

Episode 28½ After Dispelling the Portal

Friday, April 28th, evening, breeze, partly cloudy

1. After the party got back to the tavern from the caverns, having dispelled the Portal, Sister Judith and Father Benaiah decided to go talk to Captain Trudue at the Mayor's mansion to tell him what had happened. They had to wait.

Sister Judith explained to the party back in the tavern, "Mayor Alicia was there. She asked if we had been down into the Caverns again. Father Benaiah and I said yes, and they were there to make our report to her and to Captain Trudue. She suggested that we wait there, since at the moment Captain Trudue was 'out' but she expected him back shortly. So we discussed inconsequential things while enjoying some tea and biscuits while we waited."

"When Trudue came in, he wasn't surprised to see us. He'd apparently been summoned to talk to the High Priestess, who complained that we had dispelled 'her' Portal. Captain Trudue said, 'I told her I had no idea that she had any interest or connection to said Portal, and that whatever was done was done for the good of Sundown.' So, Trudue defended our actions, though the only substantive thing she told him was that we had dispelled the Portal."

Judith continued, saying, "So, I gave him a more complete report. Father Benaiah helped fill in the details, especially his casting the 'Dispel Magic' with help from Mister Melodious and, I believe, Brother Sheth. And that I subsequently detected no magic from where The portal had been. So, yes, the Portal had been dispelled. As well as four or five salamanders destroyed, creatures which could present a great danger to Sundown. I told Trudue, and Mayor Alicia, that we had no prior knowledge of the High Priestess claiming ownership of the Portal. She had said that she told us that dispelling it was not a good idea, but without explaining why. She had insisted on being with us for all this."

"I then told them both of our concerns for the safety of Sundown, given the increase in the flow of lava into the cavern and the peril from the abundant river water in the sea cave or coming in from the river. Also about our Divinations, which seemed to indicate that, yes, there was danger, but ways to make the danger less, though requiring a delicate balance between cooling the magma welling up with water and producing so much steam as to be explosive or cause an earthquake. How Brother Sheth had been able to give us valuable information about how to do that. I also said we would do another Divination tomorrow to check prospects for the future."

"The Mayor and Captain seemed satisfied that we had done right. Especially not knowing what the High Priestess might know, which she never revealed to us in time to consider any change of plan."

Judith wound up by saying to them, "Tomorrow Benaiah and I will do just that, and let you know what we find."

There would have been some discussion among party members. Given that this was happening in the tavern, it is assumed that people would have been careful not to say anything bad about the High Priestess. Though, Lady Kaykenyon would have mentioned again that the High Priestess was not at all appreciative of having received the score or so of ceramic tablets back, and that translations, as best she could provide, were refused. She also refused to answer any questions about the box Lady Kaykenyon was seeking.

Saturday, April 29th, morning, windy but clear skies

2. It was after breakfast when Sister Judith reappeared. Father Benaiah was with her. She explained, "I cast another divination this morning. I was asking specifically about the status of the Portal. The fact is, the Portal is still there, but it is 'Closed.' It is also becoming inaccessible due to the hot lava pouring up through it and around it. Yes, the lava is being somewhat cooled by the water coming in. But someone using the Portal would find himself arriving into the midst of mixed stone and lava. Something perhaps an earth elemental could withstand, and possibly something of a fire nature unto the lava cools more. But, in any case, the Portal is closed and so not usable. Opening it again could be done with a 'Wish,' and perhaps a 'Limited Wish.' Also, I learned that indeed, the High Priestess has a staff with the potential of opening the Portal, but it lacks that power now. But the current situation is that the cavern where the Portal is, is slowly filling with lava, and not cooling enough to be stable."

Father Benaiah then spoke, saying "My own Divination seemed to indicate that more water flow into the hot caverns is needed for stability, to cool the lava enough. And, that had best be done soon. But, a free flow of water through all of the doors might be too much, say, if the water level rises above the dock level and flows through the double doors. It would seem that what is needed is to open that water gate from the sea cave, with all the other doors open to let the steam out. Maybe it would be possible to put a low dike in the passages from the Hot caves out into the Sea cave. Sister Judith and I talked briefly about that. The 'Shape Stone' spell might do that. Three castings, maybe."

Sister Judith then asked, "Is there any way we can destroy or remove that iron gate that's currently blocking the water?"

Doil says, "I don't think any of us can endure going back into the Hot Caverns now. But if someone could, using great strength somehow, the bolts securing the slides to the rock could be forced out. Then the iron gate would fall loose, out of the channel."

Judith asked, "Maybe 'Stone Shape' to remove the stone holding the bolts?"

Doil just looked at her. Then said, "Yes! Exactly. And, that could be done from the water side. I could show you where."

"Best done after the low dikes to keep water from the river from flowing in in excess," Father Benaiah stated.

"Right. And, we make a quick exit once that water is released. The steam is going to come pouring out pretty quick. Hope not too much pressure."

Sister Judith said to the party, "I don't have 'Stone Shape' prepared. I can have it prepared for tomorrow morning. I believe I will be able to do four castings. Assuming I do not need to do another Divination."

Father Benaiah looked at her in awe. Then he said, "I will be able to do one."

"Three for the dikes and two for the water gate," Judith said. "Tomorrow?"

Sunday, April 30th, morning, breezy, partly cloudy

The party accompanied Sister Judith and Father Benaiah into the big sea cavern to carry out the mission of adding a sill of about three feet to the double doors and the skeleton door to the hot side. Then, with the boat drawn up handy, Sister Judith and Father Benaiah simultaneously did a "Shape stone" to remove the lowest courses of stone accessible on either side of the iron water gate. The gate didn't fall out, but the bottom of it was now detached from the wall and allowed a great increase in water flowing.