

## 23 The Jewel of Judgement

In Amber, Gerard had been acting as Regent in Random's absence and was exhausted from continually using the Trumps to manage his forces and his siblings.

Caine was still recovering from his bout of madness and sickness, but he was up and about.

Vialle was delighted to get Random back and Random himself was exhausted from Shadow-walking to evade the Abyssal Horror.

Llewella had recently reported in from Rebma – increasingly-frequent (almost hourly) fluctuations in the Pattern there were causing the magical anti-pressure domes to weaken.

Aleyn (with Random's permission) Trumped Trellys Jeseby (his Chaos "girlfriend") and invited her to come through to Amber. Trellys was delighted to learn that Aleyn (and Cassie) had survived the nuclear blast.



*Most of her family had been killed and now she was the Heir of Jeseby, with her Aunt Ranna Jeseby the new Head of the House.*

*Queen Dara had declared herself Empress of Chaos and now had gained a power to shoot bolts of black lightning (an Abyssal Power). Her stated intention was to drive out all Amber influence from Chaos and then eventually bring ALL of Shadow back within the influence of Logrus.*

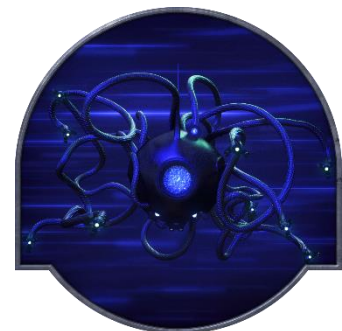
*However, Dara had apparently not been prepared for the emergence of the Abyssal Horror and in the days since the Great Sacrifice, it had disrupted several Chaos Shadows and broken several Ways.*

*Bances of Amblerash (High Priest of the Logrus) had admitted that he couldn't help rebuild the Ways because the Logrus itself was experiencing fluctuations!*

Our heroes tried to get a rest, but after only a couple of hours, Julian contacted Amber to say that a HUGE army of Skaven was advancing into the Forest of Arden led by some form of Dark Queen in black full plate armour. There were also Skaven Shaman trying to conduct some sort of ritual in the fringe of the Forest.

Random put out a general call to summon an army and asked all the family members to follow him down the Great Stair of Kolvir to defend Amber. He put on the Jewel of Judgement and said he would use it to blast the enemy with Storms.

Cassie contacted Fiona (still in the Dworkinarium). Fluctuations there were affecting both the proto-Pattern and the mini-Logrus! She moaned at Cassie – demanding to know why she hadn't already followed the advice from her Tir Na-Nogth trips and "FIXED" the other Patterns! She explained (with exasperation) that Cassie is the family member with the MOST Pattern inside her – deliberately created that way and she should use the Jewel of Judgement and walk the divergent Patterns and re-write any variants. Fiona said that the fluctuations were rocking the foundations of the Dworkinarium and the place would soon collapse. She refused to leave until she could finish repairing the Eye of Dworkin.



Cassie eventually agreed and told the King “Fiona says you’ve got to give me the Jewel of Judgement!”

Reluctantly Random agreed, and Cassie Trump-called Llewella and went through to the Rebma Pattern chamber. It would take about half a day for Random and his army to arrive in the Forest of Arden so he insisted she try and get the Jewel back to him in time for the battle.

Aleyn said his goodbyes to Trellys, who Trumped her Aunt Renna and returned to the Courts of Chaos.

[GM: what followed was made more tense by the rules of Amber Accelerated as the characters have a limited number of points of Trump ability and Pattern ability and kept running out. It was taking a 4-hour rest to recover – I was also declaring that the other Family Members were also very low on Points as they have all been busy since the start of the Abyssal Invasion]



In Rebma, it was clear that Llewella was exhausted from her magical efforts to shore-up the Wards. The Pattern was glowing strangely and had some unfamiliar twists and turns near the centre. Within Cassie, the power of the Pattern burned very brightly and she could clearly sense the “wrongness”. She performed the ritual of attunement with the Jewel as she had done a few weeks ago and this time it projected a sort of hologram of the Jewel around her that moved as she did.

She stepped onto the Pattern and clearly felt that the aura was re-writing or reinforcing the fiery trail as she went. The resistance built up even more quickly as she followed the familiar curves. Any slight deviations from the Pattern of Amber were being erased.

The usual flashes of dream-like images appeared at the periphery of her vision, offering tempting and distracting insights if she would only turn aside or pause to examine them.



The Dark Queen on a black horse, cutting down several of Arden’s Rangers. In a lull in the battle, the woman turned and began to lift her visor... Cassie pushed the distraction aside and moved on.

As she reached the place where the most deviant strands of the pattern were clustered, she saw images of other Patterns and knew that ... something was offering her knowledge of exactly which Patterns needed to be fixed. The temptation to study these was too great to be ignored even though slowing to look at them would make the final steps of the Pattern more difficult than ever. She thought it worth the risk.

Once the Pattern in Water was mended (Rebma), two others needed the same treatment. The Pattern in Air (Tir Na’Nogth) which she had previously seen was burnt and broken and might need almost re-drawing from scratch! The Pattern of the Rose (Corwin’s Pattern) which was the “most wrong”. It was the presence of that Pattern, similar but different that had weakened Reality so much.

There had once been another – a strange mix of Pattern and Logrus, created by a thousand years of Rage by Finndo, but that one had been severed from reality by the destruction of the Shadow of Brittainia.

The final effort was almost too much for her, she had slowed almost to a fatal stop, but she somehow managed to complete the Pattern and collapsed at the centre, panting heavily.

In the distance she could see Llewella and one of her guards, but they seemed to be moving in slow motion, indistinct. The effort had been considerable and she now knew that the other Patterns would be MORE difficult. If only she had some doses of that Pattern Booster potion. For now she had to rest and sleep. Time seemed to be running at double speed within the Jewel’s Aura.

Aleyn was halfway down the Great Stair when he got the Trump Call. It was Cassie, but there was static and strange jumps in the communication caused by the time differential. “I’ve fixed the Rebma Pattern but got to do the Rose and Tir Na’Nogth. I need some Pattern Booster potion or I’m going to fail.”

King Random could see the image of Cassie with Jewel’s strange aura and the Pattern of Rebma. He advised her against keeping the Jewel on for more than 10 minutes at a stretch because “Time starts to play tricks on you!” Cassie had already kept it on and activated for about 3 hours (Amber time) and 6 hours subjective! Time was stretching and jumping more and more, but she knew that if she took it off, it would cost her more energy to re-activate.



Aleyn said he would head back to Spagyria (Shadow of the Alchemist/Scientists) and see if they had managed to create any Potions. When they left, the three Alchemists were in the process of using advance techniques to clone plant material for the ingredients.

He trumped Isolde – the oldest of the three. She was surprised (but pleased) to get a call. It had been six months for her. Their relationship had been intimate and fun, but both were virtually immortal and had known it was casual. Still, she had clearly hoped to see him again.

“Yes – we’ve just managed to make a couple of doses of each of the recipes you left us. You know we intend to use the one you call PATTERN to stabilise the Philosopher’s Stone and create...”

Aleyn was in too much of a hurry to go over old ground. “I’m sorry but Cassie needs the Pattern Potion. All of Reality (the Many Shadows I told you about) are in danger. If Cassie fails...”

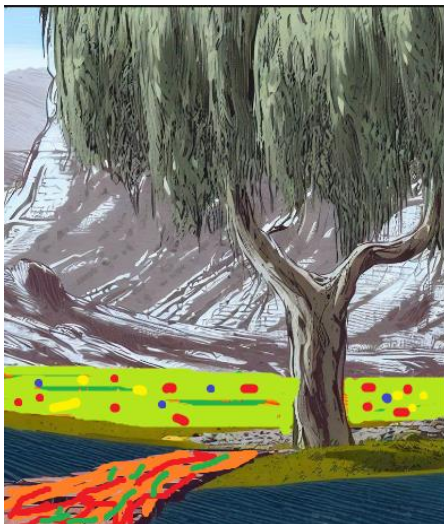
Isolde accepted the urgency but needed to convince her two fellow scientists. They were clearly very agitated about what the World Security Council would say “It will set us back six months!”. Anya had examined Cassie with a sort of Psychic Probe and was willing to believe Aleyn’s story. They each had a key and all three of them had to use them at the same time to unlock The Vault.

Aleyn pushed his luck even further and asked for additional potions. They handed over 1 each of the other three (Magic, Trump & ?Logrus?) as well as their 2 Pattern potions, through the Trump Connection and Aleyn rode a couple of hours to Rebma to deliver them.

After an hour's delay waiting for an audience, he was led down to see Princess Llewella and could see Cassie, still surrounded by the ruby aura, in the centre of the Pattern.

To get the potions to her, he'd either have to walk the Pattern or use Trump. Using Trump [GM: which Fatigued him as he'd already filled his Trump Stress track] he delivered the Pattern Booster Potions to Cassie. They discussed possibly giving Bances of Amblerash the "mystery" Potion (which they thought was a Logrus Booster) in case there was a similar need to FIX the Logrus. They argued about whether Cassie should tackle Tir Na'Nogth or The Rose next. Aleyn told her the moon was currently up, so the Pattern in the Air was available now, but Cassie insisted on heading for the Rose instead. Aleyn was concerned that she might be killed by the Rose if she turned out to not be a descendant of Corwin – but Fiona and Florimel had told he she was Corwin's child (despite being a product of Shadow Earth's Cloning and Artificial Insemination research developed by Aunt Flora's Nazi scientists!)

She used the power of the Pattern to teleport her to the valley of the Rose.



The tree that stood at the start of the Pattern spoke to her as she approached.

"Beware Traveller! Stepping on the Pattern will destroy you unless you be of the Lineage of Corwin of Amber"

They chatted for a few minutes. The tree had seen a few people go up in smoke (burning my leaves!) over the decades. Only two people had walked it without being destroyed – Corwin – the Maker and one who called himself Merlin, son of Corwin.

The tree wished her luck.

It seemed the rumours were true. As she stepped forward, the familiar Pattern-walk feelings flooded her. The Rose was very different and during the process, she had to use both doses of the Pattern Booster potion to erase the lines of difference and inscribe the lines that match her inner vision of Amber's Pattern.

More visions arose to assail her senses...

The Battle in Arden – Random was fighting the Dark Queen. Caine tried to slip behind her and was in position to stab her in the back, but at the last minute she turned, swung a huge greatsword one-handed and cut off Caine's head!

Before Random could take advantage of the distraction, she kicked him in the ribs and impaled him through the stomach, then the tide of battle swept between them and the vision was lost – it was clear the King was regretting not having the Jewel of Judgement and Aleyn at his side.

Cassie pushed such thoughts aside and pressed on...





Another vision showed her Aleyn, galloping into the edge of the battle, sword flashing as it cut through a swath of Skaven towards the Dark Queen. As he was engaged with a Skaven Prince, she saw a shimmer of smoke rising from the mound of bodies as a Shaman materialised behind him unnoticed. If she called out, perhaps



she could warn him... but this was a distraction, ignore it, press on.

The final distraction was a vision of one of the worlds beyond the Rose. A handsome man sitting at a street table on a broad pavement in the French Boulevard. He was playing an accordion and stopping every now and then to scribble notes. A group of beautiful young women were watching and smiling. She recognised the man from his Trump – it was Corwin – her Father. What will happen to the Shadows beyond the Rose if she re-writes the Rose itself? Will they be lost? Will they be destroyed? She could have spoken to him... Ignore ... Press on.

