

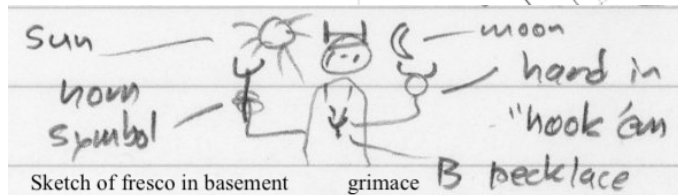
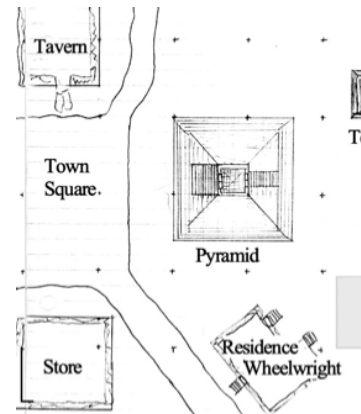
## Episode 27½ After Visiting the Portal

### Wednesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, about noon

1. Melodious decides to try and approach the High Priestess Vega of the Sun. She's not usually out and about. (He did see her when the party returned to the Mayor's place with all of those ceramic tablets.) Melodious needed to find his way into the temple. He learned in casual conversation that the entry is by way of the building just to the south of the pyramid. The wheelwright has his shop in the back, but there is an unlabeled front entrance. (He learned that from Felicity? Probably.) He decided to try about noon.

His idea was to see if he could walk around normally and charm his way around. He intended to say that he seeks the priestess's counsel to talk about the fire entity, and what seemed to be a portal it could move through.

So, Melodious moseyed around, and casually walked up to the door (Labeled "Residence" on the map, facing the road). He pushed it, and it opened! He saw nobody there. It was a smallish room, with, directly ahead, steps going down and turning to the left. There was illumination in the room down below. He quietly walked down the steps and turned the corner, trying to act casual. There right in front of him was a fresco covering most of the wall:

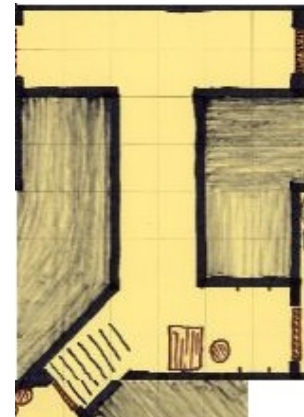


As he came down the steps, to Melodious's left was a store room, including a well. To the right was also a storage area, with a door to the north.

Melodious went through the door after listening and not hearing anything. He found himself in what might be a guardroom. Nobody was there. He thought he heard voices from behind the door on the right. He also noticed, hanging from a peg on the wall to the right, a set of keys on a large key ring.

Melodious made a mental note of the key's location, but decided not to take them during the day.

He couldn't make out what the voices behind the door are saying. Not without approaching and carefully "listening at the door." He thought that he was hearing two men and a woman talking in a normal tone of voice. Melodious decided to listen at the door. He had "Mage Hand" ready to throw a mundane item in another direction as a sound distraction, if someone came his way.



Yes, it was two men and a woman talking. He recognized the female voice as one of the priestesses, not Vega. One of the men is Limnis, and the other Calypso. They were both involved in that mess concerning the evil priestess with the dog evil symbol of Seth. Limnis had wanted to keep it. It seems what they were discussing was the contents of one of the ceramic tablets recently returned. "This has to be a 'boat'," Limnis was saying. "But what is this one?"

"It seems to be, well, you know. Symbol of a bull or something like that," the woman's voice says.

"And this looks like an arm. What would any of this have to do with teleportation?" Calypso asks.

"And why would a boat have anything to do with it?" That was Limnis.

"Well, her worship demands an explanation," the female voice says. "If I understand right, by tonight sometime."

"Well, I guess she needs her beauty sleep. If she hasn't snuck out the back door," Calypso says. "She should be helping us."

The conversation then swings toward a different part of the text on the tablets. Something to do with an eye and the sun, maybe. It does seem like these three are very preoccupied with what they are doing.

Melodious took a peek down the corridor to the north. He saw two heavy, iron bound wooden doors. One to the west, the other east. Both had a keyholes, and so were possibly locked.

Melodious let curiosity get the best of him, and went for the keys, and headed to the doors with the locks for a listen. Both doors to the north (one east, one west) have similar iron bound heavy wooden doors. It looks like a lot more traffic goes into the door to the left (west) than the door to the right (east). Yes, it looks like the keys on the ring do fit this sized lock. He noticed that one of those keys looks like it gets a good bit of use. He didn't hear anything from behind either door.

Melodious decided he'd go for the low traffic door. He checked the door to the right. Silence. He carefully tried to open it. Locked. What about the keys? Yes, one fit it. He quietly unlocked the door, and pushed it open. Did it creak? Yes. (Did he happen to have any oil? No.) He tried to be gentle with it. Good - the people in the room shouldn't have heard it. The door opened to look down a hallway that turns left in the distance. The lights here were dimmer, as if not renewed recently. Venture in? The passage was somewhat dusty, as if not used all that often, but there are clear signs of passage. (It's probably been a couple of months since the Continual Light spell on these lights were renewed.) He entered slowly and carefully.



Making his way down the corridor, he could hear talking through the wall on his right talking. Almost certainly the same voices he heard at the other door earlier. Then it got quieter as he approached the corner. [Player: "Perception" die roll: I did manual roll and its literally a 20.]

Good! Melodious noticed that to the left, the passage fades into darkness in the distance. More dust. The signs of use stop. More dust that way too. Where did the traffic go?

Melodious gently walked here and there blowing dust around, gently, to see if any flowed a certain way. Yep. There are small cracks, and just a wee bit of air motion.

“Ah, awesome!”

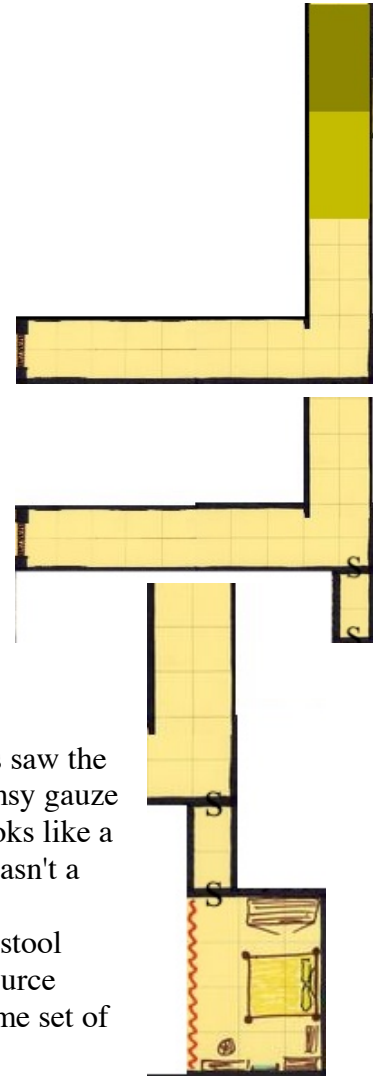
The answer was, obviously, a secret door to his right! There at the corner. Yes, it was designed to look like part of the wall, but dust or grime has accumulated at the seams, and in places air was passing through cracks, giving it away somewhat, now that someone was looking for it.

Melodious set to figuring out how to open it. He didn't see any sort of handle. So, he gave it a gentle push. It opened! This time with no creak. It's a narrow space a few feet wide and 10 feet to another door. The door in front of him to the south seemed identical to the one he just came through. Both had lock mechanisms, but the one behind him was simply left unlocked. The one in front could be tripped from this side. There was a wire that went somewhere that must be for a mechanism to operate the latch from the other side.

He tripped the catch to open the door.

The door opened into a bedroom. On the bed, Melodious saw the High Priestess Vega, asleep, face up. She was wearing a flimsy gauze nightgown. Lying next to her was a staff with a head that looks like a symbol of the Sun. The right (west) boundary of the room wasn't a wall, but a curtain. [DM: On d20=5, she continued sleeping.] Melodious could see that her vestments had been cast over a stool near the opposite wall. The room was dimly lit by a magic source similar to those in the corridor. Melodious could hear the same set of three voices, faintly, from the right (other side of curtain).

Melodious, after considering for a few moments, decided, trying not to flip his shit, that he was gonna aim to sneak out'a there, but hastily! He quietly closed the door, tiptoed down the corridor, and peeked around the corner. Still nobody there. He put the keys back, and casually but quietly glided up the steps. Exiting the door to the street – was anybody there? Yes. But, not paying any attention. He managed to get back to the tavern with no notice. It was time to catch the noon meal.



### **Wednesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, well after dark. It's rainy and windy.**

2. Oliver, Belfor, Veylann were planning to get into the Temple by way of the adjacent tower. Both the tower and pyramid are stone. Stylistically quite similar. Oliver asked the barkeep and Slippa similar questions separately in regards to that tower or known entrances. Oliver's intentions were understanding and confirming that this thing isn't evil. Not thievery or damage. What Oliver learned was that the usual daytime entrance to the Temple priesthood quarters are through the building just to the south of the pyramid. The front door facing the street. The same building has the Wheelwright's shop on the back side. It's understood in town that people of the Way of the Cross are not supposed to go past that entryway. And, they don't. There's a door where one of the

priests keeps watch and will summon whoever it is you want to talk to, if willing. The Mayor or Captain usually sends the messenger girl, who is allowed to go further, into the priests' quarters themselves.

Now that you are making a point of noticing, internal security for Sundown seems all but absent. The palisade watch-posts are manned through the night, and there are people coming and going from those here and there during the night, mainly to the tavern for midrats, or to and from dwellings or the barracks room in the Mayor's mansion. But there is no organized night watch patrolling the town at night. Oliver chose some time before midnight and it was dark. There are a few scattered lights here and there that it's not 100% dark, but darned close to it. The weather was rainy and windy. He recruited Belfor and Veylann to go with him.

The tower is 50' high, maybe a bit more. There are no windows at ground level or what might be the next level up., but narrow windows, 4 per side, at 2 distinct levels above that, and a rooftop. No doors could be seen. There is something on top of the roof, big, bulky and irregular. Visible when seen from a distance. The tower at its base is about 30' x 30' and the sides are straight up. Stone all the way up. Well constructed. It looks like pigeons are using the tower as a home, and likely bats as well. You see no signs of anyone there. There are minor signs of disrepair here and there. It would be a hard climb, even for a flying squirrel. The surface is no longer smooth everywhere, but it is near vertical. Belfor planned to climb up the north side of the tower, so as to be sheltered from the wind and rain by the tower itself.

Belfor transformed himself into the wild shape of a flying squirrel. It was a difficult climb. Three times Belfor lost his hold and "flew" gently to the ground to try again. Finally he made it up to the lowest row of windows and disappeared inside. He wasn't inside more than a minute before he reappeared at window a level up, changed himself again into a flying squirrel, and jumped. He floated again back down to the ground.

"Rats," he told Oliver and Veylann. "Giant rats. You would think I could handle a few giant rats. Never hit a one. As you can see they chewed up on me pretty well." [DM: He was at -33 hp. out of 38, used one 1st level spell for Healing Word.] "The two levels I was on, the ones with the windows, were bunk-rooms. Didn't have time to look around, you understand. Several bunks in each one. Anything fabric was rotten. Bat mess on the floor. Giant rats. No telling what else. Oh, yes, pigeons. On anything high enough for the rats not to get to, like over the windows."

Oliver asked if he could make anything of it. "What is could have been previously? Seems odd to have a 50' tower with bunks in it. Maybe an old guard tower?"

Belfor answered, "No telling. Seems an odd place for a guard tower. Why so close to the pyramid?" Veylann: "I don't have a clue either. But likely built at about the same time as the pyramid."

Oliver wasn't ready to give up. He asked Belfor, "What are the odds of getting up there and dropping a rope?"

Belfor replied that he didn't have any wild shapes left at the moment. He's also hurt [DM: 5 hp. left] A flying squirrel can't absorb much damage. A short rest would help. Then he could do wild shape again. What he'd try to do is climb all the way to the top before transforming back to human, then drop a rope. He didn't have one.

Oliver said he or Veylann would get a couple of ropes off the horse, Pacman.

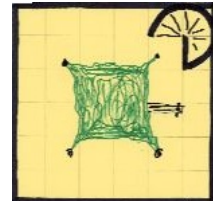
Belfor said that he would cast “Darkvision” on both Oliver and Veylann so they could fight their way down through the nasties to below ground to find if this thing connects to the Temple. It probably does.

So Oliver and Veylann fetched the ropes while Belfor short rested. They knotted the two ropes together and added additional knots to make it easier to climb.

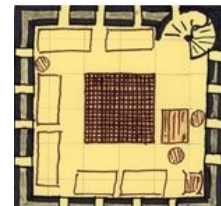
It took five tries before Belfor got to the top as a flying squirrel. Once when he slipped, he managed to glide to a windowsill to make the next try, instead of all the way to the ground. Belfor transformed back to human form. He took the two ropes and tied one end to the big bulky mechanism on top of the tower, and dropped the ropes down on the N side, out of the wind.

Veylann and Oliver climbed up the knotted rope without difficulty despite the wind and rain thanks to the shelter provided by the mass of the tower. Once Oliver and Veylann got up, Belfor cast "darkvision" on each. There was a spiral staircase in the NE corner of the tower roof. The rim wall of the tower was fairly low - maybe 2 feet. It didn't look like its purpose was to protect archers from opposing fire. From the top of the tower, the three adventurers had a good view of the town. It was higher than everything else, except the very top of the pyramid, which is at the same height.

There was some sort of big mechanical thing covered by what amounted to a tarpaulin there on top of the tower. Oliver wanted to look under the tarp and see as much of the mechanism as possible, and see if he can figure anything out. If nothing else, try to memorize what he can of it to draw it out and get Doils opinion of it. But in this wind, messing with the tarp, which was not in good shape, was likely to tear or lose it completely. From what Oliver saw of it, it looked like the thing was designed to rotate. There was a big lever sticking out on one side which seemed to be there for pushing the machine around to a particular direction. It didn't look like a ballista or catapult though. There seemed to be big metal "leaves." He could see some hinges. But, really, Oliver couldn't make much sense of it. Veylann had no idea what it is either.



Belfor did warn Oliver that there were giant rats down on the next floor. Three of them. Probably hiding under the beds, what's left of the beds, that is. Then they headed down, Oliver in the front, followed by Veylann then Belfor. Oliver was indeed attacked by three giant rats. They got the jump on him and he was bitten a couple of times, but then killed all three with short ranged shots with his hand crossbow.



Belfor says, "Those things looked a lot bigger when I was a flying squirrel!"

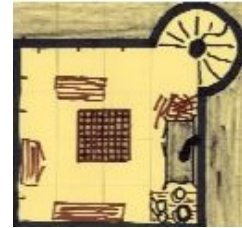
No sooner had he finished saying that then two giant centipedes attacked from the far side of the room. Veylann was watching and shot one. Oliver turned and got the other with his fourth shot.

The next level looks about the same. Six beds, or remains of them, and minor furniture. Mess from bats and pigeons and whatever. The party knew to expect rats. Sure enough, two more! Both managed to bite Oliver before he and Veylann killed them.

The next level in the tower had no windows, and was a long abandoned kitchen. There was a big metal stove, remains of what must have been wood for fuel, and an assortment of kitchen tools and instruments, all showing neglect. A grate in the ceiling to the next level up would have supplied some light during the day. Oliver went into the

room to look around and was attacked by one of those big giant wolf spiders. This time he shot first. Dead spider. Nothing else in the room seemed interesting.

Down another level, ground level perhaps, there was another kitchen. It was very similar to the one above, but looked recently used. Well, within the last few months maybe. There was relatively fresh wood, and the pots and pans were not so dirty. In this one Oliver killed two more giant centipedes that attacked.



The party of three ventured lower still. Next down was a smaller room, clearly within the tower foundation still. It was only about ten feet square, and was being used as a store room for small chests of grain, several kegs of salted meat or drink, and a few spare utensils. No monsters! So, down another level, and here the spiral stairs stopped.



This room was much like the one above, but there were no stores. Instead, there were doors in the north and south walls. Heavy, ironbound, solid wooden doors. With keyholes. Veylan tried his lock picking skills, but without success on either door. These were obviously good quality locks, and might even be of an unfamiliar design.



Unable to go further, the three returned up the tower, searching the rooms as they went without finding anything. At the top Belfor gathered in the rope, resumed flying squirrel form, and glided down to the ground. Talking briefly, they agreed that this indeed was a way to get into the Temple, but the locked doors had been something that couldn't be defeated. At least, not this time. They also agreed not to tell the world at large where they had been. Melodious maybe. But not Slippa. Oliver was afraid that she might take offense at trespassing into the Temple, or even just the tower.

### Thursday morning, October 27<sup>th</sup>:

#### 3. Treasure Distribution (by Doil):

**Treasure, 4 times ago Episode 23 (not allocated yet):**(with Groa, Corvyn, Sheth; not Felicity)

Magic shortsword (needs minor repair) (~1140 gp)

Coins from chest (all KoS): 250 cp, 140 sp, 50 gp

Navigator's kit (needs refurbishing) (6 gp)

**Treasure, 3 times ago, Episode 24 (not allocated yet):**(with Corvyn, Felicity; not Sheth, Groa)

11 bronze shields, 11 bronze war-hammers

Garnet gems: 5x200gp, 8x100gp, 8x50gp = 2200gp value

**Treasure, 2 times ago, Episode 25 (not allocated yet):**(with Corvyn, Felicity; not Sheth, Groa)

18 bronze shields, 18 bronze war-hammers

2 metal large spears (from salamanders) – unknown metal.

Garnet gems from salamanders: 3 x 50gp = 150 gp. value

Garnet gems from Azeri: 2x200gp, 10x100gp, 12x50gp = 2000 gp. value

**Treasure, last time, Episode 26 (not allocated yet):** (with Felicity; not Sheth, Groa, Corvyn)

2 metal large spears (from salamanders) – unknown metal.

Garnet gems from salamanders: 6 x 50gp = 300 gp. value

**Treasure, this time, Episode 27 (not allocated yet):** (with Felicity; not Sheth, Groa, Corvyn)

1 metal large spear (from salamander) – unknown metal.

Garnet gem from salamander: 1 x 50gp = 50 gp. value

**So, rolling the treasures all up together by group: All include O,M,V,D,Sl,B,E**

**Ep23: (G,C,Sh no F) 10 shares(+4%)**

Magic shortsword (needs minor repair) (~1150 gp) less 10 for repair = 1140.

Chest with coins (250c, 140s, 50g) and Navigator's kit(6): = 918.7

KoS coins values assumed: 1c->1s; 1s->1g; 1g->15g Total = 2058.7  
 4%=82.3 Per share: 197.6

**Ep 24, 25: (C,F, no Sh,G)9 shares(+4%)**  
 Garnet gems: 7x200gp, 18x100gp, 20x50gp Total = 4200.  
 4%=168 Per share: 448

**Ep 26,27: (F, no Sh,G,C) 8 shares(+4%)**  
 Garnet gems: 7 x 50gp Total = 350.  
 4%= 14 Per share: 42

Grand total= 6608.7

(29 bronze shields, 29 bronze war hammers, 5 metal spears (salamanders): not included)

So: O, M,V, D, Sl, B, E: 687.6 each; G,Sh: 197.6; C: 645.6; F: 490 +fee 264.3 = 6608.3

Oliver: garnets(6x100), 5xKoS gp, +12 gp, 6 sp

Melodious: garnets(2x200, 2x100, 50) 2xKoS gp, +7 gp, 6 sp

Veylann: garnets(2x200, 2x100, 50) 2xKoS gp, +7 gp, 6 sp

Doil: garnets(2x200, 2x100, 50) 2xKoS gp, +7 gp, 6 sp +fee 264 gp, 3 sp

Slippa: garnets(1x200, 4x100, 50) 2xKoS gp, +7gp, 6sp

Belfor: garnets(2x100,9x50) 2xKoS gp, +7gp, 6sp

Elsapheth: garnets(13x50) 2xKoS gp, +7gp, 6sp

Groa: Chest with coins (with 12 KoS gp), Navigator's kit(6), 11gp, 6sp

Sheth: garnets(1x50) 9xKoS gp, +12gp, 6sp

Corvyn: 12xKoS gp, +465gp, 6sp

Felicity: + 490 gp

Total: garnets(7x200,18x100,27x50), 50 KoS gp, Nkit(6), 1296 gp, 63 sp = 6607.7gp

There is a small discrepancy of about 1 gp. Roundoff error may account for that.

### Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup>: breeze, partly cloudy (mid-morning)

- The party is preparing to go back down to the "Hot Caverns" within the complex underground under Sundown. Brother Sheth is among those just come from Guardraw.

(He had 774xp and 3 days of training on departing from Sundown to assist with copying and translating the ceramic tablets. So, he was not traveling or adventuring on April 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>. He did training with clerical help on each of those 3 days, adding 6 days' worth of training (bringing his total to 9). He needs three more. How much help was he in the work of deciphering the scrolls? He is +7 in Arcana and Religion, and proficient in History and Investigation, and the language of the Kingdom of the Sun. A day's worth of training at his double rate would cost 40xp or would sell for 20xp, so just doing usual stuff in his discipline stuff would earn on the order of 30xp. He's been doing an important task, and he has higher skills in Religion than Rahab or Kaykenyon, and equal to Kaykenyon in History. He also brings "Knowledge of the Ages" to the task (as does Rahab). He's the only one of the three that knows the modern Kingdom of the Sun language. So, he's more directly knowledgeable than either of the others. Enough for 100 xp per day? That seems a bit much for there being no explicit danger. So, maybe 65 xp per day, half way between 30 and 100. So, 195 xp, added to 774, gives 969. Subtracting three days of training at 20xp each makes his total 909, 3<sup>rd</sup> level. That seems about right. Throw in his role in helping escort Groa and others to Guardraw and Lady Kaykenyon and Judith back. I think that's fair. So, Sheth advances to 3<sup>rd</sup> level)

### Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, late morning, breeze, partly cloudy

- Oliver proposed that he could speak with the Mayor and Trudue about Sundown's past, and about the information that Sheth had relayed from the tablets.

Trudue told Oliver that he probably shouldn't have you talk to him about the contents of the tablets. The Sundown priests and priestesses are very sensitive about that. It's their tablets, and they ought to be the ones to tell him. Him and the Mayor. Listening to

Oliver, or Sheth, about what's there, might be taken as validating the seizure of the tablets by Lady Kaykenyon. Of course, if there is something very, very important, especially if it concerns the safety of the town, he'd appreciate knowing. He thinks the priests will be able to figure out what's there eventually. Without asking for help. Both Calypso and Canopus are pretty sharp. The High Priestess isn't a dummy either.

Oliver then asked the mayor and Trudue if they don't think it's weird that this religion is so secretive? Why would they need to hide their beliefs and history if there were nothing to hide? Especially considering its confirmed that there is a permanent portal open under the town leading to the plane of fire. A portal that demons have accessed previously to attack the inhabitants of the town?

Trudue answers, "All of that is exactly the reason to be secretive. No telling what kind of zealots might single out Sundown for 'correction,' or worse. Or, perhaps you have not heard of 'The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrines of the Faith.' Also known as 'The Black Robed Clerics.' No, they never have shown up here in Sundown, but that's a good thing, and Trudue hopes to keep it that way."

Oliver wasn't going around spouting this information to just anyone, but he thinks the people in charge should know. And no, Oliver has not heard of the black robed clerics, but again, the things Oliver has described are facts and immediate threats. The black robed clerics are a what if. In the end, Oliver wasn't going to argue to share information if they want to be willfully ignorant. He was going to stick to the plan and do everything he can to get that gate shut. And no, he was not going to tell them that.

Trudue feels that it is important to support his people. And, yes, the clerics at the Sun Temple are his people. Even when they might be unreasonable. But, he fully supports that the tablets should never have been taken from Sundown, and must be returned. He is happy that at least some of them have been returned.

<b>Experience:</b>	Oliver	Veylann	Belfor	Melodious
5 g. rats (OBV)	63	31	31	
2 g. centip.(O(V)((B))	57	29	14	
1 w. spider(Q((VB))	40	5	5	
2 g. centip.(Q((BV))	80	10	10	
Mission (fnd entr temple)	25	25	50	Mission: info about temple +100
Total this episode:	+265	+100	+110	+100
<u>Previous xp.</u>	<u>16475</u>	<u>7868</u>	<u>7478</u>	<u>14784</u>
Current total:	16740	7968	7588	14884
				(needs 116 more!)