knights Hospitallers of Jerusalem here and you need attention.”

Without delay he sent a messenger to the Foulques de Villeret, Grand Master of the Hospitallers who had command of Malta Castle requesting urgent attention for his friend and comrade; in no time 4 Knights arrived at the Priory to care for him, the luxury of a soft bed that didn’t move, was quite a potion on its own and certainly made him feel far more comfortable.

The Hospitallers reported back to Sir Geoffrey suggesting that Sir Ralph should remain in their care for at least seven days to regain his strength and stamina, Sir Geoffrey laughed, “The ship will be loaded and leave tomorrow, and I am sure Sir Ralph will need be on it.”

The Hospitallers returned to their patient; the nine worthies relished the delicious meal of lamb and local vegetables, thoroughly enjoying the banter, refreshment and freshly cooked food, soon they settled down, looking forward to a good nights sleep with gracious appreciation.



The morning came with repent, Sir Ralph had been well cared for and had also been made aware that the tide was turning for the Templar Order, as confirmed by Sir Jacques de Molay, there was much pressure from Pope Clement V and King Philippe IV for him to return to France to answer to false accusations, they should go in haste and beware the reception at La Rochelle, as there was much unrest at all quarters.

The Knights boarded the ship that afternoon, soon it set sail bound for the port of Lisbon the crusaders were about to face another gruelling 7 days at sea; they bade farewell to their comrades at arms, and waved them into the distance.

Eren, was pleased to see the knights back on board, and welcomed Sir Jerar with "Home please", which made all the Knights laugh in a contemplating way,if only they were!

**In some there are one
In others there are two
In the ones where there's one
There's one there for you**

**In the ones where there's two
That's not two too much
As two ones make two
And each means you've won!**

What are they?



4. Old Friends Meet Again

Jed becomes Jack

“YES”, shouted Mr E with exuberance, “YES” he chortled“I only think I’ve got it, but it will take a bit of putting together” he looked searchingly in the air mumbling to himself “got the transferase mitosis enhancer, juxtaposed intermolecular paradigms”,which gradually broke into the insane ravings of a total lunatic which sounded like.....”squergywergydiddlers, grundanglersbinchpolymerganisers, telemereintragagadandoids.....



With his hands over his ears Jed shouted “SSTTOOPP” ...the room fell silent, Brian’s face had taken on the features of a man possessed; he stood quietly for more than a minute, composed himself then sat back down.

“Jeddadiah, It is obvious that you need to infiltrate the committee to establish exactly what they are up to, and to foil their plans.

It is futile to try and bug the place, and if you coerced a collaborator, they would certainly be discovered and severely dealt with”

“And” said Jed?,

“And”, Brian replied, “I have a plan; for the last 6 yrs I have worked towards creating; not cloning, ‘Sectional Human Representation’; I have studied and investigated every aspect of the process leading to the final experiment which you see before you” he gestured to Wilma.

My most recent investigation coalesced many different aspects of development, including physical, psychological, physiological, molecular, genetic, atomic and others I will not confuse you with.

The results have proven conclusively that I can transform the superficial external appearance of an individual and also re tone their vocal chords, leaving all other brain function totally as it was before the S.H.R.

This means Mr Toogood, I can change your visual appearance and voice so you can sit in on all the meetings as my new laboratory assistant, I can easily create a new identity with a C.V. and a traceable reference database.....what do you think?.....and whom would you like to be?”

Jed sat in a state of utter confusion, his head spinning with all the information that he had just been bombarded with,

Woah...he thought, I may not be the best looking guy in the world, but this maniac wants to change my rugged, if not handsome features, into some unkown bod, created from within the mind of a madman...am I happy with my blue peircing eyes, ...so I’ve beentold...you’re damn right I am....., do I want to take the risk of losing my full head of blonde hair and ending up a disfigured balding mess NO...NO.... NO!!!



But before Jed could gather his thoughts and open his mouth Brian added, "Another bonus is, my real girlfriend Triany is the PA to Professor Anton De Mort the Chief Honcho of the Committee, she can help you and feed you any snippets that you may have missed."

Then without pausing for breath Brian folded his arms and stared right through Jed's eyes deep into his brain with relentless persistence.

"How perfect is this, you can be involved in every decision that is made at every stage, no relying on second hand information and no risk to the real you....."

"Enough, enough, I give in" said Jed throwing his hands in the air, ARE YOU REALLY SURE you can pull this off?"

"REALLY SURE?" questioned Brian,

"I would happily carry out this procedure on my mother"

"....Uh hum, Mr E, I am aware your mother passed over 3 yrs ago!"...

"Well, you know what I mean" giggled Brian.

"Ok,... How long will the transformation take.....and how long must I remain as Mr XWhat am I saying ?" asked Jed,

"Let me see, I need to take some blood and tissue samples, run a Doppler check, wire you for an EEG get the old Kirlian camera out and see if we can do a little Aura Transfiguration, check your Kinetic Energy levels along with.....mmm; Friday today, get a good nights sleep and we will start first thing tomorrow, and, if all is ok I will pop you in the F.I.R.E, Pod, and you will be ready by lunchtime Monday..... that is the Fibroblastic Inceptor for Re-structuring Enzymes Pod of course."

"Are you totally insane Brian?"

"Not totally Jed, just enough to be on the edge", chuckled Brian,

"So, here's your room and I'll see you in the morning, have a good night... Sleep time Wilma" Wilma sat down and went instantly into sleep mode.



Jed sat 'alone' with only his thoughts for company, *what have I agreed to? I must be the insane one, well, drastic solutions are needed for impossible situations I suppose.*

He stretched out on the bed, exhausted from his journey and the thought of tomorrow, he slowly fell into a deep and very nervous sleep.

At 7 o'clock Jed awoke to the appetising aroma of a cooked breakfast, he quickly arose and ventured into the kitchen where Wilma was busy preparing a hearty feast.

"Good morning Jeddadiah" Wilma said in a very mouth watering way,

"Good morning Wilma" Jed returned in an equally enticing way, before thinking *what is wrong with me, I actually find this none person attractive!*

"That's very nice of you to think that Jed" said Wilma

Oh God, she can read my mind I am in serious trouble.

At that point Brian came down, "Morning Jed, hope you slept well?"

"Er yes, fine, um..Wilma is ..er just preparing some breakfast, for us all"

"Not quite Jed, you are on starvation until after the tests, so I suggest you relax with your glass of water and I will be with you shortly", Brian smiled THAT smile and tucked into his brekky.

Jed sat in the laboratory trying to erase his mind of the thought of food, and what may happen in the next few days.

Brian came through before long and began his tests, giving out the occasional "well, gracious, with associated head nodding and shaking, without actually divulging anything, after a few hours the preliminary tests were done and submitted for analysis.

"Ok, Jed you can have some sustenance now, enjoy, as there won't be much tomorrow either."

The day passed uneventfully, until Brian came in later with the results,

"There's good news and bad news, I CAN do the procedure...but only in a female form"

Jed rose to his feet "I AM OUT OF HERE"



"Only joking" said Brian keeping well out of Jed's reach

"All is looking good and I can begin the process this evening, but I do need you to peruse these images Jed to choose who the new you is to be"

Jed looked at the mug shots rolling up on the screen asking, "Where did you select these from the local prison?" he kept scrolling, when one acceptable image appeared,

"I suppose that one will do...temporarily, how tall is he?"

"Same as you Jed, I am only manipulating your appearance; your stature and general dimensions will remain the same, it's a bit like wearing another face, but to everyone you will be just another employee".

Speaking in a positive yet pushy tone Jed said "Ok, let's get on with it"

They disappeared into the Research room that was filled with indescribable equipment; Jed said a small prayer, then Brian began.

Several hours later Jed emerged looking in the mirror he said "I'm exactly the same"

"You most certainly are, but tomorrow I need to F.I.R.E. you up, then things will change, in the mean time I will have your credentials authenticated so see you in the morning, do get a good nights sleep"

Jed felt unusually tired and fell into bed soon drifting into slumber.

Sunday arrived, Jed still felt ok, looked in the mirror and yep, still Jed, he walked into the kitchen and said "Good Morning" to both Brian and Wilma who were looking at him intently.

Jeds' expression changed, he looked around the room, "Who said that?"

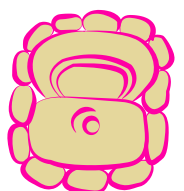
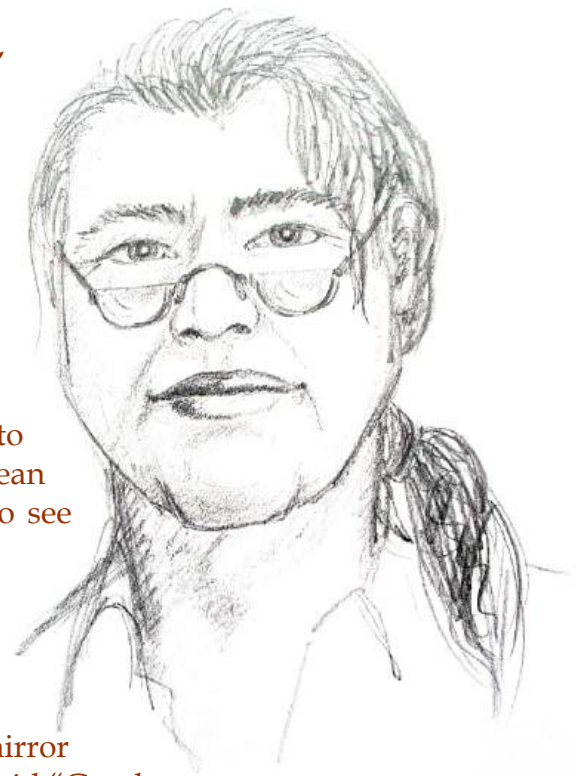
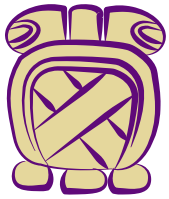
Brian laughed, "That was the voice of the new Jack Falstaff "

Jed was amazed, and kept saying things unnecessarily just so he could hear his new voice.

"Have a light breakfast, then the real work begins" Brian said as he made his way once more into the Research Lab'.

The rest of the day was spent FIRE ing Jed up; until late in the afternoon, the incarnation of Mr Jack Falstaff appeared.

Jed strode past the mirror many times admiring his new look, practising his voice at every opportunity.



"Ok Jed familiarise yourself thoroughly with Jack's credentials and the new you in preparation for your interview tomorrow" Brian related in a far more professional tone.

Jed replied similarly "Of course Mr Cunliffe."

Everybody retired early in anticipation of the enactment of Brian's ingenious façade.

Monday morning arrived 'Jack' was well rehearsed and ready for his new roll.

He accompanied Brian to the office and felt very unnerved to see all those familiar faces that didn't recognise him.

Soon he was in front of the selection committee whom he knew very well; all went according to plan, and the post was his.

Brian escorted 'Jack' to his official laboratory, where he was introduced to Triany;

"Hello, ah-hum, Jack" quipped Triany, in a mind blowing husky Australian accent, accompanied by a delightfully whimsical smile, causing the smooth tanned delicate texture of her face to glow with an air of serenity, Jack paused, in a state of heightened attraction.

He gazed into her almond translucent green eyes, then couldn't help but systematically scan the tall, slim and elegant lady before him, she flicked her head to one side gesturing for him to follow; with her dark wavy hair falling about her swan like neck, Jack followed his Svengali.

Arany's last words resonated suddenly in his head *Befriend Triany.... I will, I will, Jack fantasised, and then reality hit home, this was Brian's real girlfriend....or was it, she was just too perfect, was this in fact a later version WILMA??*

This thought brought Jack to his senses; he composed himself and walked briskly to the rest room , he just had to wait now for a meeting to be convened and make sure he was in attendance; Triany said she would keep her ear to the ground and let him know of any particular itineraries that 'Jack' should be aware of.

He didn't have to wait long before Triany informed him that De Mort had summoned an Emergency meeting of the select committee of 12 of which Brian was one, but not available so 'Jack' would take his seat, the Itinerary was to discuss the lack of contact from Arany and the whereabouts of Jeddediah Toogood!!!



Jed pondered, This is surreal I am attending a meeting to discuss where I am, and how to find me, and also why Arany who I put into suspended animation has not reported in....awkward!!

The committee assembled and was brought to order by the aptly named solemn faced Anton de Mort.

He then began a transcript of what may and may not have happened to both Jed and Arany not ruling out espionage from another faction.

He then handed out an encrypted data accumulator, which gave an in depth overview of the current precarious situation and suggested alternative methods for retrieving the Gods Treasures assuming both Jed and Arany had either defected or died, requesting everyone's feedback and proposals within 24 hrs.

'Jack' felt a surge of adrenalin; this could be the very information he had been yearning to discover, he found it difficult to contain his excitement as he returned casually to his laboratory.

He immediately obtained the passwords from Triany enabling data decryption; his eyes rolled as the proposed hypothesis spewed out across the screen, he instantly copied the decoded log into his Time Capsule Chip Bank for later retrieval.

'Jack' signed out from work at normal time and raced back to Mr E's who was in the laboratory having been out on surveillance all day, hence Jacks representation at the meeting.

"I think this is it Brian, this information could be the directional link to my life's purpose, I am nearly too afraid to open it"

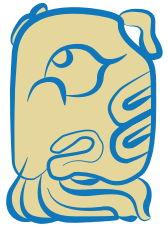
"Give it here w'ell soon see what the thoughts of Chairman Mao are"

Brian took the Time Capsule and fed it into his unhackable reader, they both devoured every word as it appeared on the screen inwardly digesting its connotations and inferences.

At the termination they turned to each other and simultaneously shrieked "Eureka"

This disclosure was more a directive than a request for input; inviting sanction to send 'Professor Vinnetti' virtually as a bounty hunter, to eliminate the risk to world security, presented by the alleged coercion and defection of Arany and Jeddediah to some unnamed super power.

At the same time he would be programmed to secure information to the whereabouts of the Cauldron of Eternal Life and the Bachal Isu from Jed by whatever means necessary!!



Within the document was also an encrypted schematic plan, which Brian was able to decipher in minutes that disclosed the locations of the treasures, and divulged alleged 'confirmed confessions' that Vinetti had witnessed in a conversation between Jed and Arany where he heard them discussing how they were to steal the God's Treasures for their own wicked rewards.

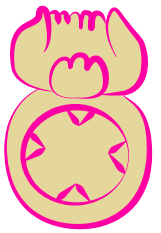
"This is what I returned for Brian" Jed said passionately, "I must get back immediately and prevent De Mort and Vinetti's plans from becoming reality, he will attempt to find Arany first which will give me some respite but it will certainly be a challenge to stay one step ahead"

Brian and Jed went into the Laboratory to deploy Re-Integration, to return Jed to his normal self;

In just two hours Jed immersed intact, although his voice was still somewhat disassociated; he said his grateful thanks and goodbyes to Brian and the lovely Wilma, then preceded to enter data into the Amulet.

**Jeddariah he got all fired up
When he went into the pod
Then one came out as both of them
But which one won the job**

Who was it?



5. A Viking Tale - The East Cowes Assault

The Future Encounters the Past



orkbeards inland assault could be likened to a comet ploughing its unhindered journey through the universe destroying everything in its path without remorse, with Shanklin simulating a perfect “satellite respite” with plenty of comfortable Inns to temper the foot sore warriors before they continued their journey to Godshyll.

Badb approached Forkbeard saying, “Sire, I had a vision that the raid on Godshyll will be rewarding in many ways, I saw a stranger dressed in holy cloth, not of our kind, in the church grounds, who holds the secret of time itself, he must not be harmed as he seeks to undo the ravages of the past and make good the future”

“What on this earth do you talk of Badb, your riddles are not for the ears of mere mortals, are you saying don’t harm the holy man”?

“Yes Sire”, Badb replied curtsying in acknowledgment,

“So be it” replied Forkbeard, “can we now put an end to these ramblings?”

Badb once again curtsied “Yes Sire” she said with an infinitely wise smile lighting up her rugged features.

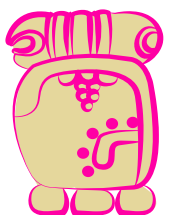
The army marched forth imposing their force through Hyde, and Appuldurcombe, poaching wild deer and rounding up pack animals to help carry their load.

No resistance was proffered as they imposed their might through the sparse countryside; Forkbeard had seen these response tactics before,

“We will see no retaliation until we reach Newport, then they will board themselves up in the Carisbrooke Fort, but with our formidable force we can overcome their puny walls of protection” he resounded reassuringly.

Clouds of dust trailed the pursuit as men and animals forged their way across the meagre farms and homesteads burning to the ground what little they encountered, soon the church at Godshyll could be seen standing proud amongst a few scanty dwellings from which small bodies of men were scurrying away, frantically trying to evade the oncoming threat.

The Norsemen were permitted unlimited access to whatever they wished, it was futile for the Eyjarskeggi to resist, all property and possessions were unceremoniously removed or decimated, whilst ensuring any place of note was relieved of its “non desirable” occupants whilst desirables remained in occupation for later entertainment.



A band of 20 warriors immediately raided the empty church, removing all they could lay hands on, including a bronze statue of and the golden sword of a local hero, many silver chalices, and gold coins were hidden within a priest hole built into the fabric of the walls, their reward was nearly a Kings Ransom, but unwittingly left the "Holy Grail" undetected.

In the centre of the village were places to rest, with plenty of food and grog to satisfy the marauding warriors thirst and appetite, they spilled into every crevice consuming their fill as they went, until bleary eyed and incoherent.

Badb, was sitting out under the full moon, whispering her prayers to Cerridwen the Moon Goddess of Enchantment, Initiation and Regeneration her celestial beauty filled the dark corners and lit up the shadows in hues of silver threads,

"May it please you to know my Goddess
of magnificent splendour, that my sincerest
wish is to spread just one tiny ray of lustrous light
upon this mother earth in your name and be a comfort to all
those who are lost in the darkest of nights, that they may find their
way back to their hearts desire."

As these words of compassion passed her lips from the corner of her eye Badb caught a flicker of moonlight playing upon a crumpled shadowy form which seemed to manifest itself from the very earth beneath, slowly it untangled its twisted profile emanating into the contours of a cloaked monk in prayer.

Instantly Badb realised that this was the fulfilment of her vision, the holy man, who controlled time itself.

Jed was surprised, even at VR 4 everything was black, a sound like thunder resonated within Jed's body threatening to tear his head from his torso if he moved too quickly, conversely he could feel the inane pressure of gravity attempting to compress his physical form into a pinhead without compassion or care. Then in an implosion he was sucked into a vacuum of silence and nothingness, his physical body floating in space.

His thoughts were caught up in the limbo of time as he seemingly drifted in slow motion to his destination, the legendary Godshyll Church, the one that refused to be built on unholy ground.

Tale tells that the church was originally to be built within the village, at the foot of a hill, which was owned by a very sinful person, the footings were dug out ready for construction – and that's where the trouble started..the workmen toiled hard all day, but none would work there once darkness fell, for fear of the voices that befell round about the grounds. In the friendlier light of morning when they returned, the workmen's tools had vanished.



They believed the locals from the Inn were playing jokes on them, so they decided to get a nightwatchman, to keep his eye on coming and goings, but by morning without sight nor sound of any human the tools had still been rearranged or moved to another location. By now the builders were becoming more than a little frightened, it was rumoured that dark magic was involved.

Until, one bright morning the workmen arrived to begin their days toll, when ALL of their tools and huge stonework's had disappeared apparently without trace.

The whole village was searched from top to bottom, but nothing could be found, until later the following day a local herdsman was tending his goats at the high point of Godshyll when he came across all the stoneworks lying in a circle, with all the workmens tools in the middle forming a cross. A force greater than man or beast had projected the implements to their rightful place of rest, on top of the very hill you find it built today!!

Then with a resounding crash and pain, reality was once more with him, he had repolarised in the Church Vestry in Godshyll, he quickly grabbed a Monks habit from the rail, and still very disorientated staggered down the steep hill, he could hear noise and laughter, who was it and where was it coming from, the dizziness overtook him and he fell to his knees, then, a voice from nowhere called

"Welcome stranger"

There before me was a wizened lady of mystical qualities

"I was foretold of your coming, what seeketh thou"? she called

Jeddadia felt as though his entire human form was still travelling through time, like pieces of a jigsaw strewn across the galaxies, waiting for some kind soul to find ALL the fragments and assemble them in some sort of functional structure.

Where am I he momentarily questioned who am I, have I arrived at my intended destination, what is my quest, did I actually make the journey without any missing parts?

His mind was racing trying to make sense of this crazy time transportation mission; he knelt motionless whilst his body assimilated his faculties.

Badb's voice echoed in the distance "Welcome, are you all right, do you need any help"?

Jed slowly turned his head in the direction of Badb, thinking, "well, that's positive, I can hear, and my neck works, let's try the voice.....Sthurr chooo chne rabey" was his eloquent reply, which even he could not make any sense of, "Mmmm this could be awkward, let's try again", he asserted, then with great concentration he replied in staccato "Thank - you - kind - lady" to the great relief of both parties.



Jed was dressed in a long hooded robe, similar to the cloth of a priest, he wasn't sure that this masquerade would be welcomed amongst the Norse heathens, he gradually uncurled, straightened his body and stood before Badb,

"I am Jeddadia from a distant land, I am seeking to find my mother who lived in this time....forgotten place"he bumbled trying desperately not to completely expose his true objectives in his first sentence.

Badb smiled, "I am Badb my ancestors are Badb Goddess of war and Morrigan both leaders of the Tuatha De Danann, whose powers have been bestowed upon me, I am very aware of your quest Jeddadia"

This stopped Jed dead in his tracks, how could this seemingly innocent old lady have the knowledge and power to comprehend his intentions before he had barely introduced himself.

Jed had to think quickly

"That is most interesting Badb, does this mean I will be allowed to pursue my goal unhindered"? he remarked without revealing any more details.

"Yes, you may pursue your goal" Badb replied with a hint of sarcasm, "but I can not assure you that it will be unhindered,....although with your considerable powers, I am certain this will not be of great concern" she gave another one of those all knowing smiles as she beckoned Jed nearer.

"I have already told King Forkbeard of your coming and not to harm you as his wealth could be enhanced, so consider this fact in any conversations you may have with his majesty and you will probably be retained in good health for the time being, come inside and let me introduce you to King Sweyn Forkbeard,be agreeable"

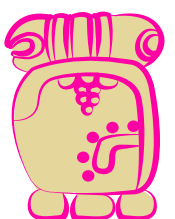
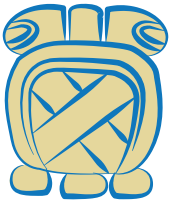
"You are very kind Badb, thank you for upholding my confidence"

They walked into the rowdy Inn, where the King was reposed in the back quarters, to jeers of

"See you found yourself a good man witch haha" and "Perhaps you can magic him some new clothes" along with other derogatory comments.

They entered the back room where the King was being kept occupied with the attentions of his "admirers" he snapped

"What is it Badb?"



Badb and Jed bowed in respect,

"This is the holy man I spoke of your majesty"

"What holy man" questioned the King

"The one I saw in my vision whom you agreed to protect as he may be able to enhance the Kings purse"

"Did I,..... well, if that is the case he will be protected, be gone....I have far more important things to deal with", he turned to his ladies in waiting to continue his pleasures.

They left without delay, once in the courtyard Jed asked

"What are the Kings plans Badb, where is he to go from here"?

"He next plans to lay siege at Carisbrooke Fort, even though he knows they have fortified the building with new walls the King declares it can be torn down quicker than it was built"

Jed shuddered inside, as he knew that his beloved Kate's family were keepers of the Fort in this timeline and should the invasion by the Kings warriors be victorious, Kate's parents would surely be killed, therefore, she would never be born.

Jed considered his position and confirmed,

"I will travel with you under the Kings protection until we reach the Roman Settlement then I must attend to other business, please do not betray my confidence, for should the King know of my plans my head will roll."

"Jeddadia, I know your intentions are good and your triumph at this time will reflect the wellbeing of many others and even influence all of life on mother earth, I will be your ally throughout, and I will pray to my Gods for your success and safe keeping".

"Bless you Badb for your knowledge and understanding"

They fell asleep where they lay with only the Moon as their guardian.....

The morning broke abruptly to the dawn chorus of 500 warriors preparing for battle, with much banter and ridicule of each others prior nights activities.



Badb and Jed ate a hearty breakfast of eggs and pork before they were en route behind the warriors, marching more than pillaging through Rookley Forest and on to the old Roman Ruins close to Newport, this was a full days task, and all were pleased they were given the run of the route, as the marauders passed through Blackwater they stocked up with meat from the few local farms they raided, and water from the brook, this was brief respite, they were soon back on the road pushing on through Shide arriving at the Roman Escarpment late that evening.

It was time for Jed to take his leave from this place; he quickly found Badb, who was resting her weary bones after the days demanding march.

"I must attend to my quest now Badb, if the King asks of me, tell him you last saw me down by the brook, he will assume I was attacked and killed or captured, thank you for your help, our paths will cross again"

Jed left without further contact.....

**Another tale of unholy rest
In truth may not be so
It is said the Devil cloaked in sin
Lived at the place below**

**Hence Stones did dance quite on their own
to a higher place of rest
Away from that unhallowed ground
They made their final quest**

Where was this?

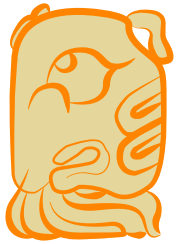


6. Jed's Quest for The Seed of Power

The Longstone reveals its secret



he only way Jed could gain the upper hand in this race against time was to retrieve the Crystal of Power from the Longstone at Mottistone, which will increase the transportation speed, time in one portal, and range of the Amulet's functions before Vinnetti was on his trail.



Coordinates were set for the portal of Godshyill Church, Isle of Wight and the time zone as 1006AD then gently Jed turned the Velocity to level 4, depolarisation had begun.....

Jed was still quite shocked that with all his "super powers" a little old lady called Badb, had the insight to know so much about his quest. Jed had also established a good relationship with Sweyn Forkbeard, who had accepted him and his way of life virtually without question, he was safe within their realms, but he now knew that the Viking army was about to attack Caribrooke Fort and he had to protect his future family and loved ones.

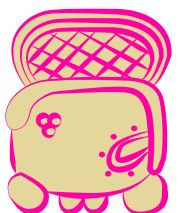
Jed slipped away at the Roman Escarpment stealing a horse from a nearby stable; he walked on soft ground until out of earshot then galloped at full speed across the downs heading towards the Mystical and Magical Megalith at Mottistone, his thoughts raced before him.

I have decided that to truly beat Vinnetti at his own game I need to seek the sanctification of the Sacred Seed Crystal with its inherent resonant energy which is said to have been created from the tears of Christ at the Crucifixion as they fell and filtered through the Black Rods of Tourmalinated Quartz which were gathered in a Moldavite cup; this vibrant tincture was infused with Salt water from the Sea of Galilee which metamorphosed into the Sacred Seed Crystal of Power on the day of the resurrection, retaining the transitional attributes of the wheel of birth, life, death, time travel and miracles in holy suspension.

I know that it is in the vicinity of the Longstone but not where, I feel this is an adventure I will not forget!

He continued his journey cantering over Bowcombe Down skirting Brighstone Forest at Limerstone, then heading for Mottistone when he came to a small track leading East to the summit where his adventure would begin; there before him stood the haunting, captivating Menhir, silhouetted graciously against the crimson evening skyline.

Jed's horse had become quite skittish as he approached the Standing Stones for no apparent reason, Jed looked around for a cause, but all was very still and quiet; after tethering his mount to nearby bushes, he strode the last few yards cautiously on foot, he could feel the unseen pulsating energy resonating an air of mysticism and foreboding as he stood beside this monument of tales and legends.



Folklore has it that the devil was carrying the stones when he dropped the huge one and a giant cast the large stone from St Catherine's Down some 7 miles away to its current location, but where was the 3rd stone, the Rocking Stone, which was used in judgement for guilt, as those with guilt could not move the stone, yet for the innocent it rocked with ease, but where was it?

Jed stood scrutinising the two stones from the West when he noticed how the tall megalith resembled a mammoth crystalline form with its predominant facet inclined right, towards the midday sun, which in the ancient study of crystallography would give the stone the quality to access the future, to the North behind the set he could clearly see the remains of a long barrow from thousands of years before, *what tales can it tell, what secrets does it behold he mused.*

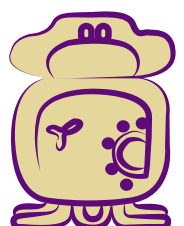
He felt there was much more to this ancient monument than was readily apparent, he slowly circumvented its boundary, allowing the tips of his fingers to caress and explore the delineations of its magnificence, as one would the skin of a lover, absorbing the sensations of each undulation and crevice with inquisitive anticipation; somewhere concealed within its façade lay the unwritten signatures of clandestine rituals and artefacts, he just needed to unravel the code.

Inducing the mind set of sacred and pagan times past, he sat on the recumbent stone placing his hands gently on the towering Longstone, asking for enlightenment and understanding, his fingers played around the small cup marks that proliferated the surface, as they probed, his tactile receptors burst into context, as your taste buds would respond to biting a lemon.

Standing back he counted nine cup marks incarcerated within a spiral form from base to apex, Jed lightly palpated their contours, like braille he could detect tiny mounds and undulations around the periphery of each, his heart began to race, with the aid of his Amulet he examined them visually, and there, in the most delicate Ogham was an inscription in each, he had studied the ancient script when visiting Ireland.

From the lowest cup vertically they read

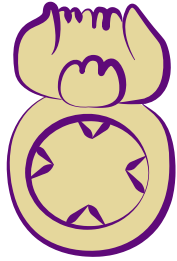
- 1) Seek
- 2) Otherworld
- 3) 200 West
- 4) Logan Stone
- 5) Truth
- 6) Past
- 7) Future
- 8) Sacred Seed
- 9) Tumulus 9



Jed felt exhilarated; he had found the clues that would lead to where the Seed of Power was concealed; now he had to find it.

From the clues Jed pondered its true meaning

Ok, let's do this in stages, I must go and find the missing Logan Stone, which if my interpretation is correct lays 200....paces? West of the Longstone, then I will take the test of truth whatever that is, and the final clue will be revealed in the ninth barrow, mmm better get moving as the night is drawing in.



Jed took his position and paced out 200 steps, which led him to a wood, where just beside a large Oak stood the Rocking Stone, it did not look very inspiring, it was small, about 3ft long and 2ft wide with a wedged shape base. He scoured around the immediate area but could not see any Barrows, *ok he thought, I had better see what the stone has to say!*

He walked up and looked at the stone, there was a feint depression in the top, Jed said a small prayer before placing his hand in the relief.....it rocked..... big time, *What happens now* thought Jed.

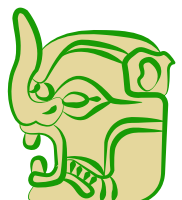
From the near distance he heard a grumbling sound far beneath the ground, he stepped gingerly towards the area where the noise had emanated from, there was the tumulus whose capping stone had opened to reveal an earthen stairway winding deep into the depths of the earth.

Jed felt compelled to follow the beckoning trail, using his Amulet to light the way, he vigilantly descended into comparative darkness; the walls were plain limestone covered with hieroglyphics portraying many battles alongside the rise and fall of countless kings.

There was nothing momentous or frightening about this occasion, Jed felt quite calm as he passed down three flights of nine stairs then along a dark triangular tunnel which opened into what resembled the Inside of a pyramid, each wall was dressed in brilliantly coloured mosaics depicting on one side the Solar System with strange shaped objects and creatures seemingly flying through space, the second showed A wild Prehistoric Environment with Man destroying all in sight.

The third displayed a magnificent image of Christ holding a Golden Casket; as Jed came closer he could see that the casket was real and seemed to have its own inherent vitality, pulsating with ethereal light.

He moved softly with consternation towards the rainbow effervescence, and peeked in awe at the Sacred Seed of Power contained within, he looked over his shoulder to ensure he was alone and reached out to grasp this Crystal of Wonder, half expecting it to disappear before his eyes.



His fingers curled around its body, then he felt a surge of energy race through his being, he quickly slipped it into a leather pouch and placed it in his security belt.

It was pertinent to leave this time capsule without delay and continue his quest, Jed made his exit in haste emerging into the blazing sunlight, *how did that happen thought Jed, I can see I must become further acquainted with my new companion!*

Jed closed the vault, covered his tracks then gathered his horse, "Hello my faithful friend, it is time for us to visit Carisbrooke Fort, then I will set you free, on we go"

Just over an hours hard ride the narrow approach to the Fort loomed ahead; Jed pulled into the nearby woods, dismounted, and loosed his horse, making the rest of his journey quietly on foot.

At this stage he was not quite sure what his reception would be at the Fort, but as he rode a plan had formulated in his head, *Once I reach the Portal in the Chapel at Carisbrooke Fort I can teleport forward to Kate's time of 1647, If I can focus on the wash house I should be able to make contact with Mrs Wheeler a housemaid, who was like a mother to Kate and then find my beloved, I just so fear for the safety of Kate and her family.*

As he neared the entrance two guards who were standing on duty challenged him, "who goes there?" one shouted, fixing an arrow in his bow.

Jed called back in as holy a voice as he could muster, "It's Father Christian brothers, I have walked from Godshyll and have important information from his Holiness The Abbott, to impart to Sir Richard de Redvers", but first I must thank God for my safe deliverance at the Chapel, will you accompany me there?"

"Not likely" said the stout bearded Guard, he'd have our heads if we left our post" at this he opened the side Gate and allowed Jed to pass.

"Bless you my sons" Jed imparted with a sign of the cross, thank you God he whispered under his breath as he walked stealthily towards the chapel, upon entry he knelt in reverence, carefully looking around for any other parishioners but fortunately the church was empty.

He made his way to the Vestry; *this was becoming quite a habit he amusingly thought!*

**The quest to find the Seed of Power
Lead not to a Rolling Stone
In name it portrayed the actual Genre
and stood their quite alone.
The rumble Jed heard definitely, kicked off all the action
This truly was a real cool find
And brought such satisfaction**

What was it?



7. Viking Raid

Carisbrooke Fort under Seige



he warriors were becoming agitated and somewhat bored, as they prepared daily for a fight that never manifested, but things were about to change.



Forkbeard summoned his finest leaders,

“The journey has been easy”, (putting the traumas of the previous battles firmly in the past) “and, I am aware that you are warriors and need to fight your way to victory not just walk it” the men resounded their confirmation, “well my fine Fólk, your time is nigh”, the troops enthusiastically hailed their support.

“At first light we attack Carisbrooke Fort”, all around roared with passionate allegiance.

“This night we must repay the Gods for their guidance and protection, prepare a mighty feast, there will be much joy and gaiety, the Horg will be blessed with the blotant life force of the finest beasts which we will quarter with the golden sword, and make these fine sacrificial offerings that will surely please the Gods, go now and prepare, tomorrow we must revenge the lives of our countrymen who were slain by the orders of that pig Ethelred”

Forkbeard spat at the ground, provoking unanimous guttural responses from his men followed by the Herop of Jaaa and Veaga svenar the Norse men were euphoric at the thought of a real battle, where they could release their suppressed anger and vengeance on the Islanders of Wyvern.

Forkbeard commanded “All warriors in charge gather round the mound for a war council” the men hurried into position and very soon were assembled awaiting their orders.

“As you are aware our forefathers levelled the Manor at Carisbrooke many times, but now the gentry in their fear have fortified the Manor and protected it with a huge wall”

“He picked up his sword and marked a cross in the earth, saying “Here is the Old Manor, and here is the new wall,” outlining the perimeter of the fortress in the dirt.

“Attacking the South East or West perimeter walls would be very difficult as the banks are steep, and we would be prime targets for their beady eyes and arrows” the warriors mumbled in contemplated agreement.



“Trying to lay direct force to the main gated entrance would also be foolish as this will be very well protected and they will pick us off like flies, so here is the plan”, the warriors moved closer as Forkbeard detailed his tactical plan of attack.

“We must march before first light, to gain the advantage, so prepare your weapons and tools this night, and victory will be ours tomorrow”.

The warriors leapt to their feet, chanting and beating their shields vigorously in noisy support and response to their leaders demands, then left to prepare for the night and the morning.

The mist lay over the fields like a million spiders had spun their webs together and magically suspended them between the plants and trees, obscuring all below that level, this was a bounteous sight for the King and his men, they set onward in haste with their bodies consumed by the mystical fog.

Within quarter of a degar their target was in sight, they approached the Fort in near silence, keeping low to benefit from the persistent shroud of protection, the scurryers who were the fittest and fastest warriors separated from the main group with ropes and hooks positioning themselves under the lateral turrets a good distance away from the main entrance, whilst the main body of men approached the main portcullis keeping quiet and out of range of the Fort bowmen who had yet to realise their presence.

Once the scurryers were in place, the main offensive postured their archers ready to let loose their venom.

On command the foremost Viking bowmen released an onslaught of arrows, then retreated behind their protective shields, the sound was fearful and enhanced by the whole army simultaneously letting out a bellowing roar of like a herd of stampeding elephants, this was enough to frighten the devil himself.

Pandemonium broke loose on the ramparts with soldiers running too and fro like headless chickens, letting loose the occasional flurry of arrows which fell before the intimidating warlords.

Meanwhile the scurryers, held tight to the walls out of sight and away from the main assault waiting for the signal to scale the walls and fight their way to disbar the main doors, making way for the Viking entourage.



Another mighty roar of “Fjorlag til Eylandr” emanated from the warriors, this time signifying the release of a huge burning battering ram, mounted on a cart projected towards the sturdy fort doors, which was also the signal for the scurryers to make their ascent.

The battering ram was more to focus the Islanders attention to the frontal attack rather than a means to enter, leaving the rear and side entries vulnerable.

The main force continued their assault with a multitude of well-planned assaults, keeping all attention forward.

The scurryers were quickly over the wall having quietly dispatched the too few men on lookout, and now made their way quietly down to ground level away from all the activity above.

Their objective was before them, the main stockade barrier a huge Oak beam across the width of both doors, it would take most of the task force to dislodge this barricade, and needed to be executed swiftly and effectively.

The two bands of warriors came together and in typical Beserkr style let out tumultuous war cries as they stormed the gates head on with swords ripping through the resistance with such malevolence it was although the whole English army were fighting in slow motion, men fell about in bloody disarray as the onslaught pushed nearer to their goal.

By now the bowmen above had changed their attack to within the walls and were raining arrows down upon the marauders, some finding their mark and others dispatching many of their own men.

The remaining Norse invaders reached the gates, some ran to each end of the Oak beam, putting their backs to the door, whilst the remaining leapt on their shoulders and together levered the Oak beam from its fixture as the remaining fended off attackers.

With a resounding crash the beam fell to the ground revealing a blast of light through its dark surround, the warriors amassed and heaved the huge doors ajar to the sound of thunderous exultation from their comrades who were descending upon the Fort like a swarm of locusts about to devour all in sight.

The Eylandr knew they were defeated the moment their main defences were breached; the Norse warriors flooded the Fort with the ferocity of a tsunami, leaving little of any worth in their wake.



Forkbeard, standing on the highest parapet, raised his Skjöld and Bradr roaring, "Victory belongs to the Vikingr Sigar" the ground shook with the pounding of feet and beating of shields as these fearless assailants rejoiced in the downfall of the supposed impenetrable Carisbrooke Fort.

"Lock the Lords and Ladies in the middle hall, we shall deal with them later" the king ordered.

With the garrison overpowered, it was once again time for the army to celebrate their well won tactical invasion.

"Before the nights festivities begin let us see what Lord of this Manor has to donate to the islands new King. Badb; Magnus come with me and bring men with you" they walked the winding stone staircase to the hall.

Magnus unlocked the doors preceding the King to reveal the captured landed gentry huddled in a corner awaiting their fate.

"Which one of you fine mortals is the Lord of this Manor" the king imposed, silence befell the room.

"I will not ask again" Forkbeard reinforced; a stout perspiring gentleman with a poorly concealed smirk stepped forward,

"It is with delight sire that I inform you, his Lordship, his family and possessions were fortuitously escorted from the stockade yesterday, to an unknown destination by an unknown accomplice"

Forkbeard was not one to be ridiculed, he rose, turned and strode out of the room calling to Magnus, "Be sure these perpetrators receive their just deserts".

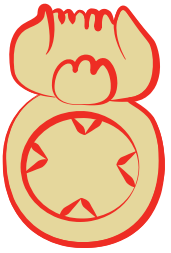
Their gasps of horror were the last breaths they would take.

The King was vexed at the escape, "He has more wit about him than I envisaged, said the King in a tone of disbelief, "What say you Badb"? the King asked in a disbelieving tone.

"His Gods were with him this day Sire" but you have won the battle" Badb replied.

"Yes, you are right, he lives now, but only to fight again".

That night the fort was illuminated with great celebratory fires where banquets of the finest foods were also prepared.



In the centre of the festivities a Horg was prepared and alongside were some of the most exotic clothes and precious jewels imaginable; these were laid before the Gods in praise. A white stallion, that could have been Pegasus was led to the Horg, brushed and groomed to the immaculate, a requiem of worship and reverence filled the evening air in solemn and total allegiance to all the Gods that had gone before them.

In ritual precision the King and Badb acting as the sacrificers stood with louted posture before this beautiful animal, Badb chanted poetic overtures as the white stallion was led before them

“Oh glorious Gods of war, protection and valour, we praise and humbly thank you for watching over and guiding us to great victory’s and we offer this sacred beast that you may be proud to ride it in glory in Valhalla”

The neck was sectioned with great skill gushing its bloody life force across the Horg and witnesses thereupon, then with one powerful stroke the head was severed and taken to be displayed in reverence between the split boughs of a Sacred Oak.

The quarters and entrails were removed and lain upon the burning embers of a vast fire, to be consumed by privileged master warriors, ensuring the stallions magical vitality would live on forever, enhancing their physical and psychological prowesses.

In his newly acquired fortress Forkbeard was safe from attack allowing him and his men to celebrate in an atmosphere of relaxed passionate enthusiasm.

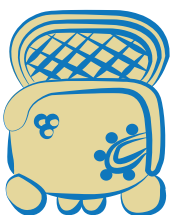
The warmongering had gone well, and all were in high spirits the following morning, the King called together his leaders.

“Babd has informed me that we are nearing our quest end and will soon join forces with our comrades at Cowes Medyne”

The men cheered heartily at the thought of this welcome reunion, Forkbeard drew a map in the dirt of their next campaign and continued,

“Before this pleasure we must let no man stand in our way on our journey to Quarr Abbey, and must push hard through Dodenor and the Riverwaye, until we are in sight of the Lavender Fields, where we may take respite beneath the Monkey Trees.

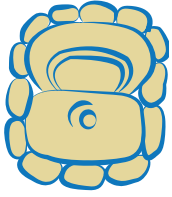
Once we are rested, the journey to Quarr is only a short journey over the mound past the sacred Butterfly Grove, we should reap fine rewards there and the monks have never retaliated yet.”



A raid of fear befell the Fort
With Forkbeard at its helm
To celebrate the victory
A Banquet, it was held

Many fine foods were prepared
and lain before the throng
But who was it that used his loaf
To stop things going wrong

Who was it?



8. The Templar Betrayal

The Journey begins



ir Ralph conferred with the Knights, "We should gather our strength on this journey, as Lisbon is seven days hence and we know not what we should find when we arrive, let us pray that Sir Vasco Fernandes holds his position and court well"

The Knights sat quietly, pondering their journey and plight ahead as they lay under the stars drifting into deep repose.

The days that followed were rife with sickness and rolling seas, these Knights were of the land and this floating hell was becoming more intolerable with every painfully slow nautical mile. Sir Ralphs health was floundering under the wave of illness that had befallen all aboard, and the Knights were concerned that he may not even survive the journey to Lisbon.

The days and nights rolled by with boring monotony, other than their inner thoughts and consciousness to ensure the success of their mission.

Sir Jerar spent time with Eren each day teaching him English, which was certainly improving, one benefit was he could act as interpreter which helped with instructions to the crew, although interpretation was still a serious issue having once received a woman of ill repute, when requesting a ships oar!!!

At last the coastline of Portugal was in sight, the Knights cheered, thanking God for their safe arrival, and were relishing the thought of clean clothes, fresh food and some intelligent conversation, unfortunately this would only be one night ashore before returning to the ship, they therefore wished to enjoy their brief respite to its maximum.

Sir Vasco Fernandes was waiting at the quayside with around 20 Knights, who bellowed an enthusiastic welcome. Sir Ralph stood at the head of the ship standing proud and tall but noticeably emaciated.

The Knights scrambled ashore, their sea legs turning to rubber as they grappled with the sensation of firm soil under their feet.

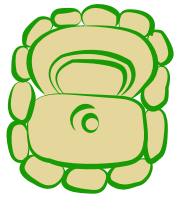
The welcoming party laughed heartily at the sight and jovially assisted them onto their horses.

Sir Vasco Fernandes escorted them to Tomar to give thanks for their safe journey, worship and pay homage to other Templar Masters that had been laid to rest at the magnificent.



After the short visit they were accompanied to the Templar Castle of Almourol where they at last could rest their weary bones, and satisfy their bellies.

Sir Vasco, confirmed that there was still much anxiety over the reprisals of Sir Jacques de Molay and Templars worldwide were in fear of their lives as this persecution was becoming widespread across the land, he turned and addressed Sir Ralph,



"You, my fine upholder of the faith must be sure to have maximum protection wherever you go on your God given quest, for there are many who, through debt, greed, envy and power, wish to see your demise"

Sir Ralph nodded in acknowledgement, his worn and frail body just wanting to rest, Sir Vasco summoned his best physicians to attend to Sir Ralph doing the best they could in the short space of time available.

The night passed quickly and once again the knights were back on board ship and sailing the following day to undertake what in normal circumstances would be a very social and enjoyable trip to La Rochelle, but with the unrest and intimidation they knew not what awaited them there.

Time passed very slowly, and after many gruelling days at sea they rounded the cape A Cluny and tucked into the Bay of Biscay's coastline en route for La Rochelle.

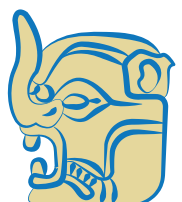
The Knights knew they would be welcomed with open arms by the Grand Master Sir Gerard de Villiers, but did not know how much pressure he and his Knights were under from Capetian and Papal pressures.

Another 3 days would see them arrive at their penultimate destination, the weather had been kind and they were for the best part intact. As they neared the port, a small boat approached the ship,

"Is Sir Ralph de Gorges aboard" they shouted from the small craft,

Sir Ralph supported by two Knights, Retorted "Who is enquiring" the three men stood up in the boat and shouted in a whisper, "The messengers of Sir Gerard de Villiers"

"Come aboard" Sir Ralph replied, the messengers were unceremoniously hoisted up on deck.



Sir Ralph stepped forward, "What message do you bring from Sir Gerard"?

"We have come to collect you and your Knights, Sir Gerard requests you do not wear your white tunic and traditional Templar robes on arrival, as there is much tyranny in France, and there are rewards for reporting Templar activists."

Sir Ralph replied, "Thank you kind sirs we will dress accordingly and prepare ourselves immediately " in no time the 10 Knights were ready and clambered down the rope ladder onto the waiting boat.

"Greetings Sir Knights, I apologise for the alarm, but it was better you were forewarned, I am Sir Hugues, it is my honour to assist in your journey".

The boat went ahead of the Merchant ship, and pulled alongside a small jetty, where they were met by other Knights who were also incognito.

Sir Gerard was one of those in disguise, "Sir Ralph, welcome, welcome, my brave comrades there is much to tell you, follow me to the horses and we will soon be at a safe place" he announced.

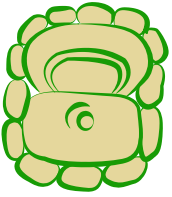
They sped off in convoy formation, without incident, after a short time they reached Vaulclair Castle where they were enthusiastically received and welcomed to the great Hall, after satisfying their hunger and thirst the Knights appreciatively retired for the night.

Sir Gerard de Villiers and Sir Charles de St Valery greeted the ensemble in the morning and addressed them formally,

"My formidable and gracious Knights, I praise God for your deliverance and welcome you to Vaulclair Castle, where you will be safe until you leave tomorrow; I know you are aware of the Templar plight, and we are aware of your religious journey and its potential repercussions.

We have received word from Sir Jacques de Molay that pressure is mounting for him to return to France and join forces with the Knights Hospitallers, but he knows this is a conspiracy instigated by King Phillippe in league with Guillaume de Nogaret with Pope Clement being used as sanctification to commandeer the wealth of the Templars by devastating their reputation and credibility, then, they will dispense our assets into the hands of the Hospitallers, after levelling any debt due from the crown.

It is imperative your quest is achieved and I am under instruction from Sir Jacques that we must do all in our power to protect you, so this we will do; my task has been to bring together as many portable treasures as I can muster from the wealth of France and secure them onto 18 ships.



We are then to transport them to a secret hiding place in Scotland along with a battalion of Knights to support King Edward since the capture of Wallace by Sir John Stuart has caused much conflict.

We will also take great pleasure in ensuring you arrive safely in England. Our ships are nearly fully loaded and by tomorrow we will be ready to at least salvage some of our chattels before the Prince gets his dirty hands on it”

The Knights cheered, banging their flagons on the large Oak table, Sir Ralph rose to reply;

“My dear Sir Gerard, we would certainly feel more at ease with your company, and we would prefer to continue our journey in one of our own ships under your protection” then looking around at his Knights confirmed, “we therefore unanimously accept your proposal”

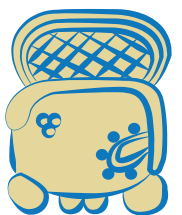
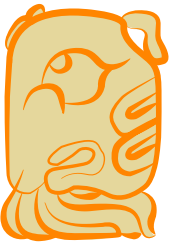
Sir Gerard respectfully suggested to Sir Ralph that he took his leave and rested for the remainder of his stay, seconding his finest physicians to attend to Sir Ralphs’ wounds and further deteriorating health.

The following day Knights, Sergeants, Squires and Turcupoles arrived at the port from across the Mediterranean and boarded the ships to prove their faith to the cause and show their strength and solidarity, it was a wondrous sight and one that King Phillipe would certainly treat with contempt.

With all the Knights on board, the 18 ships set sail for England voyaging initially across the treacherous Bay of Biscay, the weather was beginning to worsen and this stretch of water was renowned for taking many a ship to a watery grave, but they had to push on to be in Scotland to support King Edward before there were any further reprisals.

Heavily laden the ships made slow progress against the fierce Westerly winds, which made it difficult to maintain their course clear of mainland France, forcing them to head further out to sea they rounded the point at Brest, here their sailing skills were put to the test, there are many small islands and rocky peninsulas spanning the waters out to the Île de Béniguet, their task was to manoeuvre between these.

The lead ships coursed the water battling the vicious cross winds successfully, but alas the cross wind increased after they had passed through and the rear ship did not allow for this change and was dashed onto Rochers Pointus, where she quickly submitted to the gouging rocks and pounding seas being consumed in moments.



This was a tragic start for the Templars, they had lost many good men along with a sizeable fortune in gold and silver bullion, Sir Ralph prayed to God for their safe deliverance, but at the same time felt remorsefully thankful and relieved it was not the Ulub Uran that had been taken!

Once into the English Channel the winds turned Southerly and abated, making the next leg of their journey more bearable, allowing some reasonable respite for Sir Ralph whose poor health was becoming critical, after a good nights sleep Sir Ralph called the Knights together,

“My fellow Knights, I have great news to bestow upon you, last evening Mary Magdalene came to me in a vision, she was holding the antiquities the Holy man from Nazar gave to our protection, my Lady was within the grounds of a church that I recognised to be on my Island, her holiness gestured to a place where the Sacred Treasure must be concealed and lain to rest, whereupon it was spoken that the rightful benefactors will make themselves known to me and I shalt then lead them to its sanctuary”.



**The Knights arrived in Portugal
Their sea legs were asunder
On land they were a mighty foe
On water they soon went under**

**Greeted by their friendly Bro'
Their legs they soon stopped shakin'
They laughed to see such wobbly Knights
But where were they then taken**

Name the place?



9. The Island Under Attack

The Gjalfrmarr leave Sandome

Hardly a ripple broke the boughs of the Dragonships as they rowed out of the sunrise leaving Culver Cliffs silhouetted in their wake, oars cutting the water in defined momentum with barely a drop of water disturbed.

In comparison to this serene stillness the daunting sound of drum rhythms reverberated as if sent by Thor himself to strike fear and intimidation into the heart of their foes, the quickening pace exemplified the nearness of their doom, in a few hours another village would fall to the might of the Viking Sea Lords.

Trygve was the leader of this assault, he is the brother of Magnus and has a reputation for never failing in his duties and trusted by all men, whatever he commands is carried out without question, his true belief, being trust and loyalty wins battles.

Trygve mulled over the map drawn by Bran, "What know you of this Ventr and Bonecerce Sorcerer have you seen any visions of this journey"?

Bran replied choosing his words carefully

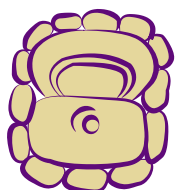
"The many smugglers coves can hide small ships that may try to ambush our fleet from the shallows, where we cannot venture, but if you put a lookout on the figurehead as soon as we turn the point, and make sure our men are prepared with bows at the ready, we can take first blood and their meagre assault will be quickly thwarted"

Trygve banged his fist on the map and with a wry smile said, "Good plan Sorcerer, we will make a warrior of you yet"

"Our other concern will be an attack from above, as the ground rises sharply from the beach, giving those aloft an advantage," said Bran enjoying his moment of anticipated glory.

"Mmmm no match for our shields Bran, but my plan is to spare two ships and let them beach at Monks Baye before the headland and attack from behind, driving any Wyvern Men into our trap on the beach, let us be prepared."

The headland was now in sight and Trygve signalled for the last two ships to break away from the fleet and pull onto the beach to make the final assault on foot.



“Reduce the beat drummer and head towards the Baye” ordered Trygve,

This allowed the foot warriors’ time to drive the lambs to slaughter; the drum beat slowed, echoing its defiant and persistent music of death.

The resistance was pitiful, there was no attack and only a few dozen peasants were driven down from the steep hill cove, where they were no match for Swens army of marauders, they were taken apart as you would remove the meat from a rotting carcass and very soon the task was done.

Trygve rallied his men, “A swift victory my brothers, Odin is surely with us this day” the warriors let out a frightening roar as their suppressed energy burst from within.

“But I fear this is not all the fighting the Wyvern man has to offer, so plunder and stack what you can find, fetch a live goat, for this night we need to thank the Gods for the victory and ask for their protection on our onward journey. Find fresh meat, eggs and good water look for the Withered Bed spring; level all buildings except the Ale house and leave the Old Church to me.”

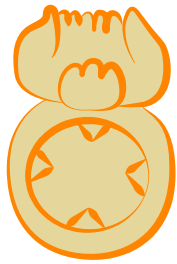
The warriors roared with approval and began their rampage of destitution through an Oxgang of strangely deserted land.

Trygve took 10 of his best warriors and lay siege on the Church, they approached with swords drawn and cautiously surrounded the small wooden structure, Trygve signalled to advance and they rushed forward with noise and verve, their enthusiasm was soon dispelled, it was empty, I mean really empty, no altar, nothing, even the bare unkempt earth floor looked neglected. They rooted around and found nothing.

Trygve grumbled, “Burn it to the ground, that was the poorest church I have ever had the misfortune to level, no chalices, not even silver, I am thinking that a plot is to hand, we must be wary of our foe and not underestimate these peasants”

As the sun fell behind the undercliff Bran stole away to the [tropical gardens](#) to find solace and a quiet place to make spiritual contact with Badb.

The air was still, and hung with the scent of flowers from distant shores majestically entwined, embracing their neighbours with silth like tentacles caressing every aspect of their nature.



Nearby as if on guard a majestic Oak intertwined with Mistletoe towered, its huge protective canopy shielding the delicate flora below, Oak and Mistletoe living together are two of the most powerful catalysts in the Druid Faith.

He sat beneath its shade and laid his staff on mother earth before him, then Bran incarcerated the breath of life deeply into his lungs in a shamanistic way, expelling all energy of low vibration and impurity from his body until he drifted in to an altered state of consciousness.



Straight away he was aware of the voice of Badb, speaking although she was sitting right there next to him.

"Your presence is verily welcome" she spoke with an expression of relief,

"I feel you are in no danger now but two days hence beware of the lighted sky, I have seen fire falling from the heavens"

"I will heed your warning dear Badb, thank you for watching over me" he mentally projected to her image, "I can see you are safe, how do the battles fare"?

"Well", Badb replied, "Shanklin has been levelled, and hoards of smugglers silver were found hidden beneath the Chine, the Gods and the King are pleased; soon we march on Godshill."

Brans' tranquillity was shattered by the sound of distant screams, along with merriment, the sacrificial goat was being prepared as an offering to the Goddess *Thorgerd*, Protector and *Seeress*; his presence would be required to join in the ritual as a Sorcerer to add more power and make certain the gift would be accepted by the Gods. He leaped to his feet and hurried back to the camp in time to bestow worship and to witness the sacrificial blood letting.

Trygve called Bran to his side,

"Has enough been done to appease the Gods, this siege WILL be victorious" he looked at Bran, waiting for conformation.

Bran raised his staff to the deities calling out "Goddess *Andraste*, impose your immortal power to make us victorious over our enemies", a shaft of lightning flashed across the night sky, Bran confirmed, "Our victory can only be granted after a great sacrifice is made".



Trygve knew how important this was, and how the warriors trusted his judgement without question, and he could not let any bad omen jeopardise this, he scanned his warriors and selected the most worthy.

"Bjorn" he called, who stealthily walked over to his leader, he knew what begat him, before Trygve could speak Bjorn said

"I have been in too many battles my lord, I have hoped many times the Gods would take me to the Gates of *Vallhalla* where I can feast upon eternal life, I am ready and thank you for this great honour"

Trygve placed his hand on Bjorns shoulder and with reverence said "No warrior has served the King better or deserve this tribute more, go be washed and prepare thyself"

Bjorn withdrew from the fold and returned cleansed, the altar had been prepared Bjorn slowly approached acknowledging all his warrior companions with a valiant smile, he quietly lay recumbent on the cold slab.

Bran presided over the proceedings "Goddess Andraste hear our plea, we offer to you Bjorg our finest warrior, please accept his illustrious soul to guard your portal forever and in return bring us victory in our siege"

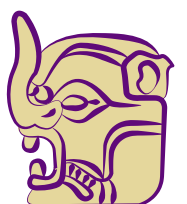
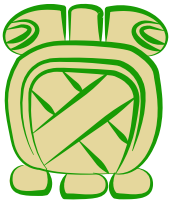
In silence the Viking priest lay the razor edge of the sacred sword against Bjorns throat and gently drew it across, there was no sound, as the life force drained from within, still smiling he drifted into *Vallhalla*, the warriors initially subdued began rejoicing at the good omen of this night.

At first light Trygve rallied his men near to the smouldering fire, "Yesterday is done, we now have the Gods from two worlds bestowing their supreme power upon us, load your provisions aboard and as the wind is with us follow our sail from this paltry place at haste"

The warrior's cheers held an air of despondency, as they bustled about gathering their meagre spoils,

"We have more meat than plunder 'ere groaned a large Oarsman, quick to reply Trygve quipped, "At least you'll go to *Valhalla* with a full belly Norseman", All around laughed and jeered, the mood was already lighter.

"Lock those mid masts firm, as the wind is high, and we don't want lost ships at this early a time, AND beware the rocks as we round the point, many a good ship's seen its' end there, *Njörðr* be with us" roared Trygve as a mighty chant of "*Njörðr*, *Njörðr*, *Njörðr*" echoed above the resounding fervour of the wind and sea.



All the helmsmen signed they were ready to push off as one by one the great Sea Dragons crashed into the white water forcing their way through the battering waves.

Bran had been quiet until now, wedging his staff between the wooden structure gave him some sense of safety as he was thrown around at the elements will.

“How long the journey Trygve” shouted Bran trying to make himself heard above the din.

“Against this tide and wind we may have to drop the sail which will add to our journey and sap the life blood from these land lubbing sailors.” Yelled Trygve

With sails now down the drum rhythm was taxing as they fought to maintain their course to Blackgang Chine. St Catherines Point was in view as the fleet hugged the coastline for protection from the unforgiving conditions.

It had taken a punishing 4 hrs to reach the halfway point, and the wind had changed direction now blowing South Easterly driving the fleet perilously close to the rocky peninsular.

Trygve was at the helm of the lead ship guiding his faithful crew around the point when a gusting crosswind and high seas thrust them landward.

“Hard down on the Port side” bellowed Trygve, trying to make himself heard over the oceans thunderous roar, his crew groaned with pain as every facet of their bodies creaked under the strain of the heaving oars, slowly regaining their position at tremendous physical cost.

With rain stinging the face of the brave leader he scanned the obscured horizon searching for the remainder of his fleet.... when he glimpsed two hulls being dashed against the infamous rocks, two ships and 100 men lost he emotionally reflected.

Soaked to the skin and with fists raised to the skies in enragement Trygve bellowed “My Gods, My Gods what do you ask of me, how can I calm your anger”?

Bran was close by his side and recognised that the status of himself, Trygve and the survival of the fleet may depend on a sign of forgiveness, he fell to his knees wallowing in the bilge of water beneath.



Pleading in earnest he appealed *“Njörðr, Andraste, Thorgerd, I beseech thee as your humble and unworthy servant, shed compassion on your devoted subjects, use your infinite power to calm these troubled seas”*

As he grasped his magickal staff and raised it to the heavens, tumultuous rain broke over the sea with thunder and lightning cracking overhead shaking the joints of the ship and men; they cowered where they stood and lay as if they had taken their last life’s breath, whereupon an unearthly silence descended upon them, the wind and rain returned to the skies as the Sun pushed the clouds aside as the Gods unleashed their divine control over the storm.

The silence hung in the air timelessly like a feather caught in a vacuum of anticipation, then as realisation broke through the fleet, an equally deafening rapport of a thousand oars reverberating through the wooden gunwales awoke the soul, embellished with chants of *“Hagall Odin”*

Trygve turned to Bran, who was still on his knees; helping him to his feet he whispered

“We shall all be forever in your debt Bran, this day you have saved”

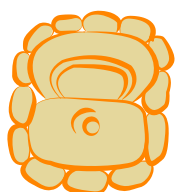
Bran acknowledged this endearment with a courteous smile and nod, knowing he had also saved his own life!!

St Catherines Point was now behind along with the remorse of losing two ships with all crew. The Norsemen ploughed forward with renewed gusto focussing their energies on Blackgang Chine, the pulsating rhythm of the drums returned with its adrenaline rush on the fleet.

The weather had changed dramatically; it was now a clear sunny day with a gentle South Westerly breeze assisting their passage.

Trygve consulted with Bran, *“What do your Gods say to this plan Sorcerer to divide the fleet in 3 forces of 16 then I can send them on ahead, to advance our arrival in the north of Wyvern as I do not expect any major resistance until we reach Cowes Port”?*

Bran replied once again with caution, he needed to visit Brooke and the Sacred Longstone which Badb had revealed to him would be a destiny of great importance.



"Yes Trygve this would bade well with the energy that surrounds us now, as promised by King Forkbeard, I must take my leave of you for at least one sunrise and sunset when we land at Brooke Bay to partake in worship at the Sacred Longstone at Mottistone, then I can return with more potency" Bran assertively responded.

Trygve paused in deep thought, then with a look of satisfaction on his face said

"I will set the first league of ships in at Blackgang, and let Gunnar lead them through the cliffs, it is said the ancient winged dragon has been seen flying in these whereabouts; Gunnar will strike it dead with one arrow from his bow and add its head to the table, he is fearless and one of my best warriors he will serve me well.

A second fleet will split and beach at Brighstone Baye in advance of our waiting treasure trove and the remainder at Brooke Baye... then we will besiege the stashed smugglers hoards of Oyster pearls, gold and silver jewellery, and deprive the rich lords and ladies from their fine trinkets, if we attack along both coastal paths we will thwart any passage of escape, our rewards will be great if we can drive them into our trap".

His voice became excited as he visualised his master plan coming to pass and all the riches to plunder.

"The front longships will continue West to Freshwater Bay in the charge of Steinar to show those pigs the wrath of the Gods, and the length of our swords, levelling everything in sight, nothing will be left standing or breathing, he will lead the hunt, plunder and hoard all we need to provide for our onward journey".

Bran nodded in agreement and rose, Trygve slapped him on the back, no words were needed.

Trygve tempered his ship until Gunnar was within distance whereupon he foretold the plan, which was joyously recalled to the other leaders.

**Ventnor and Bonecerse Smugglers caves,
Attracted the Vikings attention
To find the hidden treasure there
was Forkbeard's sole intention.**

**Whilst battle commenced Bran slipped away
To a place of peace and tranquillity
He knew the perfect prayer to pray
In an aura of meditation and humility**

Where was this?



10. The Templars Arrive at Wyvern Sanctuary and Secret Concealment



Over the next few days the English Coastline came into view, a most welcome sight for all, but particularly for Sir Ralph, the thought of landing on his beloved Wyvern was all that was keeping him alive at this stage and the sight of its green and sandy headland brought new life into an otherwise failing body.

Their epic voyage across the Mediterranean, and Atlantic had lasted for 25 gruelling days, taking its toll on all, Sir Ralph signalled to the Ulub Uran who had been tightly shadowing the lead ship to pull into St Eadington Bay.

The Knights needed much assistance to unload the treasures and asked Eren to speak to the captain to see if the crew would assist them, for a fee of course, which they gladly agreed to.

Sir Ralph addressed the 9 worthies,

“At last we have reached our destination although I am sad to say I do not have sufficient strength to accompany you to Scotland, but I would like to invite you to help me complete my mission before you leave the Island and be my guests at my family estate in Knighton, before this we can quickly take refreshment at the Fishermans Tavern on the Duver, then meet my family and recuperate before your onward journey, what say you”?

The Knights heartily agreed to assist Sir Ralph in the final concealment of the Holy Treasure and take benefit of the welcome respite.

“I will also summon some of the trustworthy locals from Brading, Bembridge and Nettlestone to convey our chattels to Knighton,” said Sir Ralph with a distinct air of joyous relief in his voice.

Word of his return and arrival spread rapidly, later that day, his family came to greet him bringing locals who were already on the shoreline busily unloading the precious cargo, Sir Ralph kept the Holy Bachal Isu concealed within his tunic for safe keeping.

As darkness befell, they set off on the Nunwell trail for Brading, passing by the [Oasis](#) of the Devils Punchbowl, Nunwell House, the [Roman Villa](#), and Adgestone Vineyard, without incident, before the steep climb to Knighton Village.

It was midnight when the convoy arrived, cold wet and exhausted, the locals unloaded the Knights merchandise into the stables.



Eren approached Sir Ralph, and knelt before him, then in his best English.

“Would me to stay here serve you”

Sir Ralph smiled and pointed to the stables.

“Join the others and guard the stables”, Eren beamed, jumped to his feet and ran like the wind to his post, which would be the beginning of a new life for him, the rest of the locals made their way home.

The family tended to Sir Ralph, who by now was virtually in a state of collapse, the chosen 9 settled down to a night of bountiful rest before pursuing their quest the following day.

At daybreak the Knights enjoyed a welcome breakfast of fresh bread and meat washed down with pure clean local spring water; before setting off Sir Ralph gathered the 9.

“We must make sure no one suspects our mission or what we are carrying this day, and only speak to those we trust implicitly, I cannot emphasise enough that this will be a day that will be recorded in the annals of history, let us prepare for our journey”.

They donned their white Surcoats over a protective body of chain mail and set off for the church seen in Sir Ralphs’ vision; only he knew its location.

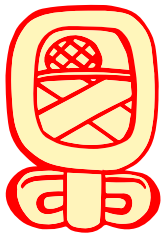
They mounted their horses and thundered over the hills through Newchurch, then, on to Arreton Manor where Sir Ralph rested to gather his strength; the lady of the Manor provided the finest but brief respite and warmly welcomed them. Whilst there, the Knights embraced the opportunity to pay their respects to the Quarr Abbey Monks who were tending the grounds and gratefully receive their blessings.

They were in dire need of footwear and travelled a short distance to purchase goods from the local Craft Village before re mounting their steeds.

Sir Ralph lead the group heading for Rookley Park, where again it was necessary for him to stop to regain his stamina.

Sir Jerar feared the journey was going to be too much so early after their gruelling voyage and asked Sir Ralph.

“Sire, I fear for your health and ask you to rest for longer, I understand the importance of this mission, but if you continue at this pace you will not be able to finish the quest?”



Sir Ralph nodded

"I thank you for your concern dear Jerar, but my only driving force is the thought of laying the holy treasure to rest, but yes let us rest here in the Park for a short while, and take refreshment at the local Tavern, then we must push on to the village of Gatcombe".

The Tavern went very quiet when the Knights entered, the locals had heard about the return of Sir Ralph but had not laid eyes on a full band of Knights all dressed for confrontation.

The Inn keeper bade them welcome, and cautiously asked,

"Scuse me me lud, we 'aven't seen such fine gentry in these parts afore, if you pardon me asking, is there any thing you needs to know, that I may 'umbly be able to 'elp you with?" he said tipping his forehead in respect.

Sir Jerar replied light heartedly

"Well, unless you are familiar with the best place to hunt the Kings deer, which of course I am sure you are not, we will be on our way, our guests expect us to bring our own suppers home you know?"

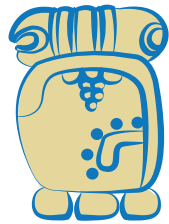
With that they quaffed the remains of their flagons and left the Inn feeling less than comfortable with the inquisitiveness of the Inn keeper.

At last they were on the final leg of their journey and before long they cantered into Gatcombe village outskirts, Sir Ralph slowed down to a walk as they approached

The Church of St Olaves with it's distinguishing tall tower and multiple disconcerting Gargoyles of Devils and spirits alongside the secret scribes of Druidity, even so this was the first sign of civilisation thereabouts, standing tall and dominant secluded in a shroud of Oak trees which still captured the earlier morning mist in the cobwebs of their branches which were magically suspended by strings of glistening globules of diamonds

They dismounted and walked towards the main tower, Sir Ralph was having some difficulty breathing by this time and ordered the Knights to stand guard around the church whilst he entered alone.

The church was very familiar to him as he had attended on many family occasion, but also there were many clandestine Templar visits his family knew nothing about where faceless brothers pledged their allegiance to much more than just the cause.





He knelt in the main isle and prayed to the Holy Father for protection in these uncertain times and asked that he may bestow his blessings on all his family and loved ones, he made the sign of the cross and arose, walking respectfully backwards until he reached the church entrance, where he turned, straightened and stealthily exited the church.

He slowly walked around the grounds to where the sepulchre once stood in all its glory, now just remnants of times gone by, here tales were told of dark magic and ungodly occurrences.

He reminisced the time he was fighting in the Holy Land alongside Sir Edward Estur and was amazed to meet his companion, a young 17yr old girl named Lucy Lightfoot hailing from the region of Carisbrooke on the Isle of Wight.

She spoke of life on the Island in a very modern manner that sometimes just didn't make any sense, and seemed quite ahead of her years in a most spell binding way, most thought of her as quite delightfully fanciful. Unfortunately Sir Edward died in 1303 just two years previous, and a full size Oak Effigy carved from Oak had been laid across his tomb interned in Gatcombe Church.

But when he died Lucy disappeared, Sir Ralph sent his condolences via his retainer to Lucy, whom he assumed had returned to the Island, who accordingly made extensive enquiries only to find that there were no records at all for a Lucy Lightfoot anywhere, not only no records, but no family, friends, acquaintances, in fact it was if she had never existed at all, or had she not even been born.

His mind returned to the present, he entered the arched entrance to the sepulchre and there before him was the secret tunnel concealed behind a doorway of stone which had to the right a small carved Templar Cross in Marble, and to the left a Stone Sword and in the central a carved rosette portraying the emblems of the Templar Faith.

Above the three representations were carved these words in Hebrew **בהוא כותב ררוגתמ חצנ ייחו חוכה תא** "Love, Strength and Eternal Life Reside Within"

Sir Ralph seized the Cross and rotated it 180 degrees clockwise, he then grasped the Sword and rotated that 90 degrees clockwise, finally he gripped the Rosette and rotated it anti clockwise in a full circle 3 times.

The sound of falling masonry came from behind the stone, followed by the grumbling of thunder, slowly, the thick stonewall rotated sufficiently to expose its inner being.



As it opened it was although a thousand angels burst into flight emitting an energy of golden light the fireflies danced in mystical circles of enticement drew him deeply into mother earth, he followed their lead judiciously treading the well worn stairs, winding back and forth, down and round it seemed to take an eternity before he came to a vast cavern he entered its inner being captivated by the ambience.

He shielded his eyes from the reflective glaze of thousands of tiny mosaics portraying mystical and heavenly figurines in gold, silver and copper textures, creating a vibrant show of artistic wealth.

The floors were glass like marble slabs of every colour and shape, weaving their forms together to create rich turquoise pool like images polished so highly that he was fearful to tread on them for they resembled the deep waters of Dozbury Pool and threatened to draw him down into the bowels of the earth, never to return.

The straight mosaic walls gave way to Black Onyx banner rails that nurtured Angels carved from white marble embedded with golden layers of light, each watching your every move ready to protect your path at every step.

The summit curved to a perfectly formed apex, filled with murals of the Holy Land with life like images of Knights in battle against all those that denounced God in protection of the holy travellers.

He walked slowly in awe to the end of the adorned hallway where the Archway transformed into a vast high domed inner hall like a Mosque, the ceiling was exquisitely embellished with scenes from the bible depicting the Birth of Christ, the Ten Commandments, The Last Supper, The Crucifixion, and The Resurrection representing the sequence of life, truth, death and rebirth.

Chequered black and white marbled blocks, formed the floor, with a six pointed star in blue and gold mosaic stone relief emanated from the white marble Altar that stood pride of place in the centre of the star.

The peripheral walls were carved into twenty seven foot deep individual archways each with marble pillars supporting an Angel holding the Templar Cross with the name of the Knight who was laid there to rest entombed within a traditional Oak Sarcophagus bearing an Effigy of the Knight, along with his armour, weaponry and clothing, each remembered and honoured for eternity.



Sir Ralph nostalgically moved towards the Altar, by its side stood a towering Gold Cross reaching to the heavens, commemorating the lives of fallen Knights, and days gone by; supporting himself he took a stone cross from the lanyard around his neck and pressed it into a corresponding relief in the gold cross, then twisted the whole ensemble 90 degrees clockwise, as if by magic an intricate mechanism whirled sliding the white marble top to one side.

Frail of body and exhausted he raised the Bachal Isu high to the heavens, whispering!

"I fear my time is nigh oh Lord and I beg for you to understand my deviations in life from the path of righteousness, please forgive any wrongs committed; I have done my best to serve you in your own image and only ask of you to watch over my family and keep them safe from evil" He then slowly lowered the holy sacrament to its final resting place."

Barely able to stand, he levered the Golden Cross back into its original position and withdrew the embedded stone cross placing it securely back around his neck; the white marble Altar lid sealed closed,

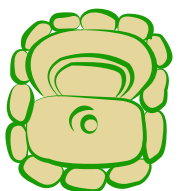
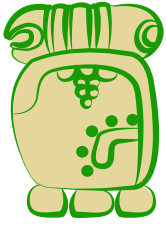
Precariously he began his journey back up the labrynth of stairs with his guardian fireflies illuminating every step he took, guiding him out of the Sepulchre to the safety of the Arched entrance.

Gasping for breath he reset the positions of each of the three symbols in sequence and locked them in place, with the Stone façade located securely Sir Ralph sighed with relief knowing that at last the sacrament was securely hidden, all he needed now was to meet the unknowns who would complete the visionary mission. He clung momentarily to the wall to steady himself, then with trembling gait stumbled his way towards the waiting Knights, falling to the ground before they could run to assist him.

**Sir Ralph arrives at Wyvern Isle
His health becoming poor
He travelled with his 9 worthies
To defend the cause and more**

**He seeks to conceal a treasure rare
In a sepulchre of outstanding grace
Deep within this sacred grave
He finds the perfect place**

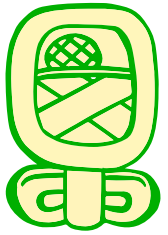
What was the treasure wrapped in?



11. The Viking Fleet Attack Blackgang feels the Norse Blade



fourteen ships set sail for Brooke, Brighstone and Freshwater; Gunnar manoeuvred his long ships quietly into Blackgang Baye hugging the coastline to avert detection; the terrain was not in their favour as the ascent was steep in all directions that lead to the village and the prize of The Church of St Catherine's.



The warriors beached their craft in near silence and were preparing their assault when the sound of a million bees filled the air!

Gunnar knew this sound well and ordered "Höfuð Skjald-borg"

The warriors instantly threw their shields above their heads, as what seemed like a thousand arrows thudded relentlessly into their makeshift protective blockade sounding like an army of heathen clubs smiting a thousand skulls.

Screams of anger and pain broke the atmosphere, with crumpling bodies falling heavily to the sand followed by cries of "Hel taki þik eyars skítkafl!" as the whole Norse army leapt to its feet and ran headword in full flight, remorselessly pursuing the enemy that had dared to take first blood.

They soon reached the summit only to find their assailants were nowhere to be seen,

"Spread across the fields and hunt these pigs down" thundered Gunnar

The warriors stretched out across the hillocks forging their way forward although driving game from cover, but this time the men of Wyvern Isle were the quarry.

Nearby the [wooden crofts](#), animals were still penned, and a welcome sight for hungry bellies, they were herded together and several warriors detailed to watch over their evenings feast. In amongst these a pure white calf stood alone in a corner of the pen, standing perfectly still as if in the hope it would not be seen.

Gunnar called across to his men, "Guard that beast with your life, or your life will replace it"

The guards soon caught hold of the calf and carried it into a small hut for safe keeping, the calf's welfare now reflecting on theirs.



Suddenly a band of Wyvern bowman were seen scurrying away down the hillside, a large group of warriors roared with aggression and revenge, soon taking chase.

“Cut to the right and shut off their escape, ready your bows keep your eyes alive and heads down,” shouted Gunnar as men hurtled down the mound into position.

In no time another roar was heard accompanying the thwack of bow strings releasing their venom as they struck home with deadly accuracy, some small recompense for their previous losses.

“On to the Church and ransack every hovel on the way, then burn them to the ground, I want nothing left here, you 6 take the tavern, we will be back before sunset make sure there is plenty of meat and the best grog on the table for my return”

Brunnar lead his marauders up to the church hungry for revenge, as they passed the graveyard there was evidence of recent burials, they burst into the church where the smell of burning embers saturated the air, one loan holy man knelt before the altar of his god, praying that he may be forgiven for his sins, the sound of heavy feet stomped towards a large crucifix standing in the isle.

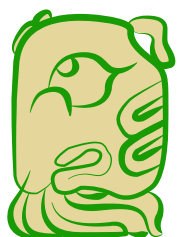
“Where is your God now holy man” Gunnar scorned, the priest turned and said “God forgive you for you know not what you do”, these were his last words before the crucifix crashed around his head.

“I know what I must do priest and it is done”

Said Gunnar as the priest collapsed from his prayer box into the ground. Brunnar snatched a cross and rosary from his fingers as he lay, when he noticed a glint from beneath the priests prayer box, rolling the priest out of the way he pulled back a kneeling cloth to find a fine golden bracelet wedged between the wooden floor, he drew his sword and prised apart the boards to expose a sack concealing precious jewels of gold and silver trinkets, he let out a mighty cry of “Mikill Wotan.... it is good to know you are by my side.... Swen, dig up those graves and let’s see what is really buried under there,”

The graves were uncovered to no avail, the bones left dishevelled in their wake.

The night was drawing in, Gunnar ordered his men to return to make ready for their leave the following morning and to change the guard on the animals then celebrate the plunder at the nearby Ale House.



That night Steinars fleet of 6 Long ships headed around the coastline rowing hard with sails set for Freshwater Bay.

Trygve and Bran lead the first convoy on course for Brooke Baye with Sigourd controlling the Brighstone Baye landing, they voyaged by night to elicit the element of surprise on the unsuspecting gentry at first light.

The air was calm, the full moon shone like a mirror reflecting the dark shadows of the long ships with oars outstretched like a flock of Ravens about to take flight, these ghostly images glided across the water in near silence to their positions in the Bayes.

Without warning the skies lit up like a volcano spewing its wrath upon the earth, with flames of fury descending upon the warriors at Brighstone Baye, they were caught unawares, the arrows of destruction decimating their target with relentless intensity.

“Take cover ashore” shouted Sigourd, scrambling for the sanctuary of the cliffs, several of the ships were ablaze and many warriors injured or dead.

Sigourd rallied his men concealing themselves within the natural terrain, calling out

“We must wait until just sunrise before our attack to drive these peasants back along the coast, Trygve will be launching his assault at the same time, fortune is with them, I have not seen any flames over Brooke Baye”.

From Brooke Baye Trygve had seen the cascading attack,

“It would seem your women’s vision has come to pass, all does not bode well for Sigourd, we will begin our attack as planned at first light, which will draw the Wyvern men to us allowing Sigourds warriors to push forward.” he said to Bran.

“Yes Trygve you must be true to the original plan so Sigourd can plan his assault; I will return from my pilgrimage to the Sacred Longstone as soon as my worship is complete, and I will bring news of the Kings progress.”

“How will this be possible” asked Trygve

“It is possible” commented Bran with a wry smile breaking over his sullen features.

As the light broke on the horizon the ground glistened around, one of the warriors shouted excitedly holding stones in his hands.



"We have Gold beneath our feet"

Bran smiled again saying "This is known as fools gold and to be sure a fool found it, it is created from the crushed forests of millions of moons ago, so you will still have to go to battle", the warriors mocked incessantly.

Trygve raised his hand hailing his battle mongers into action,

"My warriors make thee more noise than you have ever screamed, let these peasant farmers feel the fear of the Gods that is about to crush down on their pathetic world, they will rue this day forever; Onwaaaard."

Trygve and his horde of warriors leaped up the side cliff like mountain goats, exploding with sounds radiating from the bowels of the earth, enough to frighten the devil himself.

In contrast Bran quietly slipped away to make his ritual journey to the Druids Sacred Mottistone Longstone.

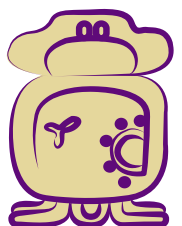
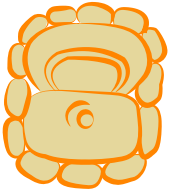
Sigournd signalled for his warriors to attack scaling the same terrain as Trygve with equal volumes of curses and ferocity. The Wyvern men held their ground for only a short while, and were soon on the run, to seek sanctuary in the underground tunnels leading from the Smugglers Ale House or so they believed.

Trygve advanced unopposed over the undulating countryside and spied in the distance the Wyvernlanders disappearing behind the Ale House, not wanting to run into a trap he commanded his men to separate, half towards the Ale House, the rest down below the cliffs edge to thwart any escape.

By this time Sigourds mercenaries were closing down on the foe, and quickly followed Trygves lead.

They arrived in unison on both sides of the Ale House to find 30 Wyvernlanders with drawn bows waiting expectantly, the Norse approach was so momentous that the bowman were overcome with distraction and in their confusion only loosed a few arrows. This was their demise, the Norsemen bore down on them with mighty force, their swords and poleaxes crashing down in frenzied attack dismembering and maiming at will till all were still.

Trygve bellowed "Into the tunnel" and ran headlong into the darkness, his men with him maintaining their war cries of hell, in the distance an army of dark figures could be seen silhouetted outlined against the faint light at the end of the tunnel, when a familiar roar of...



"Jáááááá Vegio aust Svín" echoed through the shadows, followed by the sound of metal on metal accompanied by unearthly screams and the deathly thud of Norse clubs dismissing the enemy with uncompromising remorse; the combined forces of Sigourds and Trygves warriors had blocked the escape and dealt a crushing blow to the Wyvernlanders.

Soon victorious chants and praises to Odin resounded throughout the tunnel, creating a crescendo of turbulent excitement.

The two leaders heartily greeted each other in the mouth of the tunnel.

"Sigourd, your men fought like true beserkr, our plan worked well, but tell me how many did you lose at Brighstone Bay? asked Trygve with a tone of sadness in his voice

"Some 15 good men and a ship I fear" replied Sigourd

"We will offer their souls to the kingdom of the Gods before we leave this land so they may feast and continue their battle in Valhalla for eternity" said Trygve, lifting the air of loss.

"What have we here" exclaimed Trygve with a broad smile flashing across his face, as he pointed to a concealed passageway within the cave, he signalled to a formidable group of warriors to dislodge the large boulders blocking the entrance and then to follow him in.

They walked its damp and dark route for near 2 rôst, whereupon a stairway was found cut into the side tunnel, at the summit there was a large Oak door from which female voices could be faintly heard.

In near silence they unsheathed their swords and poleaxes, they besieged the blockade with the strength of thrice their number, it soon relented crashing down inside a huge manor parlour, shrieks of fear resounded through the halls with lords and ladies scattering in all directions, the Norseman did not hold back their fervor.

Inge was a giant of a man as fearsome as the Gods themselves, he grasped an elegant high ranking male by the throat and lifting him off his feet pulled his face eye to eye and demanded with the breath of the devil "Where are you hiding your Gold and Pearls?"

In a voice of aristocratic influence his Lordship replied "As an English gentleman, I am not in the habit of fraternising with heathens". Although Inge did not fully understand his words he understood his tone and fragrance, without wasting another word, he unleashed his grip and before his feet hit the ground his head left his torso bloating blood in all directions.



Women screamed and fainted, men stood mortified, mouths aghast in horror.

Inge turned eyeing his next victim, "God have mercy on us" rang out across the Hall, "I beg you what price our lives?"

Inge wiping the bloody sword on his tunic turned and slowly repeated "Where are you hiding your Gold and Pearls?"

The trembling Baron pointed to the wall, Inge glared at the wall, then back at the Baron he next strode over and unceremoniously forced the Baron towards the wall and shrugged his shoulders.

The Baron and a consort dragged aside two monumental chairs then stepped aside, they were obscuring two large flagstones, Inge lowered his frame and gripped the cut outs in the stone and heaved the flagstones awry to display wooden steps leading down to an underground hide away.

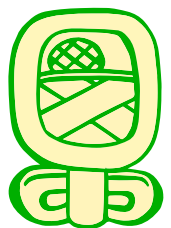
In case this was a trap, Inge beckoned the Baron to lead the way, they slowly stepped down below, displayed right in front of them was a huge mound of all kinds of Smugglers Treasure, Jewellery, Precious stones, Gold and Silver Coins and Goblets, Swords and other refinery, a truly magnificent haul.

Inge bellowed for Trygve to come and behold the vast fortune set out before them, they were much pleased, "let's use our guests labour to rid them of this burden of wealth" scoffed Trygve, they summoned the household before them, after the previous massacre all were certain their end was nigh.

Sarcastically Inge spoke, " Right all you unworked hands and fat bellies it's time for recompense", several of the lairds fell to their knees begging for mercy, "Get you up and downstairs it is time you did some work", the guests verily ran down below in utter relief to offer their assistance.

With a broad grin Inge declared

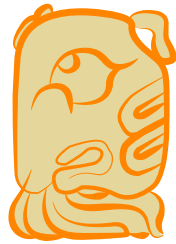
"And if I should find ONE piece of booty on any person you will all suffer, so you had better remove any trinkets you have and put them in the chests." The warriors tormented the captives with jeers of " Vegio aust svins," (kill the pigs) the treasure was retrieved in haste and the captives were bundled into the inner hall and locked away to be later rescued, giving them the opportunity to re establish their wealth for the next raid.



Teams of warriors and gentry carried the booty in relays all the way back to the waiting Dragonships, there was much celebrating and merriment that night, the Gods had shown they fought by their side and had rewarded them for their offerings, loyalty and worship.



**Forkbeard's warriors set sail for Brooke
Then Freshwater and Brighstone
Their goal was to find the smugglers treasure
But found they were not alone**



**The assault they made through tunnels deep
Took skill and determination
The men that fought and won the day
Were warriors due citation.**

Who was a giant of a man, Answer Inge?



12. Jed Manipulates the Past

In the Name of Love



Once concealed behind a cloaked door as planned Jed set his Amulet for 1647, visualised the washroom, grasped the Seed of Power in his left hand and turned the VR to 4.



What a different experience this was, he felt as if he was in a floatation tank, floating, but not quite under his own steam, whilst hands of Angels that had been immersed in heavenly scented oil were caressing his body.

This journey can take as long as it likes, Jed thought, then, he was aware of the strong smell of soap, his repolarisation was far less intense than before, but far more odorous, as this time he arrived smack in the middle of a selection of undergarments in dire need of a good scrub!

He tentatively removed the underwear hanging from his ears, and brushed aside other offensive garments; re-orientating himself he grabbed some clean clothes that were hanging to dry, and was soon apparently more appropriately dressed in some sort of kitchen attire which he did not quite recognise.

Jed could hear muffled voices coming from the room at the end of the stone staircase, he gingerly crept on tiptoe to where the conversation was coming from and peeked around the corner, there with folded arms giving out orders to all and sundry was the Houseman.

Jed scoured the room for any sign of Mrs Wheeler, then, near the corner amongst piles of clothes she stood, bent over a huge Butler Sink busying herself with her duties; he needed to attract her attention without attracting attention to himself, "ping" an idea crossed his mind he scurried back to the "to do" pile of clothes, grabbed a big bundle, took a deep breath and walked directly across to Mrs Wheeler and dumped the clothes on the existing mountainous pile.

Without looking up Mrs W responded, "Not more already"

Jed replied quietly "Mrs Wheeler it's me Jed"

She looked up in a start, and ordered, "Come with me"

Jed followed her to the main laundry room behind the kitchen.

"Jed, how wonderful to see you, we were so worried when you disappeared... you look worried, why are you here?"



"It's a long story Mrs W, I fear for Kate and her families lives...from events of the past...that will effect the future, complicated Mrs W, complicated, also I have to take Kate away with me, my feelings for her are so very strong and I cannot bear to be without her, will you bring her to me?"

Mrs W gave Jed a bone crushing hug and a bigger grin before bustling off to find his dearest Kate.

It seemed like an hour before she returned although it was probably only minutes. Jed felt her presence long before she arrived, he could visualise her rushing through corridors above stairs, he sensed her excitement her love, her passion, they immediately made that telepathic connection, which was even stronger than before.

From out of the darkness a voice softly whispered "Jed."

It was although Jed had been impaled by cupid's arrow sped from a cross bow, he gasped with desire, every hair on his body bristling with sensual excitement, a wave of overflowing emotion rushed through his veins. With his head as light as a feather and his heart heavy with love, he turned to see Kate's magnificence standing there before him.

They came together in an electric embrace, their lips barely touching, sent crescendos of ecstasy pulsating through the fibres of their being, they held each other in an eternal bond.

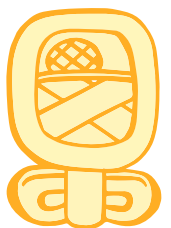
Suddenly, they remembered Mrs W was standing there and looking rather embarrassed.

Jed politely coughed and began to explain to Kate in the fastest and simplest way, if that was humanly possible, about his mission to find The Gods Treasures,

"Forkbeard the Viking King is going to attack the Fort here at Carisbrooke and win the battle, er, this was in 1009, so bear with me, if he succeeds, which he will, your ancestors will be killed and therefore you will not be here.... are you with me so far? Kate tentatively nodded with an expression of doubt etched all over her face.

"I cannot let this happen Kate, I could not bear to lose you, the only solution is; we must travel back to that time together and warn your 'ancestors',..... I know this sounds crazy,....of the impending attack so they may flee to safety.

As mad as it may seem you must come with me Kate, to save your kin, and to preserve our life together."



Jed continued "I have the power with me to transport us both back to this very spot before the battle commences" he held out his hand, "Will you come with me"

Kate didn't have to say anything, she was totally in tune with Jed's thoughts and ambitions, but replied "My love I will go to the ends of the earth and beyond to be with you"

Jed held Kate's hand and explained the best he could what was about to happen, he programmed 1009 AD into the Amulet, destination, Current Position, and turned the VR to 3, for Kate's comfort, he held the Seed Crystal with his left hand, and.....they were on their way.

Jed being a 'seasoned traveller' held Kate close to him; as the depolarisation began, Kate's lips slowly parted, her eyes rolled in her head, and the sounds emanating from her mouth were those of ecstasy, Jed being as one with Kate, felt the same emotions, the old classic film Barbarella flashed through his mind, then in a second they were repolarising in a room alongside the bar of an Inn, in the centre of an Ancient wooden fort.

"Where are we?" asked Kate, as she struggled to stand, focus or maintain her balance,

"This is Carisbrooke Fort as it was in 1009, and it seems we are in an old Inn, in fact if you look above where the fire burns, you will see the landlords name, William Meux, Kate brought her hand to her mouth and gasped, "I am certain that is my Grandfather about 13 times removed, William was a very popular name throughout the history of our family, and there were certainly a number of Inn Keepers".

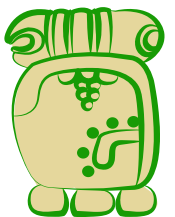
Kate was excited at the prospect of meeting her ancestors "Totally surreal, here we are from the future to rescue my family that I have never even met!!"

But, they needed a plan; scrutinising the natives Kate commented

"How are we going to convince that lot who we are and why we are here?" Directing her gaze at a number of locals sitting around the blazing fire.

Kate stared up at Jed for inspiration...none came,

"YOU, are going to have to talk to the Inn keeper, and explain who you are, I don't suppose you have any currency from this period either?" Said Jed light heartedly..."Do you know any of your family history from this period that you could share? Asked Jed,



"Some Jed, but this is over 600 years ago; however, I do have this necklace, which carries a small round pendant;" Jed's eyes lit up, "I am assured this is a family heirloom that has been passed down from generation to generation, and it has some unusual markings which I understand to be an old family crest"

Jed kissed Kate full on the lips, "Perfect, let's hope they have some recollection of it, there are some clothes on the chair, let's see what we can do with those, and, Kate, we must choose our words very carefully, here they are still burning witches at the stake!!"

With that consolation Kate wrapped a scarf around her head and roughed up her clothes, Jed put on an old hat and coat that had seen better days,

"Better wear a bit of dirt, " said Kate smearing some soil over both their faces, "Well here goes nothing " said Jed as they shuffled through the opened door.

A hush of mammoth hushness echoed around the Inn, momentarily they thought their ears had failed them; all eyes were fixed on the new visitors.

Jed and Kate made their way precariously towards the welcoming fire and sat on a bench trying not to make eye contact with anyone, the serving wench came over,

"Aven't seen you ere afore, where you comes from?" Kate realised Jed was not very familiar with the Island so replied in an equally disdain accent,

"I comes originally from near Kingston way do ya knows it?

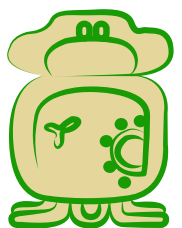
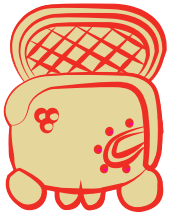
"Naaahh don't get abowt too much, but Mr Meux comes from that way" the girl replied

"Wot be ya business ere then?" she again quizzed

Jed thought it was time he joined in, "Tryin a get a decent drink, we'll ave two flagons o ya best ale" he said jovially, they all laughed which was a great relief.

Then in a quieter tone Jed asked "We would like to ave a quiet word with the guvnor, if e's around?"

"I'll go get yur ale and tell Mr Meux." She obliged.



Several minutes later a cheerful rounded figure entered; eying the room he soon recognised that Kate and Jed were not locals, with a nod of his head he went over to them.

"Ow doos, Becky says you wants to arve a word we me; ow can I elps ya?"

He sat on the opposite bench and lit his pipe,

"Would you be William?" asked Kate inquisitively, in her well brunged up brogue.

"That be me maam" he replied courteously

"One of my great great grandfathers many times removed was named William" Kate replied with an air of mystique.

William laughed "So was moyne me dear, ow funny is that?"

"What is even funnier William, is one of them was you!!"

"Waat;... don't folla ya me dear ave you bin drinkin elsewhere tonoyt?"

Kate smiled in a very warm but sobering way, "Not a drop William, not a drop; there is something very important we have to talk to you about, is there somewhere a little more private?"

"Spouse out back would be alroyt, the wifes cleanin' the brass"

They stood up and casually walked out the bar together towards the scullery, they could feel 15 pairs of eyes burning into their backs of their necks as they disappeared from view.

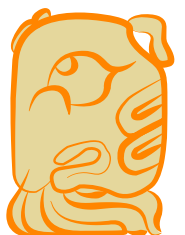
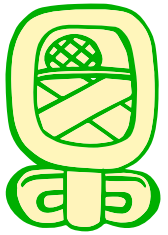
"This is Eleanor, the lady o the ouse, also known as moy wife"

Jed greeted Eleanor with "Pleasure to meet you Mrs Meux

I would like to introduce you both to my companion Kate Mew"

William and Eleanor, looked puzzled, "Funny; ow comes we don't know ya, if ya names Meux,"

"Well", said Kate, "we have some explaining to do, which you may find quite unbelievable, but I assure you is the Gods truth, I think you need to sit down"



They all sat around the kitchen table, William and Eleanor had that grimace of unbelief on their faces, and that was before Kate had started to try and explain the extremely unusual circumstances of their visit.

“First of all, I need to let you know that yes we are related”,

William raised his eyes in surprise,

“Let me try to clarify things William” Kate responded putting her hand on his.”

Kate then went through the process and storyline of meeting Jed, what had happened, including that Jed was able to travel through time.

William just laughed, “I think you two’s just come owt the loony bin”

Jed stepped in on the conversation,

“Mr and Mrs Mew I totally understand why you find this explanation ridiculous, and I don’t blame you, but will you let me prove it to you?”

“What do ya mean young fella?” William replied with a frown and suspicion.

“If you will allow me to I will take you into the future, and you will see how this very same spot is so different”

“What ar you talking abowt?” quizzed William, getting a little irate.

Kate intervened,

“Great Grandfather;” Williams face changed immediately “The only way you will ever believe us is if you experience the journey yourself, Eleanor and I will remain here, you will only be gone a matter of seconds, please go with Jed, your decision today will determine whether the Mews name carries on through time.”

William stood up, put his pipe on the table and said “Let’s get this rubbish sorted owt once an for all, roight now what do I do?”

Jed held firmly on to Williams arm, he did not want any mishaps on this trip; he set the Amulet to 1647, same location, VR 4, with the Seed of Power in his left hand he turned the dial.



Jed and William disappeared before their eyes.

Eleanor gasped in astonishment "may God protect them!".

Kate held Eleanor's hand and spoke in a soft caring voice,

"There is something I need to show you dear Greatest Grandmother," Kate removed the necklace from around her neck, "Have you ever seen this before?"

Eleanor stood up in amazement,

"Thaat looks just loyk the one my mother gave to me sister 'Lizabeth"...on closer examination she declared.

"It is the same, it has our family mark on it; one of our ancestors, not quite sure which one, ad it made special by one of the local silversmiths, well, ow you came by thaat is beyond me" she said with a wry smile."

At that point it was although a huge bundle of rags had been thrown in the corner of the room, only this bundle had two bodies in it.

After a minute or two William appeared from within the bulk and staggered across the scullery, looking like he'd been to the moon and back,

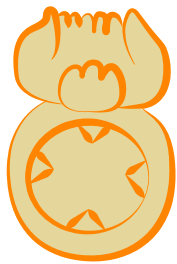
"Oy don't know whaat to say, I've seen things thaate eyes and me ed don't believe, never seen nothing loyk it in me life: either he slipped a potion into me ale or, well, I'll ave to go along with it.

Jed explained that they both needed to escape, before the oncoming battle, to save their families future.

William instructed Becky to look after the Inn, as they had to go away on urgent family concerns and may be some time. At that a carriage was hastily brought round from the farrier and the Meux's went off into hiding.

"Phew, said Jed, "I wasn't sure if they would come round to our way of thinking and thank God they did, now we have completed this part of the mission and your family name has been preserved.

Kate, we must now go forward to 1305 as it is time to meet the Master Knights Templar Sir Ralph de Gorges at Gatcombe Church; once gain it is imperative that he trusts us both implicitly, you must gain his confidence by letting him know who you are and how you know of his family and impress upon him our sincerity in achieving our life's purpose to bring the Gods Treasures together for the good of all mankind, I apologise for laying all this responsibility on you Kate, but the words for better or worse seems to spring to mind.... eh humare you ready?"



Kate was surprised at Jed's latter implications, but in a good way; they embraced, the Amulet was set, and they were whisked into the darkened cloisters of St Olaves Church Gatcombe.

These Time travel escapades were becoming like getting on a nos 36A bus to New Cross, Jed thought as they were transported through to the timeline of 1305.

They materialised as programmed inside the Church without issue, hearing muffled voices in the distance they snatched two hooded cassocks hanging in the vestry and quickly made their way around the back of the church.



**Time and tide wait for no man
Though Jed had found a way
To make time stand still for him
To bring tomorrow to today**

**An amewsing story was to unfold
Which to all seemed utter lies
The only way Jed could show the truth
Was if they saw it with their own eyes.**

Who accompanied Jed on the 4 square 4 7 trip?

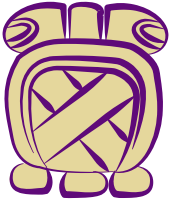


13. Bran visits Mottistone

The Druids Prayer



he Sacred Longstone at Mottistone stood proudly above the skyline reverberating telluric energy to all matter around, Bran approached this place of supreme reverence with an aura of inner divinity and peace, he felt an instant oneness enveloping his whole being, emotions ran wild, he had worshipped here many times before with his family, who had now been transported to the otherworld, awaiting reincarnation..



He placed his hands upon the great stone, feeling the love and compassion it resounded from the world above, louting his head he fell to his knees, worshipping the Gods, in awe of their presence and saviour for granting his safe journey and gratification for the powers bestowed upon him, and that they would guide him to use them wisely.

He took out a sharpened stone from his tunic and made a small incision in his wrist, allowing 9 drops of blood to fall on the altar stone, representing the 9 worlds of resting, praying

“Oh gracious and all powerful forefathers allow me Bran of Dagd to know your ways and receive your magickal powers, so I may sense the 9 worlds within my earthly plain and transport my life force to wheresoever the need takes me.” as he prayed he felt a new energy of resounding magnitude trying to connect to him, this was other than that of the stone, although he could sense its inherent spiritual life force he could not identify its source, what could this new entity represent, where would it lead him?

All at once he perceived the vitality of Badb entering his thoughts, he subconsciously opened his mind and beckoned her to him.

“Bran are you at the sacred stone?” the voice of Badb questioned in an all knowing way,

“Yes dear Badb, it is truly comforting to know you are with me, are you safe and how is the Kings quest?”

“Yes Bran, I am well protected, and the King has had great success at his conquests, we are at Godshill, I had a vision of a travelling man possessing God like powers, not of this time who has come to make good the past, it is our destiny to meet with him, but I know not why at this time”.



Bran replied, “I feel a great shift in energy here at the Standing Stone, it is although there is a secret being held within that desires me to unlock and release it, but will not show me where or who holds the key, although I sense that once the secret is revealed it will change the world.”

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD I SHALL NOT WANT



he maketh me to lie



the still waters

down in green pastures



he leadeth me beside

"I feel this too Bran, you must keep your mind open to all perceptions, and seek guidance from the otherworld" Badb proffered in an enlightened way.

"I sense my purpose has been divined and must return to the Longships now to continue our mission, may the Gods walk with you."

Bran, filled with unresolved questions, made his way over the rocky terrain back to the ship where Trygves men were already loading the lucrative spoils from the siege.

"Welcome" called Trygve as he caught the image of Bran hurrying down towards the bay,

"It would seems your raid on the Pearl Merchants at the Manor was most successful" said Bran pointing towards the hoards of pearls, precious stones and jewels being hoisted aboard the waiting ships.

"Yes Bran, the Gods looked down in pleasure bestowing upon us much wealth and protection for our warriors"

"And what of Gunnars raid" asked Bran

"They faired well at Blackgang, some gold and a sacred white goat, without much loss,, Get those treasures on board, and none overboard if you care for your life"

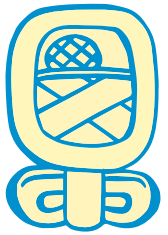
Trygve shouted steering the conversation in another direction.

As by magic Gunnars and Sigourds fleet appeared from round the bay to wait for Trygve, and the remaining ships. Trygves booty was loaded at great speed, and they were back on the water en masse with oarsmen assisting the sails set for Freshwater Baye to meet with Steinar and gather provisions for their journey to Cowes.

Steinar had landed at Freshwater Baye two days hence with little resistance, as the Wyvern army focus was on the invasion of The Pearl Merchants Manor House in Brighstone Baye.

There had been time for the warriors to practise their hunting and gathering skills, scaling the cliffs to recover Cormorant and Razorbill eggs, as well as stalking wild boar, goats and rabbits, showing their bowman prowess by taking meat on the run and on the wing with a single arrow.

The fresh spring waters that ran down to the sea were captured in goat skin drums ready to quench the thirst of parched sailors throats and bellies, these were stacked and stowed ready to replenish their comrades vessels.



Perhaps their most welcome vanquish was to capture the Manors set along Freshwater Baye, and live in the lap of luxury on fine food wine and as much ale as could be consumed, but, for all too few nights, as they would soon be back on the hard sea of the Dragon ships, who knows when they would enjoy this lifestyle again?

The lookout hailed a lone boat ashore which was bringing the Warrior Leaders Trygve, Gunnar, Sigourd plus Bran and the white goat ashore.

Steinar and his men welcomed the victors with great exuberance.

"Come ashore my comrades I welcome you to celebrate another Viking conquest of Wyvern Isle" all around thundered their praises and gratification.

The four bold and fearless warriors came together in a magnanimous embrace in hearty recognition of each other's achievements; they sat on the rocks passionately recalling the conquests of the previous days.

"We have done well and pleased the Gods with our gifts and sacrifices, but to ensure our onward protection we will offer the sacred white goat to our God of Gods Odin, before we set forth around the treacherous Dragons Tail this will be the most dangerous seafaring voyage for us all,.....How well do you know these waters Bran?" all eyes fell upon him in great expectation.

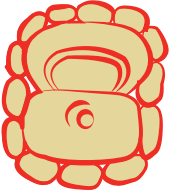
"You are right Trygve, these are treacherous waters, you must go around The Gorse, if you try and cut through you'll be scuppered for sure, there are many spines to the Dragons Tail; I will sail with you, just be sure to follow our course" Bran knew that the safety of the whole fleet depended upon his judgement.

"I will take the helm and lead these ships to Newton Haven and raid there with Bran as my watchman,

Sigourd, you follow behind me and set a course to raid Alum Baye, there are few dwellings there, so should be an easy target.

Steinar raid from Totland Baye,

Gunnar take the remainder of the ships and sail on to Yarmouth, raid what you find, and load your vessels to the hilt with as much food and water as you can carry, my fleet will be ahead of you and we shall all meet in Thornay Baye after one sunrise at undorn, to prepare for our final attack on Cowes".



The Warriors enthusiastically agreed Trygves plan,

“Bring the sacred goat to me” he commanded, the much revered animal was washed in the pure fresh water spring, then laid upon a large flat rock, they stood together in worship “ Odin hear our prayers and accept this sacred beast as our offering to you, watch over my men and their ships so our journey will be safe and fruitful, Mikill Wotan”

He roared, the warriors echoed his praise a thousand times louder as the sacrificial sword kissed the neck of the chosen one and its blood returned to the sea, Trygve laid his hands in the pulsating river of blood, then anointed his leaders and himself; holding their hands high in the air they saluted Odin once more, the warriors roared their support and allegiance as the commanders embraced then returned to their ships.

The air was still, the clouds lay heavy around the distant coast line, there was an eerie silence as the ships advanced, with only the hypnotic drum beat and the oars making their presence known across the glass like water, their journey towards the Dragons Tail, had begun.

All ships had their best men on lookout scouring the sea for hidden dangers as the rocky edifice of The Gorse came into view, Bran altered course to make his circumnavigation of the headland around the point, when a thick dark blanket of cloud descended from the heavens enveloping the treacherous rocks and cliffs as if they had been magically painted out of the landscape, you could barely see the ship behind you.

Trygve bellowed to his men, “Drummer make more noise, Warriors, Chant the name of Odin to every drumbeat in your loudest voices so the fleet may follow our sound”

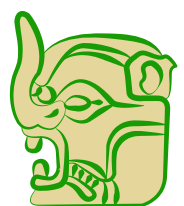
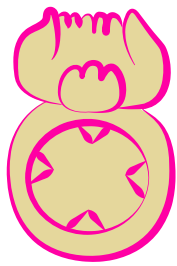
The drummer struck with resounding vigour, the men thundered Odins name to every strike,

Trygve beseeched “Odin do not leave us now”there was little more that could be done.

Bran once again came to Trygve with a look of deep concern on his face saying “ In our Sacrificial Prayers and offerings we should have included the Andraste and Njörðr the Sea God, they are angry at their absence, how can we recompense this omission”?

Trygve paused in grave thought; he knew what must be done,

“Bran you must make me the offering to the Gods if this mist does not lift we may not have any ships or men left to fight with, it is the only way we can be certain to appease them”.



Bran stood motionless his head spinning with task laid before him,

“Trygve, yes the Gods need gratifying and you would make the finest offering, but you are also the Lord of this fleet and without you the quest may not be successful, let me send my thoughts to others that may help our cause.”

Bran knelt at the bow, raising his magickal staff to the clouds he opened his mind to Badb,

“What is wrong Bran I cannot see you”?

“Badb I am in desperate need of your help, our whole fleet is stranded at sea in a mist of the Gods making, we must calm their wrath together so they may clear our path to safety”

“Bran, I know a fith fath spell that can make things disappear and new things take their place, I have an idea, focus with me on this cloud,”

Bran still kneeling visualised the encompassing mist whilst Badb recited old spells passed down to her from Morrigan and the Tuatha De Danann.

In Brans mind he could visualise the mist being sucked up to the Gods, he slowly opened his eyes and there in the sky was a huge magnificent Gjálfrmarr constructed from the thick blanket of cloud, that previously thwarted their passage, the warriors cheers and gasped in amazement at this great transformation

Bran closed his eyes, “Badb, I am not worthy of you, you have saved a whole fleet from certain peril”.

“And you dear Bran, and you” Badb said in a soft and caring manner.

Trygve resounded, “ Strike the drum at full pace my fearless warriors, and get your backs into those oars”, he then turned to Bran saying I am indebted to you for my life”

Bran quickly replied “We are all in debt to Badb and the Gods my lord not me”.

The Gjálfrmarr apparition floated across the sky before them foraging a safe path around the treacherous rocks into Alum Baye where Sigour safely landed his ships beneath the multi coloured sandy headland without resistance and rampaged through the sparsely populated crofts where only a few local craftsmen were spared.



Steinar sailed on the new wind to raid Totland Baye, where they quickly annihilated a pitiful pitchfork challenge placing the local Manors and Taverns immediately under their barbaric rule.

Gunnar and Trygves fleet set course for Yarmouth Haven, Newton and Thornay Baye to replenish their supplies for the major reprisal on Newport Haven and Cowes, their plans went well reaffirming their "frith-stool" as they went.

Over decades of invasions the "Ayars" knew only too well what fate befell them as the warriors rampaged over their land, homes and women, the Beserkrs reputations were sufficient to drive all and sundry into immediate submission in the vain hope some lives would be spared, only rarely were beautiful women, slaves or skilled craftsmen bequeathed this grace.

In three daegur the fleets came together as planned in Thornay Baye, it was a fearful sight to behold, nearly 500 warriors and 17 ships in close formation consuming the Baye as they beached their vessels.

With all the warriors ashore Trygve addressed his men,

"Welcome my brave warriors you have pleased the Gods and fought well, in two daegur we make sail for Newport Haven, where we will surely meet our greatest resistance" the warriors jeered in defiant retort as Trygve shouted over their mocking..... " Therefore, after you have blessed Thornay Baye with your gentle Norse presence"

The warriors erupted once again in shrieks of jovial malice....'Bring back all you can carry as this night there must be much feasting and merriment and we must prepare offerings to honour the Gods who have stood along side us in battle and exposed our path to glory, so go teach these peasants a lesson in fighting, seek your pleasure and bring her back to savour."

The response was tumultuous, like a volcano erupting from the bowels of the earth the noise spewed into the atmosphere with thunderous rapture.

It was as though every battle, trial, loss of life and pain had been washed away with a few well chosen words, the hordes left in jubilant frenzy to storm Thornaye, Gurnard and the surrounding Manors.

In the now comparative quiet Bran and Trygve stood together to seek direction from their Gods, Trygve raised his eyes to the dark skies,



"Oh wondrous Gods, we beseech you to come together and lead us victoriously from our quest, we are here to serve and please you, enter our spirits and run by our sides to smite the foe before us, we ask for your allegiance, blessing and strength so we may return triumphant from our task, this night we will offer our most precious possessions to you in thanks and reverence."

On the warriors jubilant return that night the rituals of worship were proffered, the finest jewellery, the most magnificent Boar, and a beautiful sylphlike captive female were prepared and laid to rest.

The warriors made much merriment that continued all through that night, feasting on meat and dried mushrooms washed down with flagons of wine and ale until euphoria transcended their presence of mind, every Tavern, Manor and eating house bulged at the seams with drunken lecherous bodies consumed with the fervour of lust and ale.

The morning Sun rose seemingly before its time, dishevelled heaps of distorted figures were strewn every which way on dusty tracks and in filthy barns, their images more akin to the remnants of a lost battle rather than a band of fearless warriors.

"Man your boats" hailed down the line in rapid monotonous repetition; stagnant forms fell from shacks and rose from the ground contorting slowly into near human form preceded by groans, curses and a few wincing smiles reminiscent of the nights cavorting escapades.

With heavy heads and unresponsive bodies the last battle was now a distant memory but the warriors soon shook themselves into shape with every mans concentrated effort now firmly focussed on the next siege of Newport Baye and Cowes.

The fleet commanded sail and oar to ride hard against the tide around the nape of Black Hedge to seal off the Medyne escape route and meet with Forkbeards foot warriors approaching from the South.

**Badb predicts a traveller
of untold power will arrive,
And bring forth wealth and happiness
Allowing all mankind to survive**

**The Longstone holds the secret
Of the seed of power no doubt
The Vikings worshipped Gods on high
But left two main ones out!**

Who were they?



14. The Journey to Brooke The Knights Hospitallers Warning



As Jed and Kate rounded the churchyard tower they could see one of the Knights lying on the stone pathway, with several other Knights in attendance, as they approached from the gateway entrance Kate whispered

“That is Sir Ralph and it looks like he is in dire need of help” they cautiously approached the group, who until that moment had not noticed their presence.

The Knights could see the pain and anguish in the eyes of Sir Ralph; as they encircled him two monks shrouded in a dark grey Habits approached from the gate.

“Can we be of assistance?” said the taller Monk; then looking down he said, “might I enquire if this is Sir Ralph de Gorges?”

The Knights looked suspiciously at the pair, retorting “Who would you be and how would you know that Father?”

“Jeddediah Toogood” replied the monk.

“Sir Ralph would have spoken about us in deed, not by name,”

Kate then threw back her hood to display her well kempt features.

“I am Kate Mew daughter of Sir John Oglander of Nunwell House which we will explain another time”

The Knights were surprised to see a woman’s face concealed under the hood.

Kate then spoke in a most confident manner.

“You must trust us, our mission is akin to yours, but right now this poor Knight is in need of urgent and immediate medical help, the nearest Hospital is in Brooke Village which is run by the Knights Hospitallers of St John, they have the skills to tend to the needs of Sir Ralph until he is strong enough to make the journey back to Knighton, let us take you there without delay”

Sir Ralph had told the Knights that he was to encounter unknown allies to whom he would pledge his allegiance, and time was of the essence, so they gathered their horses placing Sir Ralph on Sir Jerars horse with him for support and safety.



"Follow us" called Jeddediah as they set off as fast as possible across the woodland and over Chillerton Down and on to Shorwell where they paused just long enough to snatch food and water from the local Inn.

Early in the morning back at Sir Ralph's Estate there was a ruckus in the courtyard, leading to an unknown visitor hammering on the main doors.

As the Knights had left for Gatcombe the Retainer of the Manor attended the door

"What is this rumpus, have you no respect?"

A ruddy-faced well built young man stood at the entrance quite out of breath.

"Me Lady I 'ave just rode down from 'Aseley Manor on the Adherton estate, the Abbott asked me to deliver this very urgent message to Sir Ralph de Gorges personally," he said with a tip of his forehead, holding the parchment firmly in his grubby hand.

"Tom, isn't it? you had better let me see the contents as Sir Ralph has already left, this morning?"

Tom begrudgingly handed over the parchment and waited.

"My good friend Sir Ralph de Gorges,

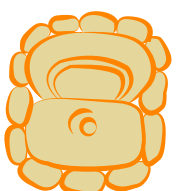
I am most pleased that you have returned to the Island, but I feel it necessary to warn you without delay of sinister goings on at Brooke Hospital, the Knights Hospitallers have, in the news of the "Templars Troubles" made it known that they will be "looking after" properties on the Templars behalf, so they will certainly not welcome your return.

Forewarned is forearmed Sir Ralph and I look forward to engaging with you soon.

Abbott of the Abbey of Quarr

"Thank you Tom, now it is your turn to earn a sliver penny", Toms face portrayed his keenness to oblige, "You know the Island better than most, and as this message has been entrusted to you, I will in turn ask you to deliver it as a matter of life and death to Sir Ralph; take our best horse and ride like the wind for St Olaves Church at Gatcombe.

Sir Ralph is in very poor health and only this very morning I suggested it may be appropriate for him to visit the Knights Hospitallers in Brooke for respite before his return, I do trust no harm will come to him".



The Lady of the house pressed the silver penny in Toms grubby hand saying "Please pass on my indebtedness to the Abbott".

Tom instantly spat on the coin and with a smile that would light the sky remarked "Oi'll be doin' 'at roight now thank ee me Lady"

Tom pushed his advanced reward securely into his money pouch, ran to the farrier and leapt on the waiting thoroughbred and sped off on his mercy mission.

Tom knew the short cuts well and was a first class horseman, soon he was galloping across St Georges down and on to Blackwater, all the time thinking of the fastest routes, at Blackwater he took a detour across Gatcombe estate arriving at the Church in record time.

There were no other horses or folk in sight, he tied up his horse and walked briskly down the pathway to the church entrance when a rounded figure bustled towards him,

"Scuse me sir" said Tom, "I ave an urgent message to deliver to one of the Templar Knights, don't spose you ave seen none?"

The man scratched his head for a moment and said "Well, I eard my master at Goten Manor where I elps out talkin bout a band a Knights, an one of em looked near deaths door, would they be 'em?"

"Sounds like em to me squire" retorted Tom, "did e see which way em went?"

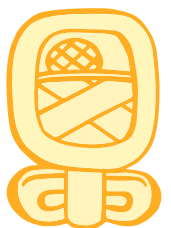
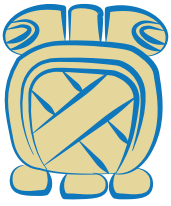
"'Eaded fast southward awards Shorrel I thinks" he said"

Before another word could be spoken Tom was back on his mount and away, he knew that was the route that lead to Brooke, and needed not to waste another moment.

He tracked over Westridge Down then across country passed Northcourt Manor, winding his way down passed Wolverton Manor where he spied a group of horsemen riding at speed.

He dug in his heels and the horse responded well, soon he was upon the group.

"Thank God I have caught you", Tom said thrusting a scroll in front of the Knights, "I have an important message for Sir Ralph de Gorges from the Abbott of Adherton Manor",



The Knights steadied their horses, and read the manuscript, it was a message addressed to Sir Ralph at Knighton Manor warning him of the potential Hospitallers hostility towards the Knights Templars, which they found difficult to believe, but this was from an eminently trustworthy source.

Sir Jerar spoke up, "This may be the case but if we do not get Sir Ralph medical help immediately, he will surely die this day"

The Knights agreed to continue at speed towards their destination and agreed to take every caution to ensure Sir Ralphs safety.

They rapidly approached Brighstone where they stopped momentarily to water their horses commandeer some food from the local Inn and gather bandages as Sir Ralph had started bleeding from his old wound.

They then continued their arduous journey passing through Hulverstone and by Mottistone Manor where they noticed herds of deer roaming the nearby Brighstone forest and marked the spot for later investigation, just as the sun was setting they arrived at Brooke Hospital, where they were halted at the entrance by 4 Knights Hospitallers.

One stepped forward sarcastically saying

"Sir Knights, to what honour do we owe this presence may I ask?"

"Good evening Sir" replied Sir Jerar in a befitting tone.

"We are requesting your compassion and urgent assistance, Sir Ralph de Gorges is in need of critical medical care, and of course we came straight to you as our Brothers at Arms".

The attitude of the Knight at the entrance changed once he knew that the injured party was Sir Ralph.

"We had better get Sir Ralph inside and attend to his needs immediately" he said ushering the party into a large waiting hall.

If you would like to rest here I will call the Grand Master Foulques de Villaret who is visiting from Rhodes.

In moments Sir Foulques appeared, "Greetings fellow Knights and welcome to Brooke Hospital" he strode over and looked at Sir Ralph, who was in a pitiful state by this time.



"Get this man to a bed" he bellowed as four assistants ran into the room to his command,

Jed in his disguise as a monk, spoke to Sir De Villaret

" If I may make a request, due to the obvious condition of Sir Ralph, that we", indicating himself and Kate, whose head was once again covered, "attend by his bedside?"

Villaret paused briefly in thought, "Yes of course fathers come this way".

He lead them through the stark narrow winding corridors, to a medium sized room attended by two nurses who were washing and dressing Sir Ralphs wounds.

"I will leave you in the hands of these good ladies, and I will return shortly said Sir Foulques as he left the room.

Jed and Kate stood piously waiting with their backs to the white stone wall as Sir Ralph was prepared for bed rest; the nurses then retired to fetch the Hospitallers .

Kate quickly moved over to Sir Ralphs bedside, she had to let him know who they were and to trust them implicitly.

**A journey fraught with menace
Befell the Knights so brave
Their quest to hide the Sacred Rod
Took many to their grave**

**What penance was paid
To ensure A loves was reached**

Name the Type & Denomination?



15. A Viking Tale: Norse Warriors Attack Cowes

Reunion of the Longships



he daybreak was welcomed with noticeably less anxiety than after previous battles, and all were in good spirits as they readied themselves for the onslaught to Quarr Abbey.

Forkbeard consulted privately with Badb,

“Our missions have been very successful, which concerns me, for everything that is taken or destroyed there is always a price to pay, it is just when, what seeeth you”?

Badb, sat crossed legged on a log scrolling the earth with a fallen branch from the Oak, “Your destiny is written sire; great fear will become you before you see the cliffs of Wyvern Eyland behind you”

“What nonsense is this, I fear no man” retorted Forkbeard

“This fear is not of a mere mortal my liege, he is not of our time, you must protect yourself by finding the cauldron of eternal life before any other, be guided by your visions” replied Badb in a truly omniscient tone.

The hordes pursued their goal relentlessly as they descended on Dodenor village where craftsmen where still building rolling carts to escape from the plunderers that were already upon them. In retaliation, the carts were loaded with hay and peasants, then set alight and rolled into their own homesteads, twas just another notch in the Norseman's bow.

The Riverway was abandoned, with remnants of all manner of unfinished goods strewn in their wake.

All was quiet as they stopped to quench their thirst with the cool crystal spring water, which was gulped with delight; suddenly the quiet was broken by the sound of many horses thundering through the vale; with short bows drawn the mounted archers let fly a fast and furious barrage of arrows, catching the unsuspecting warriors totally by surprise, it was over as quickly as it began but with 16 less marauders to worry the Eylandrs.

Forkbeard was furious at this wanton and unnecessary loss of his warriors' lives, and Magnus was called to task.

“What were you thinking of Magnus leaving our flank so exposed and unguarded, your incompetence has cost lives today, it WILL NOT happen again.”

Magnus remorsefully bowed and silently left to take care of his wounded comrades, once attended to, the invaders moved on alertly following the Riverway's meandering course without further incident, their fearful deeds were receiving reprisals.



As they left the valley and marched over the hill the sweet scent of Lavender filled their heathen lungs, which helped to disperse the rancid odour of nearly 500 unwashed bodies, they trudged across the fields until the tall "monkey trees were in sight, where they rested in preparation for the assault on Quarr Abbey.

Nightfall was closing in quickly, so the command to gather arms was given and the rested warriors joined in unison to form a protective ring around the King as they made their way to the [Sacred Butterfly](#) grove to take sanctuary for the night.

The Butterfly Grove was tranquil in the twilight, the evening breeze awakening the images of dragons and spirits, which were silhouetted in frenzied dances against the moons silver screen, in the distance you could discern faint sounds of night beasts exploring their mystical shadowy playground. Sleep soon befell the camp as weary bodies and minds drifted to the otherworld to be rested and rejuvenated for tomorrow.

Before first light Magnus sent Olaf on horseback to establish the vulnerability or defences of Quarr Abbey, he arrived at the entrance and was welcomed by a shrouded monk,

"Welcome brother, how may we help you"?

Olaf replied "I am fleeing from the Viking pigs who have captured Carisbrooke Fort, and I would welcome somewhere to stay this night"

The monk replied "You are most welcome to share our humble dwellings and what little food we have, enter."

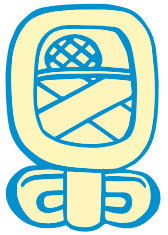
Olaf felt a pang of penitence as he was ushered to a room to rest, and given a flagon of water and a crust of bread to satisfy his imposed hunger.

He needed an excuse to leave, so he could report back to Magnus,

"Now you have been kind enough to offer me refuge here, would you permit me to fetch my wife and son as they are also in grave danger, it would only be for a few days, until the threat has passed"?

"Of course, your family is welcome here", replied the monk with deep compassion, "but I must warn you that although this is the house of God it may not be beyond the reproach of the heathen Vikings, as they have no Godliness within them, and we have been waiting for their attack for some time."

"Although it will be in vein, as all our worldly and Holy treasures have been removed and are being transported across the water this very night to the Holy Trinity Church in Southampton, but, you can take solace from the fact that should they attack the Abbey, their souls will surely go straight to Hell to be forever damned".



This frightened Olaf more than death itself, he quickly left, his mind filled with fear, how could this encounter be avoided; he galloped back, passing many small **farm buildings** on his way to the waiting army, his mind awry with trepidation and confusion.

He entered the camp at speed, Magnus was there awaiting his return,

“Magnus I have important news for the King”,

“I will be the judge of that Olaf, tell me your news”

The treasures from the abbey have been removed and are on their way across the water this night”!

“Are you sure of these facts Olaf”? he nodded in affirmation.

“Come with me, be sure you recall this news with accurate detail to the King”

Magnus and Olaf went before Forkbeard.

“Sire we have important news from Quarr Abbey”, Olaf then preceded to tell the King of the mornings events in exact detail.

“Did you enter the main vestibule ...what did you see”? said the King in hurried tone,

“Yes Sire they were empty no valuables, ornate works of art, statues or anything of worth to be seen”,

“If what you say is true Olaf, It would be fortuitous to lay siege at the port and waylay the movement of these treasures, Magnus, send a rider immediately to Trygve to set sail to intersect this bounty at Cowes Medyne, and we will march directly to meet them there, but just to make sure we will send a small raiding party to Quarr they will be in no danger and they can make sure your information is correct”.

Olaf felt inwardly rejoiced, his news had altered the plan of attack, and now he would not be damned to Hell for eternity.

The raiding party set off on horseback as the main force gathered their weapons and set a fast pace to the East Cowes Medyne, the spoils of this anticipated major conquest were soon to be realised.

Forkbeards army soon reached Island Harbour Baye where they pirated several old boats to use as transport up the Medyne Causeway, they ransacked the local fisherman’s store and grabbed fresh supplies of fish, meat and water in preparation for the coming confrontation.



The raiding party soon returned from their forage at Quarr Abbey and rode directly to Magnus.

“What were your findings” called Magnus.

“Yes Olaf was right, we took the priest to within an inch of his life and his story stayed true, and we searched everywhere and found nothing”

The King was quickly informed of the news and made haste to move his men onward through Whippingham, only stopping to take refreshment and to pillage worthy homesteads in their path.

The rain beat down hard in the faces of the warriors as they stomped the muddy paths on their way to link with Trygve at East Cowes Medyne.

But before this final battle they marched on the Osborne Estate and the Augustinian Barton Manor where many Kings and Queens of England have been entertained when visiting the Eyland of Wyvern and therefore held much potential for fine treasures, but even these encounters would be brief, brutal and profitable, his men had their orders, which they were to follow remorselessly.

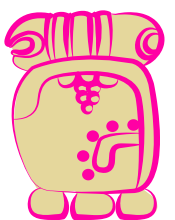
“Take the split and attack by two flanks” shouted Magnus as his warriors approached Osborne, but no sooner had the words left his lips the sound of horses at full gallop pounding the earth emanated from surrounding forest appearing like ghosts from their murky woodland setting outflanking the Kings warriors on both sides.

In full battle cry the Knights of Osborne hailed down on the weary foot soldiers and with drawn swords hacked their way around the periphery decimating the unprepared horde.

They were fast and deadly accurate in their assault and drove the Norse army back into a protective circle, but the lead warriors soon recovered their momentum, Magnus bellowed “Frangangr Sokn” as if ignited the mass exploded from the centremost circle like a nuclear reaction, with poleaxes at the ready they formidably smite the attackers bringing horses and knights mercilessly to the ground.

The horsemen instantly recognising the power being borne upon them rapidly retreated back into the forest.

Magnus although now wounded ordered “Death to the Eylandr, Onward to Osborne and Barton, seize all that you can carry, no heads to be spared for the pole”



The men hurriedly regrouped and now invigorated with rage cleaved through the remaining partisans to plunder anything of value and load onto the carts.

Without delay the roads were once again filled with chanting warriors relentlessly pursuing their fugitives.

As they progressed undeterred towards East Cowes Medyne the uplifting sight of ships masts and dragon sails of Trygves fleet could be seen rounding the point into the Baye accompanied by the stimulating sound of drum rolls beating out the rhythm of speed between the causeway as they headed to form a blockade across the water.

Tryges longships manoeuvred skilfully into position, sealing off both entry and exit to the Eyland; tumultuous cheers of joy, relief and camaraderie filled the air and the hearts of the exhausted but victorious road warriors at this welcome reunion.

In a moment the King stepped forth and ordered, "Bran, Inge, take horses and the lead of 200 men; scour the coastline for any ships that are seaworthy and moored, search and destroy every one until the Gods Treasure is found; go, there is no time to waste and do not return until your quest is achieved"

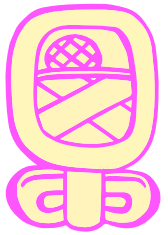
The warriors rode like the wind eager to do the bidding of their liege before nightfall.

Bran knew the coast well and sent 10 parties in different directions to comb the reed beds and secret bays where it was easy to conceal small craft and make an unseen getaway.

Darkness was quickly upon them, only broken by the bursts of glowing red auras illuminating the coastline where boats and buildings were meeting their doom, but with no signal of success.

The warriors waded silently through the dark silted shoreline searching for the illusive cargo. Trees, bracken and the lapping waters became restless spirits, waiting their turn to gorge themselves upon the cold and muddy task force.

The new moon was waning as Bran spoke in a whisper to Inge, "I fear the sacred Cauldron has already left for Southampton, this night I must meet with Badb so our powers may combine to envisage its the resting place that we may intercept its journey and bring it to the King"



Bran knew he had to discover the whereabouts of the blessed Cauldron so he could use his trusted position to smuggle it to the safety and eventually the sanctity of his forbearers resting place.

Inge blew a retreat on the horn to signify a return to base; the King would not be pleased!!

They returned at a gallop through the black unwelcoming forest soon to arrive at the camp when Gunnar appeared dragging a roughneck behind his steed.

He was near dead on arrival, Gunnar dismounted and cut the rope from his bloody wrists, the wretch slumped to the ground where a hefty kick in the ribs bowled him onto his back,

"What have you say now pig"? Gunnar taunted, thrusting his boot into the side of his throat, the rogue choking and coughing cursed

"Piss on yur mother you eeathen bastard" Gunnar enraged drew his sword and was about to deliver the "banahogg" and decapitate the miserable tyke when,

"Hold that sword Gunnar" bellowed from the other side of the camp, King Forkbeard appeared striding towards the affray,

"Has this.....person given any useful information Gunnar?"

"No your majesty" he replied with louted head and sheathed sword.

"Then he needs to be persuaded to be more obliging, does he not, bring him to the fire?"

Inge and Gunnar grabbed the now silent peasant by the scruff of the neck and dragged his dishevelled body towards the burning embers.

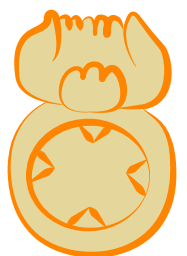
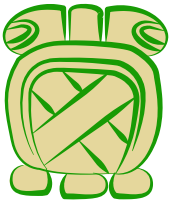
The King then addressed the blooded victim

"I am going to give you 3 chances to tell me all you know brave vagabond", "Understand" the King shouted,

The ragged peasant nodded nervously

The King ordered Brunnar to choose a burning ember from the fire

"Can you hear me?" the peasant once again nodded,



"What can you tell me of any laden boats leaving the Medyne this day?"

The peasant shook his head

"I think the peasant does not hear Brunnar, open his ears"

With this Brunnar rammed the burning ember into his ear, the captive, fell to the floor writhing and screaming in excruciating pain,

Brunnar wrenched his head backwards by his hair, "Now let us see if your one good ear can hear better than two"

He was brought again before the King.

"Do not be brave Eylandr, there will be nobody to thank you, or bury you if you refuse to answer my questions, I will ask you one more time, What can you tell me of any laden boats leaving the Medyne this day?"

The man shaking and cowering in fear, muttered,

"First loight frarm Gorse Bank, fancy priests set for Southampton"

"At last some sense, think carefully before you answer, anything else?" Questioned the King

The peasant shook his charred and bloody head "no sire" he respectfully replied.

"Let him go Brunnar, he has paid his dues this day" without waiting for confirmation the peasant ran from his captors into the darkness.

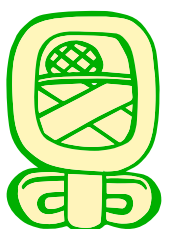
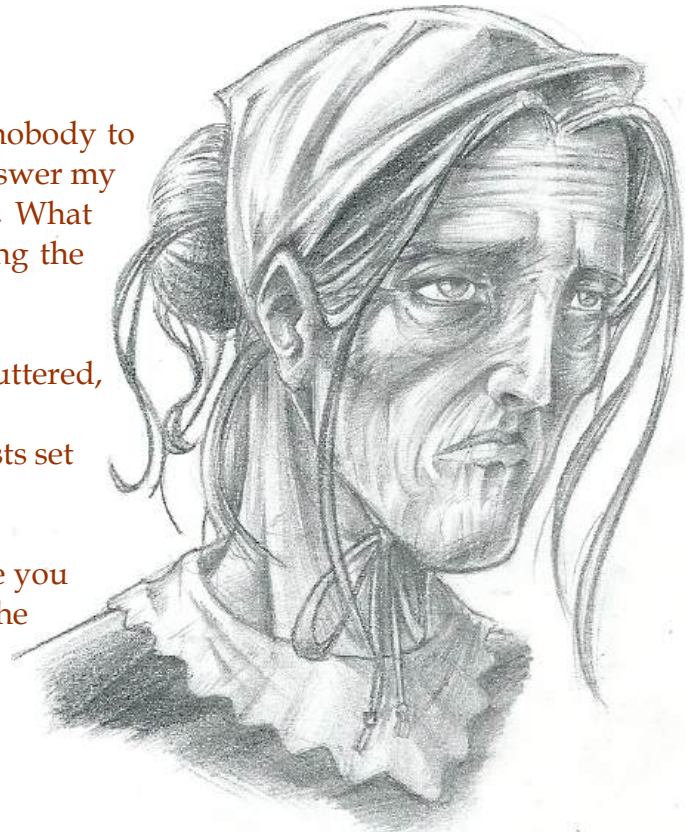
Bran searched for Badb and found her behind the main camp sitting on the banks of the Medyne, in her usual cross-legged posture gazing across the water.

A golden aura emanated from her in every direction illuminating the boats below with fairylike shimmers against the backdrop of the cold dark water.

Bran softly spoke with deep compassion "Badb, you are vibrant with energy this night, it is so good to see you, are you safe and well".

"It has been a long journey Bran, what news have you?" she asked looking cautiously around to make sure no ears were flapping.

In a near whisper he said "The Sacred Cauldron has already been taken to Southampton early this day, so we will have to combine all of our powers to find it"



"Let us visualise the journey together Bran, come sit by my side" as Bran moved closer to Badb, he could feel her radiating warmth and energy flowing into his body, he yearned for that closeness he had so missed, but now was not the time for such wanton needs, their life's purpose was to find the Cauldron.

They sat together in bonded silence, and from within beckoned the Gods, "Oh Dagd, High King of the Tuatha De Danann, clear the mist before our eyes, let us see the path of your Sacred Cauldron, Finvarra, give us your mental strength and power so we may see afar, Cliodna, through your Water Magick send a spirit contact to guide us"

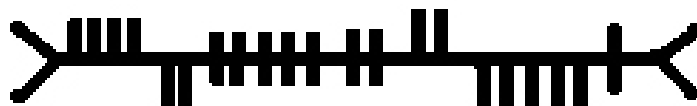
At that moment a white seabird flew down and sat on the bough of a boat at the waters edge staring at them both sitting on the bank.

Badb opened her eyes, "Praise be to all my fore bearers and their spirit Gods for sending this hallowed messenger.

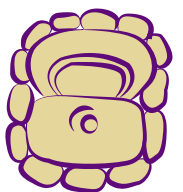
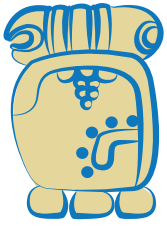
"We must follow the seabird sent by Cliodna Bran, its spirit will show us the true path of the Golden Cauldron".

**Dragons and horses came together at Cowes
To make the final offensive
The Abbott of Quarr welcomed all men
But Olaf was on the defensive.**

**Magick was about by the water
A message was sent from above,
A spirit became their guiding light
It was sent from the Gods with love**



Decipher the code to find the Deity?



16. The Future 2076AD

The Island Metropolis Revisited



After assisting the Knights in their quest to successfully rescue Sir Ralph and deliver him safely to Brooke Jed called Kate to one side before she had a chance to peak to Sir Ralph,



"I need to find out what is happening back at Paris-Trans with the committee, they knew that Arany had knowledge of the whereabouts of the enormous Kings Ransom of 500,000 Gold Crowns that was paid for the failed escape of Charles 1st and, as Arany has 'disappeared' they will certainly be sending Vinnetti hard on its trail.

Now Sir Ralph seems to be improving I am going to slip off to the Longstone Portal, and transport to Brian's, I will return as soon as I have the information I need."

"Jed, do not put your life at risk otherwise our future and this quest will all be futile, we have many years of happiness to look forward to together, do not put that at risk"

"I am not intending to risk our future Kate, but the success of our quest, will effect life on earth, which will also effect our lives directly therefore we must succeed at all costs."

Kate fought back the tears that were bursting from within, as she held Jed close she whispered "You are my life and my future dear love, hurry back to me"

Jed left, untethered the nearest horse and jumped astride racing against time to the Longstone Portal, he rode the steed hard over the downs arriving at lightning speed, as soon as his feet touched the ground he tied the horse to a nearby tree and programmed the Amulet for Brian's and set VR to 8, there was no time to lose.

Jed repolarised at Brian's, inside the house, downstairs on the floor in the laboratory; although a little disorientated he thought to himself, *That fooled two Security systems!*

As he regained his senses he noticed WILMA busying herself in automatic cleaning mode, "Hi Wilma,"

Wilma stopped, "Hi Jeddadiah, welcome, would you like a drink?"

"No thank you" said Jed, "I need to speak to Brian Urgently"



"Which level of urgency do you need to speak to him?" questioned Wilma

"Which ever is your most urgent level!" replied Jed,

"That's 33 replied Wilma I will transmit at that level"

In seconds Brian's hologram appeared by the bar,

"Mr Jed, good to see you," said 'Brian'

"Can you?" queried Jed,

" Of course I can, unfortunately I am several thousand miles away, so how's the quest?"

"Stressful yet amazing and I am still in one piece; Mr E I need to know what directives the committee have given and their intended plans."

"Well you had better speak to Triany, she has attended all the meetings and she is here with me,"

At that Triany's hologram appeared,

"Hello Jed, lovely to hear your voice, how can I help?"

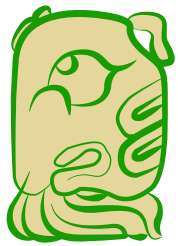
"Hello Triany, what have the committee decided about myself and Arany "

Triany took a deep breath and replied

"Well Jed, you have been branded a fugitive in league with Arany who is now a traitor convicted of stealing the Kings Ransom, the Gods Treasures, and all Turners works of Art.

As you may guess they have already teleported the cloned Vinnetti to track Arany and yourself down, and return what is 'rightfully' the property of Paris-Trans, with the brief that after interrogation, he should terminate your committee membership, by whatever methods he deems applicable, and you do know what that means.

Vinnetti is also to visit the Hospitallers and exploit their growing hostility and greed by negotiating terms for your capture, that's as much as I can tell you Jed, but Vinnetti is already there, so caution is the optimum sentiment."



All Jed's worst fears had come to life and were staring him right in the face, his priority was to return immediately to the Hospitallers at Brooke.

"Thank you both so much, your intelligence has given me the knowledge and opportunity to outwit Vinnetti and.....maybe save the world as we know it, take care my friends."

With that knowledge embedded in Jed's mind he activated the Amulet and its infinite power sprang into action once again, Jed's mind raced,

Longstone portal coordinates set... Year set....VR 8 set.... let's go...

Jed felt excruciating pain down his left side as he depolarised, accompanied by a vibration of such intensity and resonance that the accumulated sound felt as though it would split his body in two; he was losing his grip on the Seed of Power. With every molecule of consciousness he possessed he focussed on his destination, arriving safely, and in one recognisable piece.

Just as his transmutable body entered a swirling black vortex of infinite magnitude a familiar tone echoed from this deepest abyss, the blackness became grey, the grey became blue, *what is happening, where am I, oh God have I died?* contorted through Jed's mind.

He slowly opened his eyes, the light was blinding, reflecting like a laser beam through a crafted chink between the Standing and Altar Longstones, he shielded his eyes, waiting for his faculties to return, there was that sound again, he looked around searching for it's origin, when, there just where he left the animal tethered, was the horse, *yes he thought, a familiar sound from a now familiar source*, walking over to his trusty friend he smiled saying

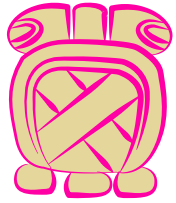
"It is most welcome to remake your acquaintance sir" and patted the horses haunches affectionately.

"Ok beast, get me to Brooke as fast as you can, I must find Sir Ralph and Kate in a hurry" The horse reared and shot off like a bullet.

He quickly arrived back at Brooke and entered Sir Ralphs room where Kate was diligently in attendance,

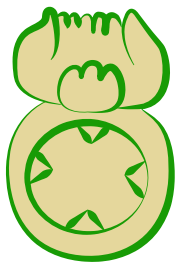
"Jed, speak to me, Jed are you all right" cried Kate,

Jed was certain he would never to see his beloved again and could barely speak, but the tear that rolled down his cheek showed his everlasting love, Kate held him close to her breast, thanking God for his return.



Jed raised his hand and softly ran his fingers through Kate's hair, and looked deeply into her heavenly eyes; Kate could see the expression of disbelief on Jed's face that he really was still of this earth.

After tenuous minutes Jed was sufficiently compos mentis to realise just how fortunate he had been to arrive in one piece this time, he hurriedly explained to Kate the outcome of his visit.



**What Brainy, Brilliant But Bizarre Brainchild did Jed
use to Bring Bran and Badb Back to Brians Bolthole.
Causing crazy characters to career cephaled, candidly
criss crossing carelessly into space?**

What is it?





17. A Viking Tale - The Southampton Invasion

The Cauldron of Eternal Life

Magnus was still recovering from his battle wounds at Osborne, leaving Trygve to lead the fleet once again.

“Get up you bunch of layabouts and load the ships you have a hard day ahead, the king has commanded to prepare for battle, we leave today as one force, to find the Holy Treasures across the waters”. Tryge proclaimed.

The ships were laden with armoury for their lightning invasion of Southampton, with the sole quest of returning the Golden Cauldron safely into the hands of the King.

The weather was in their favour as the fleet left the Medyne at Newport Haven, the seabird flying indicatively alongside the ship that hosted Bran, Badb and the King.

As they ventured further into the Suns Pathway, the spirit bird veered away from the ship letting out shrieks of alarm calls, then returned and repeated the same display over and over again.

Badb said, “We must be guided by the spirit bird, it alone knows the secret hiding place of the Undry, we must tell the King of our vision so he will be in his trust”?

Trygve brought the Sorcerers before Forkbeard, and they elucidated what had transpired in their vision quest and that the seabird was a spirit guide sent by Cliodna and must be followed.

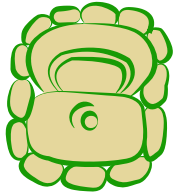
The King ordered this to be so, and the fleet set course to follow the Gods messenger.

The Spirit Bird drew them to the Eyland of Portsmouth; their numbers were overwhelming, families ran for their lives on hearing word of the landing.

The King recalled “My ancestors told tale of there only being two hundred peasant souls walking this land, and they ran northwards into hiding until the warriors left their shores”

Trygve laughed, “Looks like they learned a lesson sire, not a soul to be seen”

Badb scoured the skies looking for Cliodnas bird and then pointed at a tiny image inland circling in the distance.



"There she is Sire" addressing the King.

"Trygve, take Bran and 50 warriors, to search the grounds near where the bird flies, and waste no time" the King ordered.

Bran was reluctant to leave without Badb, but she was safer in the protection of the Kings men.

Quickly Trygve picked his men and they set off across country after their quarry.

There was little to plunder on the way other than a fine manor and an Ale House, the Kings directive was to find the treasure and return.

The bird had settled now on the small chapel of St Mary's, Bran stood perplexed, why had they been told by the wretch after torture that the holy men had set off for Southampton, when the bird was showing him a church in Portsmouth?

Trygve ordered "Search every hiding place, and bring me all you find" his men were soon scavenging every stone and building to find the elusive prize.

Bran concentrated on Badb, and soon her energy was within him, an image formed in his mind, it was that of a Saint, with eyes raised to the Gods, and hands held high in reverence, what did this vision represent.

Bran walked around the churchyard, but no such image did he behold, then one of the warriors called out to from within the chapel.

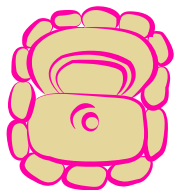
" Trygve, we've searched everywhere, can't find a thing, and not sure what we are searching for"

Trygve turned to Bran, "Well sorcerer I hope you can throw some light on why we are here following a bird"???

Bran knew he had to find the link, and that it was there somewhere before them.

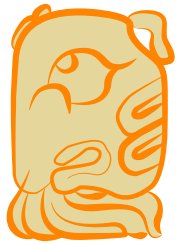
He walked into the chapel which was bare and cold, although dreary in appearance it seemed to encapsulate Bran in times gone by, he squinted through the billows of dust that the warriors created as they tore the inside of the chapel apart.

His mind racing, he searched for an image or clue that would lead to the treasure. Sweeping aside a small mound of earth with his staff he revealed an indistinguishable gnarled grey image embossed into the stone beneath.



He knelt down, and as he brushed away the remaining debris, the image took shape; it was that of an oak tree laden with large acorns all except one, which somehow looked different, more resembling a heart, Bran racked his brain, what significance would a heart represent?

He walked back out into the chapel courtyard, searching deep within his childhood memories for an answer to the riddle, he could see his spirit father Dagd symbolised by a Raven guarding his God given gifts of power, The Harp, the Sacred Undry, the Perpetual Boars, the Magick Club, and around his neck a golden key cast in the image of a Raven suspended by the links of golden chain of life.



"That's it" Bran proclaimed, "The heart represents the Earthly life, the Undry represents Eternal Food and Spiritual life, to manifest Eternal physical life, we have to find the key"

"What ARE you talking of Bran?" blurted Trygve,

Bran enthusiastically cried "Come with me" as he loped across the courtyard towards the large Oak, the spirit bird was already circling the same tree, Bran strode around it 9 times representing the nine levels of life, then stopped, the bird stopped too and settled on a stout branch that forked from the heart of the tree.

Bran could see a large nest, high in the tallest branches, but before he could speak, an apparition as black as coal sped from the sky at the speed of light, thundering into the canopy, moments later emerging with a golden chain and key, it was the otherworld emanation of Dagd, the Raven gently alighted to earth purposely placing the key at Brans feet then, in an instant disappearing into the sun from whence he came.

All around stood in silence at the miraculous visitation, Bran stooped and picked up the key and chain.

Trygve snatched it from Brans hand, then, letting out a shriek of pain threw it to the ground holding his hand in agony as the flesh on his palm smouldered with the branding mark of a Raven.

"What curse is upon this key sorcerer, you found it, you carry it."

Bran smirked as he picked up the treasure, kissing the Raven Symbol in reverence before placing it securely around his neck.

It was time to return to the King.



Bran with authority said to Trygve. "Collect all your men and let's get back to the King"

Trygve ordered his band of warriors to prepare to leave, even though some were reluctant as the barn they had found was full of ale.

The King was overjoyed at the news Bran had found the treasure, but not so pleased it was just a key.

"Where in the Gods name is the Cauldron, and how do we find it" bawled Forkbeard.

"At this time I cannot tell you sire", Bran smugly replied,

The King was not amused,

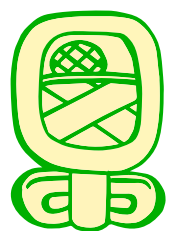
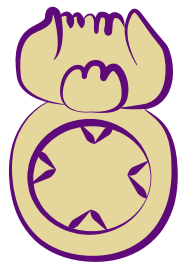
"Well Bran, you had better get your magick potions together and find our course, otherwise there will be one less mouth to feed" Forkbeard stomped off very disgruntled.

Badb was there to greet Bran, she took his hand and ushered him away from the aggression that he was growing around him, she knew that each step nearer the discovery of the cauldrons resting place was a trial of belief and worthiness, the Gods would not decree the rebirth of the Undry's' power unto any mere mortal, only its true spirit linked heir.

Bran took the golden chain and key from around his neck and placed it in Badb's' hand, she clasped it to her breast, breathing its' vibrant life force deep within.

Speaking softly she said, "This is of the Gods will, only you Bran are able to unlock the holy place that holds the Undry, envelop your hands around mine and close to your chest, open your mind, let your vision take you to this place".

They stood in silence, hands entwined, bodies indistinctly touching; their souls became one, each sensing the faintest flutter of ambience, a surge of vitality soared through their being, bursting into an ethereal clarity of understanding, as one they could visualise a vast playground of the brightest Angels darting amongst the fields and trees covering the ground and leaves in a mist of spectacular colours that had never been witnessed before.



Still conjoined in harmonic resonance, the vision of a ghostly grey image appeared from the sky breathing fire like a dragon, it was a beast with eight limbs like Odins Sleipnir, carrying the Golden Undry between its wings; circling high above Southampton it descended as though it were a feather, coming to rest amongst the Roman ruins of Byterne Manor.

Then as if a fiff faff spell had been charmed everything disappeared.

Bran and Badb, collapsed to the ground mentally and physically exhausted, they had seen where the Cauldron lay, to find it was a different tale.

They told Trygve of their experience and were summoned before the King.

“Sire after scrying the Raven Key we had a vision of tremendous intensity that showed in its parable the resting place of the Gods Treasure” Bran explained

“The peasant at the Butterfly Grove was truthful, it has been concealed at Southampton within the old Roman ruins and somehow with the Raven Key we must gain insight and access to its catacomb”

The King swiftly arose, “At last the secret of Eternal life is within my grasp, Trygve, call the warriors to assemble at the shoreline, there must be no mistakes at this next encounter”

Trygve assembled the warriors before the King.

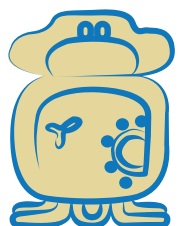
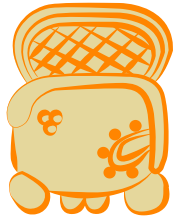
“Worthy Norse Warriors, our search for the hidden Gods treasure is nearly over”.

The previously weary and dishevelled warriors sprang into life shouting chants and praises to the Gods for their deliverance.

“Our next battle will be decisive, and one we must win at all costs, I put my trust and allegiance in you my faithful, fearless Warriors; sharpen your swords and axes we leave for Southampton before tomorrows dawn”

The response was ecstatic, the air reverberated with the sound of mass hysteria, with exaltations of JAAAAAA and FORKBEARD bellowing across the Baye in never ending crescendos. “

There was an atmosphere of excitement and anticipation at the thought of the final battle and going home, the leaders and warriors busied themselves in preparation and deep contemplation.



Forkbeard was aware that in prior battles all the locals around Southampton converged on the Burgh, to create an offensive and their number were in the region of 1000, which he felt were no match for his fearsome warriors.

Trygve, Magnus, (now fully recovered) Gunnar and Sigourd pawed over an old map of Southampton with the King who observed,

“We can approach Byterne Manor along the old Roman road, it is fast and leads directly to the area where you saw the vision, is that right Bran?”

Bran replied “Yes sire it was in that very region”,

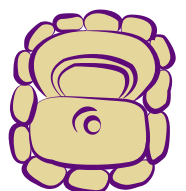
The King grunted, “Mmm lets hope that you can be more specific when we arrive there; I wish for you and your sorceress to sail in the Kings ship, as protection and a united spiritual presence” *and, to enable me to keep a watchful eye on your actions* the king contemplated, their plan was set.



**Bran's quest to find the answer to
Disclose the hidden clue
Sent him walking round in circles
The secret to undo**

**The sky was darkened over
A bird appeared in flight
The answer lain there before them
The solution was in sight**



Where did the Cauldron lay?





18. Sir Ralph Encounters his Vision

A Time for Retribution



“Sir Ralph, Sir Ralph” she called in a hushed voice, I am Kate Mew, and this is Jeddediah Toogood, you do not know us, but we know you very well, I believe you were expecting to meet some true allies not of this time?”



Sir Ralph slowly turned his head, his eyes to gaze upon Kate, tall and slender as a sapling, of intense beauty with long ringlets of auburn hair and green eyes that penetrated his soul.

Kate continued, “As preposterous at this may seem, my father is Sir John Oglander of Nunwell House, I met Jed in the year of 1647, when he was preventing the escape of Charles 1st!”

“Sir Ralph, I know that your life on this plain will soon be complete, but I am privileged to inform you that your name will be carried on”

Kate looked at Sir Ralph with loving eyes of compassion and smiled saying softly,

“In the future your sister Elanour will marry Sir Theobald Russell and have 3 sons Ralph, named after you, William and Theobald, Theobald will become Sir Theobald de Gorges and continue your name and your work”.

Sir Ralph looked perplexed, “Can this be true?” he stammered, “Are you my angels from the future who have come to complete the life cycle that will save the world?”

“We cannot substantiate the Angels Sir Ralph” said Jed, “but we are here to ensure that the Dark Changemakers of the future do not hold the world to ransom, and threaten its very existence, this is our mission”

At that moment two Hospitaller Knights appeared at the door, “That is encouraging, Sir Ralph seems to be picking up a little, must be your heavenly presence fathers”

Jed and Kate retired back to a hard bench in the corner of the room repeating indistinguishable prayers muffled to perfection.

Jed asked, “We would like to remain with Sir Ralph if that is at all possible, at least until he is over the worst of his illness?”



The Knights nodded, "That can be arranged, we will speak to Sir Foulques shortly, we suggest you get some sleep, you are our guests, please make yourselves comfortable."

The Knights left, Jed turned to Sir Ralph saying

"We have received a message from the Abbott, about his concerns over the self imposed status the Hospitallers have imparted upon themselves and their unhealthy bias towards wealth, and self preservation"



Jed then posed the question "Sir Ralph, do we have your undying, implicit trust, in the light of what Kate and I have disclosed to you; as the path of the future and mankind rests in your answer?"

Sir Ralph looked long at Jed, then at the pure and open hearted Kate.

"I had a vision whilst travelling of Mother Mary, who foretold of my encounter with persons unknown to me who were not of this time.....I believe you are these people and you have my solemn trust"

Sir Ralph then went on to tell the story of the Nazarene and the gift of the blood stained Sacred Bachal Isu, he then disclosed in great detail its resting place, and the secret combinations necessary to permit entrance, adding "And you must promise me my children that you will also lay me to rest in that same place?"

Kate held Sir Ralphs hand and gently kissed him on the forehead.

"It will be our honour to ensure your deliverance will be duly venerated dear Sir Ralph"

The night passed without incident, In the morning The Templar Knights were discussing the message that Tom had delivered, "Probably well meant Sir Geoffroy but perhaps a little harsh" said Sir Jerar.

At that moment several of the Knights Hospitallers entered the hall

"Sir Ralph had a good nights rest and is being attended by the nurses and your two priests, he will probably need to stay for a further two days"

Sir Jerar stood up, "Thank you good Sirs, that is comforting to know: As Sir Ralph is in good hands what say you that we earn our keep by way of putting some meat on the table? We noticed a good head of deer on our way to Brooke."



One of the Hospitallers replied, "That was just a small sample" they all laughed.

"If you want to really see a good herd you can accompany us to the other side of Brighstone Forest and over to Newbridge, there is a [fine Inn](#) there serving excellent local food".

'Twas agreed in a trice and they made ready for their hunt and took along several Serving Brothers to assist retrieval of any game.

The air was clean and fresh; as they rode around the steep perimeter of Brighstone Forest, where a sounder of wild boar scurried through the woods immediately pursued by several Knights who caught and dispatched one with much skill,

"That's how we hunt here" scoffed the Hospitallers, directing the Serving Brothers to load the beast onto the waiting cart.

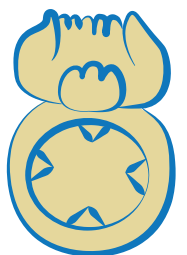
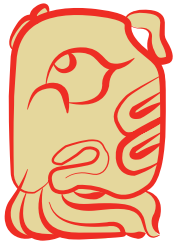
They continued to Shalcombe where they stopped to admire the local potter throwing his clay pots and bowls and whilst there took refreshment at Chessell before setting off towards Caulbourne Mill.

As they passed by Westover Park they pulled up sharply as a scurry of Red Squirrels ran across the path right in front of them, it was unusual in itself to see Ten [Red Squirrels](#) banding together in chase, but what was even more extraordinary was the quarry they were pursuing, it was one rather large solitary Golden Squirrel that disappeared into the woods, well ahead of its predators, they laughed heartily at this rare sight.

As their laughter abated they were drawn by the delicate fragrance of freshly baked bread wafting over the countryside, as just over the brow was [Caul Bourne Mill](#), it was here they ground the local corn to make the bread that supplied much of West Wight, the pungent odour of malt then filled their nostrils, as this was ground to be used to brew the local ale, all grown nearby and prepared at the mill; it was impossible not to stop and sample their wares.

They rested for a short while before mounting their steeds and followed the Caul Bourne towards Newbridge; as they approached the small village a herd of about 40 deer were seen grazing on the West side of the Bourne, the Knights ensemble leapt into action and took chase, skilfully hunting down four prime animals, which were loaded on to the cart ready to return to Brooke.

As promised they took the Templar Knights to eat their fill at the Newbridge Inn and collected wine from the nearby vineyard, they were in good spirits in more ways than one when they finally turned for a slow canter back to Brooke.



Whilst they had been away much had changed at Brooke Hospital, Sir Foulques had heard from a messenger that King Philippe and Pope Clement V were keen to see the Hospitallers and the Templar Knights working in unison, and had sent a notification to Sir Foulques de Villaret.

Kate and Jed were in Sir Ralph's room tending to his needs,

"I need to thank God for my safe return" Jed proclaimed, "I am going to the Church to offer my prayers of gratitude and ask for guidance and protection in our quest".

Jed left the room and walked to the West wing of the Hospital that lead to the church down the old stone path; as he approached the door he could hear two voices talking in subdued tones in the annexe, one was Sir Foulques de Villaret the other he didn't recognise, he paused, and quietly crept nearer to the annexe door, he could see several guards,

He then overheard the messenger saying

"I have an important document from King Phillippe and Pope Clement Clement,"

For the attention of The Grand Master of the Templar Knights Sir Jacques de Molay, and The Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers of Saint John, Sir Foulques de Villaret,

Sir Jacques de Molay, I respectfully request the presence of thy good self to discuss the criminal allegations made against the Templars fraternity, so you may have the opportunity to represent and clear the Templars good name.

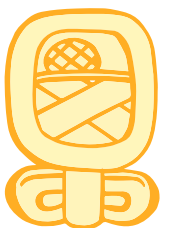
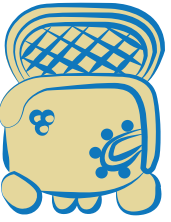
I would also like you to consider the benefits that may be accomplished from a meeting with The Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers, Sir Foulques de Villaret.

I acknowledge this may not be received with enthusiasm but is intended as a graceful request due to the great unrest, and a solution needs to be expounded without delay, I am sending reciprocal requests to you both."

In Witness

His Holiness Pope Clement V

Sir Foulques was furious at the prospect of being associated with and tarnished by the same heretic values that the Templars had been accused, the messenger had also informed Sir Foulques that a reliable source had witnessed secret meetings in France and rumours of Holy Treasures of Eternal Sanctification being present on board the Ulub Uran accompanying Sir Ralph.



Not being sure whether Jed or Arany were there, to further wet the appetite of Sir Foulques, the messenger mentioned that there may be an intruder or two within the Hospital who have knowledge of the whereabouts of the hidden Kings Ransom of 500,000 gold Crowns and that Sir Ralph was part of the conspiracy.

De Villaret was both incensed and intrigued, as he had heard many fables of the God's Treasures and the ultimate power that came with such possession, his thoughts drifted into euphoria

"The dream could become reality, the man standing between existence and eternal life, was there, just a few yards away, relying on the graciousness of my good self and fraternity to save his life, how much gratitude was he prepared to bestow?"

Jed guessed that this contained the very same information that they had received from the Abbot on their way to Brooke and confirmed the information Brian had given him.

Jed sped back to Kate and Sir Ralph, "We are all in grave danger a messenger which I am now sure is Vinnetti, has just given Sir Foulques de Villaret every reason to hang us all, putting an irresistible price on our heads, we must leave without delay".

**A Shield encircles a Maze
A Maze circles a Spot
A Spot is a Circle
A Circle is a Point
A Point can be a Mark**

Where & What Is the Mark?



19. The Gods Treasures Return

Dagda Looses the Arrow of Fire

Before sunrise, the fully armed and loaded fleet of Longships left the safety of Portsmouth Hard and with military precision began their voyage towards the final conquest of Southampton.

They were masters of the sea and no vessels approached their path; as they rounded Stokes Bay the drum rhythm intensified, speeding the ships into the confluence of the Rivers Itchen and Test, which facilitated an easy landing for the warriors.

As soon as the ships beached the warriors dived for the reeds taking cover beneath their shields from arrows of the English Bowmen who had already assembled behind the remains of the outer walls.

Once all the warriors were ashore, under the protection of their shields pushed forward into the outer ditch and onto the exposed west walls then returned a tumultuous hail of arrows across the exposed Englanders flank, creating a break point in their defences, the warriors quickly took advantage of this gain, and creating a shield wall, they force marched the mass army up the steep banks and headlong into hand to hand combat.

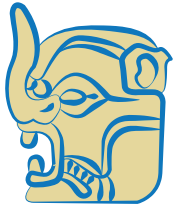
This was where the beserkr were untouchable, with war cries of “Vegi?? Allr Óvinr” they tore their way through the English lines, leaving only death and debris in their wake, just as if tornado had passed right behind them, the enemy being dispatched as quickly as they formed.

The leaders made sure Bran was well protected in the onslaught as he was now the “key” to the quest, they marched on in triumphant arrogance, burning and pillaging at every opportune moment, more as a matter of course than intention.

The warriors were soon bearing down on the Old Roman Roadway leading towards their objective, Byterne Manor.

Like blind automated robots they moved closer, focussed solely upon their mission, to find and return with the Gods Treasure.

The vast area now had little character, with only a few buildings above ground indicating the prior Roman occupation; they approached the Manor via the robber trench following the Outer fosse, and entered the grounds through a crumbling stone arch, which was linked to a considerable run of dishevelled piles of stones that once displayed the guardian bastions and larger turrets.



The warriors scrambled into the inner court resting their weary bodies against the gradient of the Inner ditch and remnants of the long stonewall.

To the West side were several large foundation trenches of Oak and huge stone piles, which once supported a large and proud structure.

Nearby another small building showed its presence by only a few scattered slabs of Bembridge Limestone, where the walls previously stood.

The ground undulated with the contours of many sunken pits and a Well, some displaying oyster shells from feastings many years prior, several others had a more sinister tale to tell, with human bones laying East – West.

As they entered the perimeter grounds, Magnus and Trygve, kept side glancing Bran, waiting for him to say “the treasure is here” but no utterance came forth.

All around were postholes of various sizes depicting many outbuildings that housed the soldiers of the distant Roman Empire.

Bran scanned the dry and dusty terrain towards the South West Corner, and caught a glimpse of the vestiges of an intriguing yet insignificant structure, which was just discernable as a small chapel.

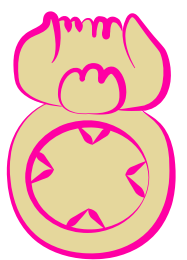
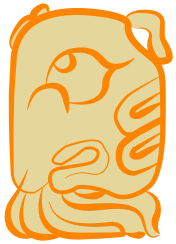
Bran was drawn to its entrance, it was somehow familiar to him; as he drew closer he found a small stone altar which was encapsulated within the fabric of the walls, with some trepidation he stepped within its boundary and looked upon it, there carved in the stone was the inscription *DEAE ANCASTAE BRAN DE DAGDA VSLM*, through Brans Ovate learning within his sacrosanct Druidism he understood the inner message it portrayed, “To the Goddess Ancasta Bran of Dagda willingly and deservedly fulfils his vows”

He had found the assignation that confirmed his spirit fathers’ wishes, and that he alone was the rightful emissary of the Cauldron of Eternal Life.

As he laid his hands upon the altar in reverence of the Gods message, the skies rapidly darkened, until it was as night, silence befell all around, the quiet was deafening.

Bran fell to his knees with hands raised to his Gods, “Show me the way oh father” he called in a voice that echoed across the stillness of the Manor.

The black clouds thunderously rolled apart, blinding Silver and Gold light projected through the skies like thunderbolts, revealing the white translucent images of The Dagda and Morrigan mounted on the immortal winged steed Sleipnir.



Dagda unsheathed one golden arrow and unleashed it encapsulated in fire, like a bolt of lightning it struck the earth exploding the soil beneath Brans' feet casting debris in every direction.

The warriors scattered for safety in terror; this vision was one they had never before witnessed.

The clouds of dust and debris settled to unveil the magnificent entrance to a sepulchre beneath the chapel, Bran slowly rose to his feet and walked tentatively towards the ingress, which was adorned with beautiful carved images of every deity imaginable, surrounding and protecting its Godly access.

He closed his eyes, louted his head and allowed the energy within this sanctuary to transport him into the otherworld, his being was momentarily transformed into immortality, he opened his eyes and there sat before him enfolded within an aura of iridescent gold were all his forefathers welcoming him to their fold.

He was drawn forward responding spiritually to the uplifting resonance and embrace of their warmth and kindness; he was enveloped in a love that was not of an earthly plain.

Slowly their focus shifted to a magnificent inverted crystal pyramid that pulsed with their ethereal energy, on the top surface there was a sunken engraving of a Raven, which Bran recognised as the same image as the Golden Key previously given to him by Dagd.

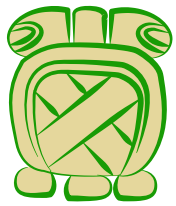
He reached into his tunic and pulled out the pouch holding the key it was now pulsing at the same the rhythm as the crystal pyramid, he fitted the key carefully into the relief, causing the whole sepulchre to resonate at a frequency of the highest intensity.

Bran thought his head would burst he clamped his hands over his ears just as the crystal exploded into billions of particles of golden light; The Gods first assimilated every particle into their being, then, in perfect harmony emanated an immortal life force that befell The Sacred Undry, The Cauldron of Eternal Life.

The Heavenly God, The Dagda, delivered the hallowed vessel to his outstretched hands whispering,

"This gift of eternal life can only be activated by the resonance of the Holy Crystal Seed of Power, I will guide you to its sanctuary, it is then your pledge to the Gods that it will only be reincarnated for the good of humanity"

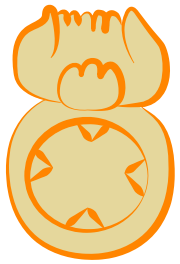
Bran replied in an unsteady but solemn voice,



"So it will be father I pledge thee my troth"

In a flash, Bran fell to the ground, exhausted and bewildered at this trancelike experience, was it just a dream, or just an exuberant vision?

The resolution was there, grasped in his hands was The Sacred Cauldron of Eternal Life, he held it with devout allegiance as he stealthily stepped back out amongst the warriors, at its sight the warriors erupted into fervent laments of "Bran Dreng, Bran Áss Tala" All the leaders raced to meet Bran and behold the Sacred Treasure.



Sweyn Forkbeard was overjoyed, at last the Sacred Cauldron and its Otherworld powers would be his, for eternity.

Bran was brought before the King who addressed him and the warriors, who were still jubilantly celebrating.

"It is a momentous day that will go down in the annals of history, the conclusion of many years fighting, many years travelling and many lost souls, I salute you Bran of Dagda, once we reach the safety of Wyvern Isle you will be rewarded and there will be great celebrations.

Make ready your plunder, tonight we prepare for our onward journey tomorrow, it is time for us to leave this place."

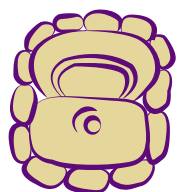
The King raised the Cauldron for all to see, the warriors were ecstatic; their rejoicing could be heard right across the country.

The Englishers had sent trackers to follow the Vikings, who had seen their celebrations and realised that the marauders were heading back to Hamtun Port that evening before their journey back to Wyvern; they quickly scurried back to inform their generals of the situation.

The Vikings assembled and loaded up their ill-gotten gains to begin the short march back to the waiting ships.

Their mood was elevated and their pace far more leisurely at the thought that soon they would be heading back to Wyvern to gather all their treasures, and then home.

They took an alternative route back to the ships which was more across country but a shorter distance, stopping to pillage Ale Houses, local Barns and Manors, taking cattle, horses, dogs, and fowl to satisfy hungry bellies, and quench parched throats.



As they approached the outer fosse of the old fort the Long ships could be seen in the distance awaiting their victorious return, Magnus lead the triumphant warriors down into the first ditch, as they scrambled up the banks, without warning a torrent of arrows rained down upon them from the ramparts above right into the heart of the army.

Magnus was hit several times and careered back into his own troops, their position was dire, there was no way they could rapidly gain sufficient ground and were sitting ducks.

Trygve ordered the leaders to split and spread, to retaliate and attack from the more accessible and less steep flank positions.

The Englanders tactics were sound but they were outnumbered and now the Norsemen were retaliating from two positions; they were under pressure to hold them back.

The Vikings were soon making headway outflanking the Englanders, who sensed the threat and retreated at speed down the outer ditch, onto their horses and away, before they could be caught.

Trygve looked for Magnus who he found laying in a blood soaked tunic,

“Trygve, I know I am dying, but promise me you’ll take me to my homeland, where I can be amongst my family, so I may be prepared for my journey in proper Norse Warrior way, build the highest Pyre for me, so that I may be closer to Odin and my journey to Valhalla, the fire must be the brightest ever seen, so my childrens may see its glow as I passes by them, you have been a great friend and fighting comrade, say you will do this for me, I do not want to leave this world from a foreign place”

“Yes Magnus, I will make sure the preparation and funeral is magnificent, the Gods will welcome you as a true warrior, and I will intern your most precious possessions, so that your life in Valhalla will be even greater than your life on this earthly plain”

Magnus nodded his head enthusiastically a broad grin breaking over his rugged features, then, gripping the arm of Trygve drew his last breath slipping peacefully into the transient stage of first death.

Trygve ordered his body be taken and wrapped in readiness for his journey home.



The battles had delayed their advance, and the light was beginning to fade, but with the Englishers on the run, the army forged ahead down to the waters edge and the waiting Longships.

“Get these ships loaded fast Trygve, we must catch the tide and be on our way”.

Trygve replied cautiously, “The wind is rising sire, do you think it would be wiser if we left at first light”?

“Wiser....Wiser?, and have the Englishers attack tonight, and slaughter us in our beds, and burn our boats.....we are leaving now” the King had spoken, there was no more to be said.

The fleet were loaded and manned at speed then pushed out to sea on their penultimate journey.

The wind was gusting fiercely from the West as they headed out into the Solente, once they were beyond Cawshot Point the wind and current drove them Eastward and was too strong for them to row directly into Cowes Haven so they had to change course and head between two ominous sand banks, Brambles End and No Mans Land.

The Kings ship had the strongest men, and made good headway navigating by plumb line between the infamous banks where many lives had been taken.

The most Easterly ships were struggling to maintain their due course, drifting perilously close to No Mans Land.

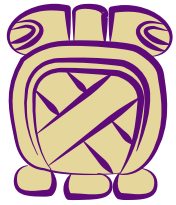
The Kings lookout shouted, “Ship aground” as Sigords vessel was driven portside hard into the sand, wedging them securely in situ.

To add to the encumbrances hail the size of meatballs was beating down on the stricken sailors, making any rescue attempt impossible, the only hope was to wait for the wind to subside or the rising tide to re-float them.

One by one the Longships pulled into the Island Harbour the Warriors were exhausted, and in near collapse.

Brunnar climbed a tall oak, he scoured the horizon without spotting Sigourds ship, but saw instead a large warship painted in white and blue headed directly from Portsmouth, the Englishers had seen their chance to level the score and bade down on the stricken vessel with venom.

Battle ensued, but with Sigourd anchored to his position, the fight was soon over with the red aura of death billowing from the smaller craft, flames lit the evening sky as the warriors met their demise, all back in Wyvern stood in silence at the news of the loss of their brave comrades.



King Sweyn Forkbeard addressed his men

"I have promised great celebrations this night and we must remember that the loss of the our courageous Warriors is also the highest sacrifice that we could present to the Gods, there will be abundant joy in Valhalla this night, and we must celebrate their journey with much wine, music, ale and feasting, we will together make this a night to remember.

Bran, Arch Druid and Sorcerer, we will also pay homage to your Otherworldy powers, that brought to us the gift of Eternal life, bring Badb with you as her powers have also made this journey victorious"

The King raised the Cauldron to the throng; once more the hordes beat their shields in frenzied acceptance of the heavenly gift and to substantiate the warriors fortune, chanting the sorcerers names in honour and Odin for sanctification.

Bran, found Badb in a large barn tending to a wounded fighter, the battle scars were scribed into Badbs' face, she was tired and weary, moving in an awkward way.

Bran called to her "Badb, let me help you", at the sound of his distinctive voice, a smile like a ray of the warmest sunshine broke over her weathered features, she turned and welcomed Bran into her outstretched arms, once again they were safely reunited after a long and eventful absence.

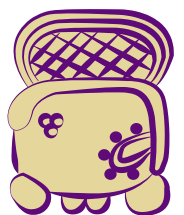
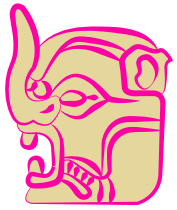
They moved away from the wounded and sat out in the cool air at the side of the barn where they could see that already the nights' celebrations were being made.

Bran pointed to the skulking images and shouted "Wh....." when he felt Badbs' hand stifle the warning, she recognised one of the two to be Jed, and beckoned them to where they were now crouching.

**The search is nearly over
The treasures have been found
Bran is now a hero
Emerging from underground**

**A battle scene encountered
Magnus draws his last breath
The Cauldron of Eternal life
Has pre-empted many deaths**

What did the pyramid display?



20. The Bequest of Sir Ralph de Gorges The Golden Undry is Relinquished



he clatter of horses hooves resounded across the courtyard as the Knights returned from their most successful hunting expedition, everybody was in good spirits with much banter and joviality.

They handed over their horses and the days bag to the sergeants at arms and made their way to the main entrance where the Grand Commander was waiting.

"All Knights Hospitallers attend the West wing immediately", the atmosphere changed instantly, as they all moved off in file.

"Mmm that was a most interesting welcome" said Sir Geoffrey de Campion, looking inquisitively at Sir Jerar, their thoughts flashing back to Toms urgent message from the Abbott.

"Better we make sure Sir Ralph is being well attended to, come with me" four Knights accompanied him to Sir Ralphs room.

As they turned the corner, there were four Knights Hospitallers guarding the room.

"Good afternoon brothers, we have come to pay our respects to Sir Ralph, and inform him of our days activities" Sir Jerar light heartedly explained.

The most senior of the Hospitallers retorted, "Sir Ralph is in good hands and sleeping at the moment, it has been requested by the Grand Master that he is not disturbed"

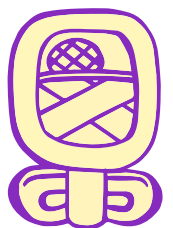
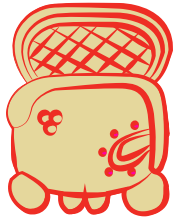
"That is very commendable brother, would you be so kind as to inform me where the two Holy Fathers may be as we are need of their services"?

"I believe they are in the church Sir, just across by the West wing".

"Thank you for your kind assistance, we will seek them out"

The Knights Templars graciously retreated, heading for the main reception area in the front of the Hospital where the remainder of their throng were waiting.

Sir Jerar rallied his brothers, "Gather round, Sir Ralphs room is now under guard and I believe our two monks are also being held within the confines of the Hospital, I fear we have no time to lose, Sir Aimon, Hugues and Ode, go firstly to the West Wing church if they are not there, then walk through the Hospital until you find the monks, then come back here where we will reassemble and ensure the release of Sir Ralph".



The three Knights went off in pursuit of the monks, whilst the main body prepared themselves for battle; they knelt and prayed that there would be as little bloodshed as possible on all sides and that their escape would be blessed with the safe deliverance of Sir Ralph.

Within a short space of time and with a sigh of relief the monks were seen heading towards them, accompanied by the three Knights, who ushered into the centrum.

Jed said "We were requested to attend the church, and couldn't think our way out of it, they took Sir Ralph to see Villaret, we could do nothing to stop them"

"Do not fret young Jed, it was wise not to encourage any suspicion or confrontation at this time"

"We also overheard a messenger from France making Villaret aware of what treasures Sir Ralph may have been transporting, his situation is perilous I fear Sir Jerar"

There was much noise and movement from beyond the hall Sir Jerar separated his men into two units concealing themselves in two corridors either side of the front hall.

A small division of Hospitallers marched down the central corridor in to the hall, with swords drawn, this was sufficient for the Templars to know their true intentions, they sprang from the corridors either side of the group and a fierce battle ensued.

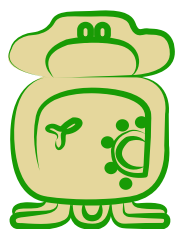
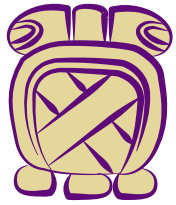
Jed and Kate took the opportunity to slip away to check out Sir Ralphs old room, there were no guards and the room was empty, carefully and quietly they preceded further into the West Wing where they could hear the commanding voice of Villaret, who they saw towering over a weakened Sir Ralph.

They would be no match for his sword and decided to race back praying that Sir Jerar had been victorious.

On their approach there was much groaning but little clashing of steel, they peered around the corridor to see the remaining Hospitallers tied up and gagged and the Templars victorious in this affray, but with the loss of two Knights.

"We have found Sir Ralph" Jed called earnestly, "follow us," the remaining Knights followed Jed and Kate to the place where he was last seen.

Through the adjoining room they could see Sir de Villaret threatening Sir Ralph; there were four Hospitallers on guard outside the door.



Sir Jerar motioned that on his instruction, four of the Templars were to attack the guards head on whilst he and the other two Knights counter attacked through the rear door.

They quietly manoeuvred into their positions, then, with a mighty roar Sir Jerar bellowed "God Wills This" and the attack began.

Villaret immediately drew his sword and held it to Sir Ralphs neck, "if I am to die, I will take Sir Ralph with me, then all will be lost"

In a flash Sir Geoffrey dived to the ground throwing his full weight behind his wielding sword aimed at the unprotected legs of de Villaret the sword buried itself into the yielding flesh and bone with a sickening thud, he fell to his knees dragging Sir Ralph with him, the sword slashing Sir Ralphs throat.

Jed and Kate wrenched Sir Ralph from the arms of de Villaret, stifling the wound the best they could.

With the help of Sir Geoffrey they carried Sir Ralph out into the courtyard where the now abandoned cart that was used for the hunt stood begging to be utilised, they quickly laid Sir Ralph on a bed of hay in the cart.

"Your duty" pointing to Jed and Kate, "is to get Sir Ralph out of there at all costs and take him to Gatcombe at full speed, we will meet you there; God willing.

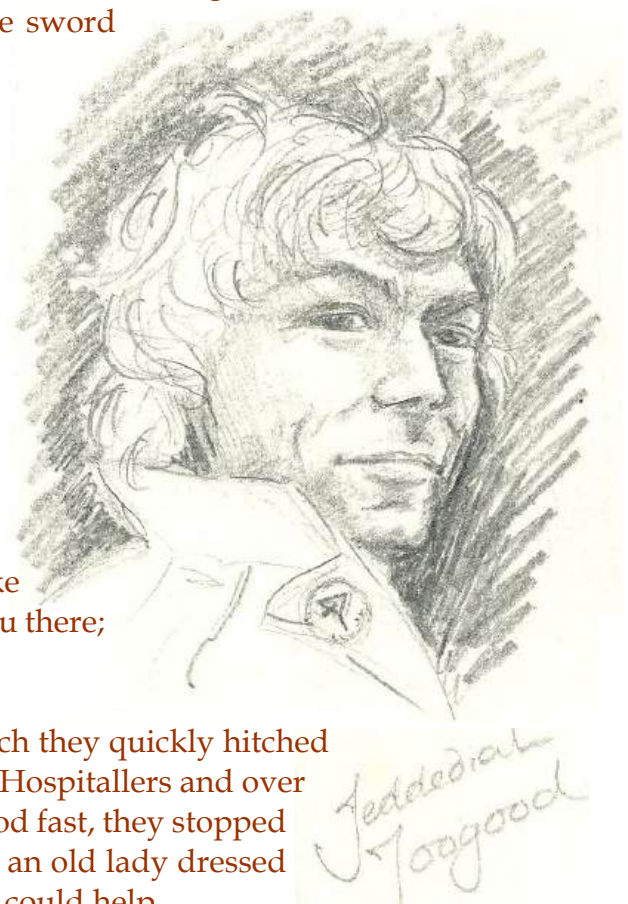
A large Drey horse was grazing nearby to which they quickly hitched the cart, racing off at full speed away from the Hospitallers and over Cheverton Down, but Sir Ralph was losing blood fast, they stopped by Newbarn Copse to administer water, when an old lady dressed in long white robes passed by and asked if she could help.

Kate explained Sir Ralphs injuries and she immediately went into the copse and cut some Rose Bark and picked Yarrow, which she crushed together with two stones, "just place this over the wound it will help" she said.

Jed and Kate knelt over Sir Ralph and applied the poultice, the blood flow reduced nearly instantly, they turned to thank the white lady, but; she had disappeared as quickly as she had appeared.

They jumped back into the cart with Sir Ralph as comfortable as he could be and set off for Saint Olaves Church, Gatcombe.

After a fractious journey they arrived, Jed and Kate carried Sir Ralph with great care into the cover of the Church, gathering some prayer mats they laid him down on the stone floor supporting his head with cushions.



Sir Ralph was struggling to draw breath and murmured intermittently "Take this cross, which he removed from around his neck....Go out to the Sepulchre.....follow the instructions I gave you explicitly and return here so I may gaze upon its magnificence..... one more time before I die"

Jed followed Sir Ralphs instructions exactly, each stage progressed to the next until he entered the crypt, he was astounded by the beauty and intricate workmanship of this last resting place of so many brave and fearless Knights.

Time was priceless, he ran down the adorned hallway of remembrance, he stopped in his tracks; there, in the centre of the mausoleum was the white marble Altar.

Jed made his way nervously towards it, his heart beating out of his chest, not knowing what he would find concealed beneath; he placed the stone cross in position and rotated the Golden Cross as instructed, the covering slid to one side and there wrapped in an ancient blood stained sackcloth, was the Holy Treasure Jed had passed through centuries to find, The Bachal Isu, he grasped the delicate artefact, and made his way back in haste.

As he exited the Sepulchre he heard Kate called loudly from the church, he hurried back cradling the Holy sacrament with trepidation, Sir Ralphs breathing had quietened he had only the energy to open his eyes, Jed held the Bachal Isu before him, Sir Ralph smiled, then drifted into a sleep from which he would not return.

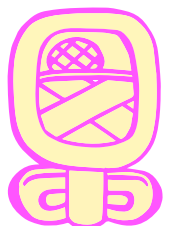
A tear rolled down the flushed cheeks of Kate, a great sadness befell them both, they sat motionless, then, in an instant, Jed with the treasure in hand raced back into the churchyard and down into the Sepulchre to replace the Holy Treasure in the Altar, he repeated the procedures and ensured it was secure and safely in place then hurried back to Kate. "Here is Sir Ralphs stone cross, enabling access the Altar, guard it with your life."

The sound of horses thundered through the quiet countryside air, Jed opened the small Church door and peered down the churchyard, the Templars had arrived; alas only four had survived the battle.

They ran down the muddy path to the church, they could tell by the expression on the Jeds face that the news was not good, Jed shook his head; as they entered the church Kate was still cradling the now lifeless body of Sir Ralph, the Knights knelt in prayer and homage.

"It was Sir Ralphs dying wish that he be laid to rest here, at his much loved Saint Olaves Church" said Jed solemnly.

"Sir Guillaume de la More replied "It would be foolish to return Sir Ralph to Knighton, as this will bring pressure to bear on his family, and with the Hospitallers seeking to procure all the ill gotten gains they can, they will not be able to persecute his family into ridicule or put them at risk.



He should be buried here now with full honours but in an unmarked grave in the way we know he would prefer to leave for the otherworld, his family loved him dearly but did not know his true inner beliefs", all the Knights nodded in agreement.

"Behind the Church by the edge of the wood there are many fallen Oak branches, gather them together so we may make a Pyre" ordered Sir Guillaume, the Knights firstly gathered many small twigs and bracken, then dragged 6 large branches of Oak from the wood and laid them on the bracken, forming the Pyre just outside the graveyard at the west side of the church.

The Knights then went into the Church and ceremoniously carried Sir Ralph out and laid his body on top of the Pyre.

"I Sir Guillaume de la More am privileged to be an Anam Chara of our gracious Sir Ralph, I place your sword by your side and 3 drops of water on your lips and say to you, go easy to the land of your ancestors, let the waters carry you across to the Blessed Isles where your family and loved ones await your spirit"

He then lit the bracken under the Pyre, which burst into billowing flames; at this moment the skies darkened and then were alight with daggers of lightning searing across the heavens.

With a thunderous roar a bolt of lightning struck the Pyre, whereupon a ghostly grey image of a Knight rose from the ashes and dissipated into the night sky.

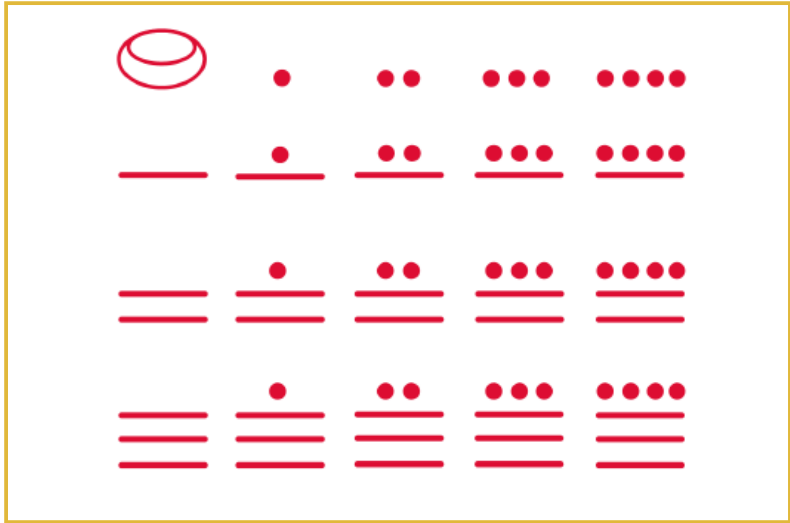
In a voice of solemn conviction Sir Guillaume commanded "What you have seen here today is never to be repeated to any man, this includes you as well" he said turning to include Jed and Kate, but there was no sign of them anywhere.....

**The Templars and Hospitallers clash
A bloody battle then ensued
Sir Ralph is mortally wounded
Death even he cannot allude**

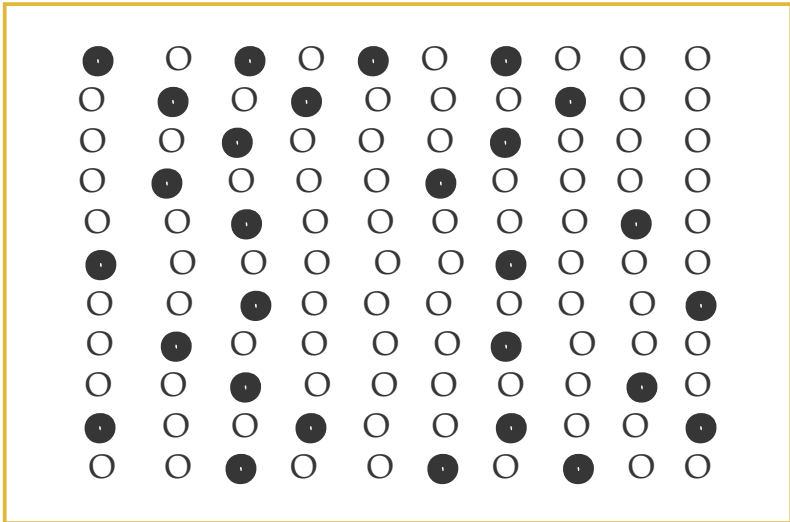
**Before that fatal moment
The secret must be told
So Jed can find The Bachal Isu
And return it to its fold**

How many Knights died?





F	D	I	R	N	L	D	U	G	N
B	T	I	H	O	R	E	E	Q	M
C	T	G	W	Q	V	E	D	J	B
Q	O	W	E	R	G	T	Y	U	I
O	P	R	A	S	D	F	G	A	H
P	J	K	L	Z	X	H	C	V	B
N	M	I	E	A	E	I	O	U	C
Y	C	J	T	B	F	O	E	V	I
L	I	O	G	K	D	T	S	R	A
D	V	J	I	J	K	N	R	I	A
E	R	T	B	Y	E	F	S	M	D

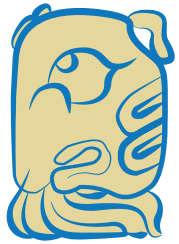


21. Yin and Yang Conjur a Plan

The Cauldron is uplifted



It was pitch black as Jed and Kate materialised in the Ruins of the Old Fort at Carisbrooke which now lay deserted after the raid by the Vikings.



They made their way cautiously through the darkness of the night, more by instinct than direction. The town of Newport eventually came into view, they passed by a few places still untouched by the raiders and crept down to the watersedge by the Quay where they 'borrowed' a small skip.

Even though the slight wind was with them it still took several gruelling hours cutting through the Medina waters until they arrived near some woods at Whippingham, where they tied up the skip and made their way towards a great fire burning in the distance.

They stood still; as the slight wind changed direction you could hear the ebb and flow of many distant voices in full merriment.

They held hands and carefully made their way through the forest, keeping just within the boundary of the trees and out of sight.

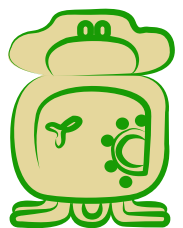
As they neared the camp, the noise became deafening, with the sound of thousands of drunken Vikings singing and chanting in celebration of their latest conquest.

Jed gulped; whispering, "This is one quest that cannot fail, if we are captured that would be the end of everything"

Kate squeezed Jed's hand; "I have every faith in you Jeddadiah"

Jed made a very poor attempt at smiling confidently then beckoned Kate to keep low, with some authority, as they skirted the woods.

As they gazed towards the camp there was a huge fire burning in the midst of the gathering that threw dancing shadows across the grounds as warriors eagerly pursued their duties, in the half-light they saw two figures, weaving their way around the periphery, in an unusual and evasive manner.



Jed's eyes were peeled for Badb, whom he had encountered in Arreton, it looked an impossible task, there were bodies everywhere, then he stopped and said to Kate, join my mind, send a message to Badb that we are here.

They both crouched in silence, attempting to focus their thoughts.; amongst all this mayhem they had to attract this one mystical woman.

Scouring the buildings around the main camp, Jed saw a solitary figure standing motionless looking out towards the woods, he couldn't make out if it was a guard, or Badb, they edged around the bushes, in an attempt to get closer, the figure approached them.....

"Badb, thanks heavens we have found you in time, we have been searching the camp for what seems like an eternity"

"Welcome Jed, who is this young lady by your side" she said eying the long flowing features of a very presentable female.

"This is Kate my life's soul mate, and whom might I ask is this gentleman", giving the staff-bearing protector standing before Badb an inquisitive eyebrow raised glance.

"This is also my eternal soul mate Bran", Badb uncomfortably confessed.

They all smiled, and sat down together.

"This is the man I spoke of Bran who is not of this earthly plain", Badb said in a spiritual tone.

"This is Badb, who was of immense help to me on my, eh hum, visit to Godshyll.

Bran explained the events leading up to the present, it was obvious there was an intangible connection between the four, even though they were of different timelines.

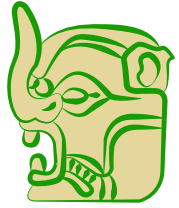
Jed then spoke, "Well my newly made friends, what I am about to explain, you may find rather difficult to understand but please take my heed if I fail in my mission it will not only effect our lives but the course of life itself."

"I am from the 21st century, ...yes from the future, Kate, is from the 17th Century in the future,???? we met whilst I was on a mission to find the one of The Gods Treasures and now we travel together.

In the future, in my time, there is a committee who I believed to be honourable, but I discovered, they had sent an evil man Dr Arany who once was my friend to go before me and steal the God's Treasures to perpetuate greed, power and world domination.

As you know well Bran, this cannot be, should these heavenly gifts be used for evil they will themselves destroy the world.

I rejoice that you have reincarnated the Cauldron, but now it is necessary to re-unite the ethereal energies of the Undry and the Bachal Isu to save mankind, and we dare not delay, as in the morning the King will be sending the treasures by heavily armed guard back to Denmark, where the true doomsday will begin.



We have been chosen to bring together our energies representing the present, past and future to overcome and eliminate these insane actions of self indulgence, enabling the resurrection and infusion of the Gods Will to be laid to rest in sanctification and harmony, this night we must leave for St Helens Church at the Duver, we must arrive there in one moon, it will take all the power we possess to do this but I will explain more later."

Bran and Badb sat momentarily in silence, then, Badb replied "How can your future powers make all these things happen?"

Jed replied "I sought out a Knight from the future, by use of a Time Portal,a specific location that facilitates me to move through the parameters of time, so I can discover the resting place of The Gods Treasures".

Kate then interrupted... "I, more than any other found this explanation preposterous, how could these ravings make any sense,"? her voice then quietened, "But Jed and I have powers yet undiscovered, and some that enable us to communicate just with our minds"

Bran then interceded, "Badb and I are the same, my Spirit Father The Dagda, is known as the King of all Gods, and rules over the Tuatha de Dannan, who possess powers of immeasurable magnitude, It seems you are right Jededia, our coming together was ordained long ago."

The group found solace in their discoveries, and held hands forming a wheel of life, which spontaneously unleashed an eternal bond that resonated throughout each and every soul.

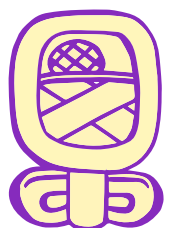
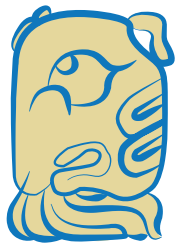
"We must move quickly, what are your plans?" Jed spiritedly asked

Bran spoke first,

"When my spirit father Dagda came to my aid at the sepulchre with his Bow of Divine Justice, he also had about his waist the Magick Harp,

I can remember when I was very young that when commanded this Harp would play the most beautiful melody that would send the wide awake into the deepest sleep in an instant...When this is established we can then call upon the Priestess of Sena to cast a mist all around and shield our escape, ...I know that if we can bring together our powers as one our escape with the Cauldron will be victorious".

Badb, then spoke in her all knowing way,



"Yes Bran I agree, but the Gods sleep was not manifested to effect animals, only humans, and the fiercest hounds are at this moment guarding every approach to the Cauldron".

Kate smiled as she said, "Do not be concerned about the dogs Badb, I am gifted with the power to calm and make them drift into the deepest sleep".

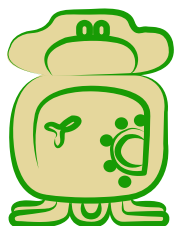
At that moment Badb and Bran were called to be praised in front of the whole army, they left their new kindred spirits and made their way to sit on the Kings right side to humbly accept his gratification.

Whilst this façade was taking place Jed and Kate made their way back around the gathering and settled in hiding as near to the horses and Cauldron as possible.



**Stranded at the quayside
A skip was found to hand,
Jed and Kate and Bran and Badb
Became one unified band**

Who was the mystical one?



22. The Cauldron's Plight

Escape to The Duver

Much merriment ensued with vast amounts of drink and food being consumed by all, there were even Thralls captured from nearby East and West Cowes, to ensure the joviality was complete.

After many hours, all around were very much the worse for their indulgences, Bran and Badb quietly slipped away to join Jed and Kate, who were hiding in a small barn on the edge of the woods.

They came together and embraced, they knew what had to be done, Bran and Badb, began their meditations and incantations to The Dagda, which were evoked through subliminal intention, the group focussed solely on the vision of Dagda and the Magickal Harp, asking for the God King to aid and protect them in their quest for world peace.

As they fell into a deeper protective trance like state an intense light broke through the darkened skies, which shone as would the midday Sun, then the most delicate, and gentle music permeated the air, encapsulating and enthralling everyone who listened to its hypnotic melody.

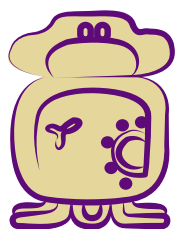
As the notes reached out into the atmosphere warriors fell to their knees as if worshipping the heavenly sound, sinking into the earth with non gracious repose.

The four Changemakers knew the time to capture the Cauldron was now, Kate, was first to creep from within the safety of the barn to be faced by 10 snarling dogs, with their hackles raised and were ready for a fight.

She stood there quietly at first, but then began to sing a mesmerising song in a language unknown to the others, the dogs instantly lay down and allowed her to walk amongst them with ease, she walked passed them and into the barn where the King and several guards were in a deep sleep.

Without sound she softly walked towards the Cauldron, wrapped it in cloth and carried it out to her waiting collaborators. Whilst Kate had been dealing with the dogs, Badb had prayed to Priestess Sena to blanket the path behind their trail with a thick and Magickal Mist that should anybody enter within would be lost for three moons.

Jed had gathered the fastest Horses and readied them for the escape, he took the Cauldron from Kate and placed it safely in his saddle bag, they mounted, turned due South and rode like the wind, they knew that the warriors would wake before light and as soon as the treachery was discovered, they would be hunted down like animals.



As they left the camp a thick black mist descended behind them, the Gods had answered their prayers, at least their journey was to begin blessed.

They sped through the darkness with Jed taking the lead their sights firmly set on the Duver.

Within a few miles of setting off the weather changed for the worst, a torrential rainstorm broke all around them with fierce winds battering the trees and blinding their path, the ground was quickly becoming sodden, putting severe strain on the horses, and with their pace slowing, they would need to seek shelter before too long, something they had not considered and did not want to contemplate.

They approached Wootton Bridge to find the causeway flooded, Jed tried to encourage the horses to swim through but the tide was high and the current too strong, so they had no option but to seek temporary refuge in the Tavern near the Lakeside Manor, then take the inland trail, adding vital time to their journey.

The Changemakers rested for a short while, just enough time for the horses and riders to regain some of their deteriorating stamina, then, they remounted and set off around the causeway and up into Fishbourne, where there were many large boats being tossed around like corks, Jed had considered utilising one to make their trail more difficult to follow, but that would now be too hazardous.

Dawn was already upon them, and they knew in their hearts that their dastardly deeds would by now be uncovered.

They rode down into the valley passing by the old ruins of Ryde Castle on their way, the rain had now stopped and the going was easier under hoof, which they knew would unfortunately benefit the shadowing Norsemen.

The horses were tiring quickly as they rounded Puckpool Point making the journey through Seaview past the [old tavern](#) perilously slow, the sound of wildfowl broke in their midst, sending audible signals to alert their pursuers.

They were virtually at a walking pace now, the steeds had nothing left in them, and in the distance the sound they all feared most, the echoes of Besrkr in full cry.

Kates' horse had pulled up lame so it was cast aside as she leapt to join Jed on his weary beast, at last [Priory Bay](#) on Nodes Point was now in sight, and their final destination just a few miles ahead, but in the quiet of the morning air the fearful sound of a battalion of enraged Norsemen was becoming louder as they closed on their quarry.



They were gaining by the second, and nearly upon the Changemakers, as they pulled up outside the ruins of the old church at the Duver, they ran as fast as their legs would carry them to the entrance.

Jed, gasping for breath pleaded

"You have to trust me, we ALL have to enter the church NOW our lives depend upon it" as he finished his words a barrage of arrows flew from the warriors bows, ricocheting off the stone walls, they grasped each others hands and ran into the old church.....



**The Cauldron was recaptured
The race for life and sanctuary was on
The Changemakers sped for holy ground
Time was marching on**

**The dogs they all laid down to rest
Which really seemed so wrong
Their calm was induced by
The sound of a mesmerising song**

In what language was it sung?



23. The Six Become One

The Future Foretold



“The Viking hordes are about to annihilate us in seconds, our only chance of escape is through Time Travel, you must trust me; interlock your arms around me in a circle, and just hold on tight”



Jed spun the dial on his Amulet to the pre setting for Gatcombe, and dialled a precautionary VR4, as this was the first time he had transported more than two people, he gripped the Seed of Power with all his might, interlocked his arms across the circle and activated the laser.

Nothing happened, and the Vikings were now in the archway of the chapel brandishing swords with bows raised; in seconds they would all be dead meat.

Jed panicked and wound the Translaser up to VR 9; they all watched in horror as the arrows left the bows en route to certain death, then, inches from their bodies they froze in space along with the perpetrators, it was although time had stood still.... which of course it had!

The circle felt an immense force momentarily equating to 64 g for less than one second, this would normally be more than any human could endure, but due to the cellular deconstruction it was possible to tolerate this, but only for a split second.

The four re-polarised just inside the church of St Olave's at Gatcombe, relating groans, grunts cries and moans of varying degrees of pain and discomfort, they sat dishevelled and disorientated, trying to regain some normality of thought and comprehension of what had taken place.

Bran and Badb's had had many spiritual experiences, but this was something else, they were all in a state of shock, their bodies having coped with more than a life times abuse in a few seconds; still reeling from the experience Badb spoke first,

“Where is this place; where has the other church gone we were in moments ago; where are the Vikings, why are we not dead; Jeddadiah, what has just happened?”

Jed himself was far from lucid,

“Well, er, there was no choice, of, of choice, the decision with every here, was made together, ready and done”



Kate gazed at Jed with one eyebrow raised and a deep furrow in her delicate brow,

"What are you talking about Jed, have you completely lost your mind?"

"Yes I believe I have" Jed quipped back in earnest, cradling his head in his hands... *ok, breeeeathe* he thought.

Sitting where he landed, Jed took several deep breaths, which gradually brought him round,

"Wow that was some journey" he exclaimed.

Bran retorted "Journey", to where and how and.....?"

Jed held up his hand, more in surrender than officiation.

"Bran, Badb, let me try to explain, Badb, when we first encountered each other, do you remember saying that I was not of that time?"

"Yes", said Badb, "but that was just an intuitive feeling, without any foundation at all"

"Mmmm", remarked Jed, "That was a whole load of intuition, ok, please listen and don't speak until I have finished"

Jed proceeded to explain in stages as best he could, attempting to clarify as he went, the mission to find all the 12 God's Treasures, the Time Travel through the uprisings and downfall of Vikings, Knights Templars, Druids and who knows what next.

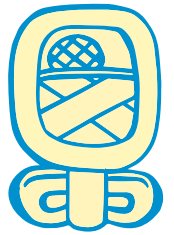
He told of his meetings with Kate, Bran and Badb and how their union was preordained, and, the evil work of the committee, that must be halted for the sake of mankind.,, finishing with,

"So to answer your question directly Badb, St Olaves Chapel, Gatcombe, Isle of Wight 1305!!"

Silence befell all as they tried to comprehend the mind breaking explanation just delivered, the quiet was only broken by Jed leaping to his feet, "Come along....No time to waste", he exclaimed with a chuckle.

Turning to Badb and Bran he continued

"We have to move quickly as Vinnetti will soon be on our trail; concealed within these grounds there is one of the most Holy Treasures known as the Bachal Isu that we must retrieve right away; "Kate, hand me the lanyard," Kate removed the chord from around her neck revealing the stone cross, which would allow access to the sarcophagus within.



Jed beckoned all to follow, they were soon once again upon the now more familiar Stone Walled entrance to the Mausoleum, Jed paused to recollect his thoughts in an attempt to remember the correct sequence of procedures to permit admittance, *Cross 180 clockwise,Sword, which way was that.....are yes the same way 90 clockwise, now for the Rosette, anticlockwise 2 times....no... 3 times.*

Jed began to perspire, he wasn't sure, and Sir Ralph had not mentioned what happens if you get it wrong!!

He hesitantly turned the Rosette 3 full circles anti clockwise and the once heard never forgotten sound of grinding rock blessed his ears. Yes he thought, without displaying an ounce of relief externally.

The Stone barrier slowly rotated to create a space just large enough for the group to squeeze through, their path was magically illuminated by swarms of fireflies leading them down the spiralling stone staircase, and along the adorned hallway where they came upon the stunning marble and mosaic outer hall leading to the Mosque like hall, as they came closer a glorious combustion of Golden Light burst from it's inner being, Badb, Bran and Kate stood motionless marvelling at the sights that befell them,

"This is even more beautiful than you described Jed, I have never witnessed such exquisite workmanship" Kate praised, with mouth open in awe.

Badb and Bran, were enraptured in the pronounced spirituality of the mausoleum, sensing it's intense power and presence.

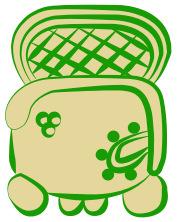
They entered the Inner Hall, and stood in wonder at the marble archways and mosaic murals adorning every aspect of the domed walls.

Their eyes were drawn to the white marble altar standing alone with only a large symbolic golden cross for companionship, Jed took the stone cross from the lanyard and pressed it into the corresponding relief in the gold cross; he then manipulated the cross 90 degrees clockwise, he was sure this was correct.

The heavy lid rumbled aside, displaying the Sacred Bachal Isu, Jed, gently awoke the precious artefact from its repose and cosseted it within his tunic.

Jed resealed the Altar, then with an air of nonsensical truth quipped "We must leave now, the future will be catching up with us before we know it!"

Leaving this pertinent remark to conjecture Jed led the others back passed the exquisite white marble angels who towered on high glaring at their reflections in the mirror like marble flooring.



The cold stone winding stairway that led up to the entrance was even harder to ascend, even for young legs, as they reached the summit they could hear the unearthly tones of distant wailing coming from the depths of the mausoleum; this spurred them on to the exit with gathered speed.

They all emerged into the light of day physically unscathed by the adventure, although the visual memory of their visit would remain forever.

Jed gathered them together once more,

“We have with our powers and knowledge amassed three of the God’s Treasures, there are another nine to find, buried somewhere throughout the annals of time itself.

We all have choices in everything we do as we travel through the experiences of life, the decisions we make now will change our futures and influence the lives of others, but these are judgements only we can make individually.

I am guided my inner life’s purpose bequeathed to me by my spiritual fore fathers, you can choose to join my quest and I would be honoured to have you with me, but I can not promise you anything, no eternal life, no riches, only a lifelong mission, with peace and harmony in our world the objective.

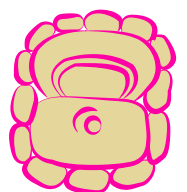
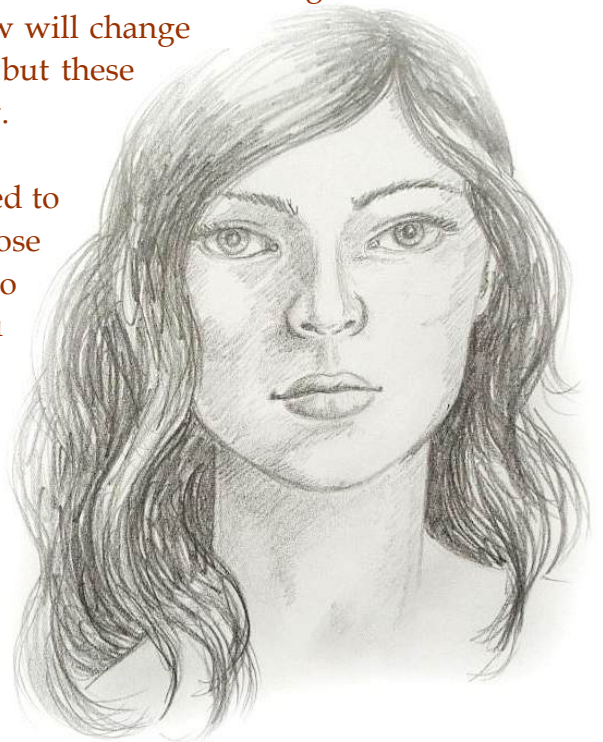
It will mean travelling through good times, bad times, horrific times and beautiful times, will you all come with me now to the future, I have to discover from Brian what Vinnetti has been programmed to do and what quests lay in store for us all”.

Kate replied, “My life is your life now Jed, you know we will be together until the end of our time”

Bran and Badb, looked at each other in a state of harmonious agreement, their age was against them but their hearts and spiritual bodies were young, they did not even speak, but telepathically knew they were destined to be together, and that they all shared the same fate or fortune, for the good and sanctity of mankind.

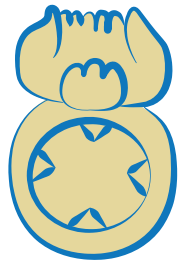
Badb said in a philosophical way, “I think we have spent enough time pondering our future, when we all already know what we must do.”

They linked arms and formed a circle, facing inwards, Jed, being in less of a hurry, set the Amulet to a comfortable VR 5, and programmed the coordinates for Brian’s house in 2047.



The four changemakers, depolarised, into another plain, this time, it was a gradual progression, even quite pleasant, then literally in no time at all, they repolarised in Brian's underground laboratory where Wilma was in idle mode, standing in the corner like a graceful statuette.

It was morning time, they all sat on the floor recouperating where they landed, Bran and Badb, were open mouthed, watching all Brian's none sensical equipment making all sorts of unfamiliar sounds, and it was so bright, they both nearly passed out when Wilma, started her daily chores, with a pleasant greeting of, "Hello Jed, who are your guests, I must authorise their presence."



Before the words had left her lips, the voice of Brian resounded down the stairs.

"Who the blazes.....Jed, I wish you had given me some notice, I am not prepared for a party" he jested; "come here my friend"

He gave Jed a big man hug before focussing on the other guests.

Turning to feast his eyes on Kate, he sarcastically commented, "Mmmm, I can see why you needed to return back to the past or future, or whatever it was in such a hurry; delighted to meet you.....Kate I presume?"

He kissed the back of Kates hand without taking his eyes from hers, and these fine people are...

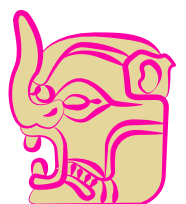
Bran stepped forward, I am Bran son of my spiritual father Dagd, and this is my companion Badb, daughter or Morrigan, a powerful Seer.

"Welcome to my humble home" Brian declared in an unapologetic tone, I am always happy to receive any friends of Jed's, continuing,

"I am so pleased you have returned, much has developed since your last visitation, and it is imperative that you are aware of what has been discovered and transpired.

"I have been doing a lot of digging around, well ok, hacking into the committees mainframe, and I have unearthed some amazing facts that you must know.

The Gods Treasures Dynasty was actually conceived in Atlantis in 9500BC where 6 Deities of the Gods were chosen for their supreme powers and each given the task to manifest all the powers they posessed in just two artefacts each, and so was born The Twelve Gods Treasures.



But, The Twelve Gods Treasures have to come together in perfect synchronicity of creation to form a true circle of Eternal Life.

To put this into perspective I have created a holographic pictorial which depicts the sequence and content, but I have not found all the names of the artefacts yet to be discovered, which I will endeavour to find out and assimilation at the Spring of each year, should I die before this time, I have created a friend "Will F Indu" and of course he will," Brian laughed heartily at his poor attempt at humour; recovering he finished, "and impart the information.



Vinnetti will stop at nothing to retrieve the Cauldron of Eternal Life, you must take every precaution to ensure he ceases to function!!, and protect yourself."

Jed returned Brians hug, "Once again I am indebted to your skills and knowledge dear Brian, we will pursue our next quest with diligence and fortitude, we here are as one body and shall always be".

Badb, Bran and Kate were still in varying degrees of bewilderment at what they had experienced and witnessed, but it was time to end their brief visit.

The four changemakers bade Brian and Triany au revoir, sensing that their energies had all combined in perfect homeostasis, together they were formidable opponents.

Jed set the Amulet for ?????? BC and the city of ??????, the quest for The Book of Prophecy had begun.

**The escape was activated
within a split second of death
The four bonded mortals
Gasped with baited breath**

**The Quest to find The God's Treasures was coming to an end.
Their paths of destiny had crossed in time
Who will they next befriend?**

**The future brings the unknown, knocking at our door
Asking us to join the game
For now and evermore**

Will you open the door?



Who are the 6 formidable opponents?

Timeline of the Treasures of the Old Gods

Atlantis 9500 BC

The 6 Deities of the Gods meet from around the world to decide the fate of Mankind

KALI
Goddess of Time, Power

ANAHIT
Goddess Life, Birth,
Fertility, Water

XIUHTECUHLI
God of Fire, War

W^ODEN
God of Magic,
Prophecy, Wisdom

THOR
God of Strength, Trust,
Voyage, War

HONOS
God of Justice
Honour, Chivalry

To help Mankind Survive the battle for life in the future they decided to each make 2 items all 12 must be brought together in the final Quest
From Atlantis the 12 Treasures with there Protectors where sent out to all parts of the World
Each treasure was given a Name, Symbol, Sign and Power

Sign	Aries	Taurus	Gemini	Cancer	Leo	Virgo	Libra	Scorpio	Sagittarius	Capricorn	Aquarius	Pisces
Celestial longitude interval (λ)	[0°, 30°]	[30°, 60°]	[60°, 90°]	[90°, 120°]	[120°, 150°]	[150°, 180°]	[180°, 210°]	[210°, 240°]	[240°, 270°]	[270°, 300°]	[300°, 330°]	[330°, 360°]
Symbol	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒	♓
Gloss	The Ram Mars (♂)	The Bull Venus (♀)	The Twins Mercury (♿)	The Crab Moon (☾)	The Lion Sun (☼)	The Maiden Mercury (♿)	The Scales Venus (♀)	The Scorpion Mars/Pluto (♂)	The Archer Jupiter (♃)	The Goat Saturn (♄)	The Water-bearer Saturn/Uranus (♅)	The Fish Jupiter / Neptune (♃)

Name	Seed of Power	Crystal Egg of Dragon	Bachaliss	Cauldron Of Life	Sword Of Battle	Shield Of Deflection	Staff of Magic	Book of Prophecy				Scale of Justice
Power	Unlimited Energy	Time Map	Rod of Druidism	Regeneration	Unbeatable	Deflects Evil	Magic Power	Touching it Gives Future Insight				Holding it Gives Truth
Place Hidden 9500 BC	India		Egypt	Ireland		Thailand	Dogland	Greece				US

Who Had IT	Sainte Sara Black Virgin Romani		Pharaoh Amenemhat III	Elatha								
Protector	Burebista		Moses	Julius Caesar				Pluto				
Given to 1	Pieporus		Jesus	Augustus				Nostradamus				
Where	Romania		Jerusalem	Scotland								

Found by 2	Vlad Dracul		Knights Templars	Roman Army	Merlin							
Where	Transylvania		France	Wales								
Given to 3	Tempus		Sir Ralfe	Clodna	Arthur							
Where Now ????	IOW Longstone		IOW Godshill	Portsmouth East Cowes								