

Cordelia's Logbook

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Em told me that when you want to think about a difficult problem, always keep a log or journal to help you think about it. That way you can dump your brain and not lose ideas. So, let's start dumping.

Mr. Graves is gone. Someone broke into the house in the night and tried to kill him; he ran away. He wasn't in a big hurry, I don't think; he took a lot of junk with him, and left the corpse of his assailant behind; however, he didn't even wake me to tell me he was going.

I don't know where Mr. Graves has gone. He went on foot as far as the vil of Fezelton, where he stole a broom before walking into the inlands; but from there I lost his trail. I thought about asking the rangers if they'd seen him, but then they would have been addled unless Mr. Graves has quite changed his tune.

It wasn't a magic broom, but maybe he knows how to enchant them?

While I was trying to find Mr. Graves someone came and took the corpse. I have no clue whom. There are some tracks, but the boots are pretty nondescript. I don't think they took anything else.

Mr. Graves left one book which was under his bed. It was the one he always taught out of; I opened it up and found lesson plans scribbled all over it. Em and Mr. Graves seemed to think the book is intelligent, but it doesn't seem to special to me. It won't respond to anything I say.

I have no idea where Em is. I think she must have left slodoop; I don't mean she's in the outlands, I mean she's not here at all. At least, that seemed to be what she meant by "popping."

The school board doesn't know Mr. Graves is gone, yet. I made sure to explain to everyone how important it was not to let them know. They wanted to know what they would do without a teacher and I said I supposed we could go off of Mr. Grave's lecture notes, but we couldn't figure them out. So I've started training them the only thing I know; lazer handle creation and use. None of them are very good at it, and once they flash they stay out for a

long time. Lots of the kids have started just goofing off inside the schoolhouse while a few of us stick to the lazer training. But I don't think they'll make much of a stand if we are attacked again.

If things get any worse, I think I may need to get some help somewhere. But I have no idea where

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Scarlet came to school today. I guess that means it's all over. chased her away, but I think there'll be too much interference to get anything done tomorrow. To think I used to like Scarlet...

I've been going through Em's place and finding what I can. I've got a letter-8, two lazer handles, a lazer slug, a lazer egg (I wish I had had that earlier!), an actual sword (for what, I wonder?), and lots and lots of books—but no magic spoon. I really don't want to try to carry all the food I will need with me if I go someplace. Come to think of it, I will need to buy more food soon anyway.

Fortunately, there is lots of money.

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School was cancelled today—forcibly so. Piasat, Ryan, and I went shopping together and I got lots of dried fish and hardtack. As we were shopping we came across Iora and her mother.

"Hey," said Iora, "what are you buying?"

"Food," I answered.

Iora asked her mother if she could hang with us for a few minutes, but her mother said she couldn't, that she thought it was disgraceful for six-year-olds to be out without adults. "Just because we're not giants, you think we're incompetent!" said Iora, but she went with her mother anyway.

"I wish we were giants," said Ryan. "That would be so wow!"

"I don't know," I said. "Have you ever met a giant?"

And thats when it came to me. The giant village—of

course! I could probably get the gubhorbles to help me if I asked, but gubhorbles are pretty weak, even compared to the rangers. The giants, on the other hand. . .

"Hey," I said, interrupting whatever it was that Piasat was saying, "do you too want to go visit a giant's village?"

"No," said Piasat, looking rather disgusted, but Ryan said "How far away?"

"Oh, just a hop," I replied. "About a day on a pipod, I suppose."

"I don't ride pipods," replied Ryan.

"How about letter-8s?" I asked, but I already knew the answer. "Well, I'm going, anyway. I wonder if I can get anyone else to come with me?"

"But what will you do when you get there?" asked Piasat.

I didn't know, exactly, but I've been thinking about it since. I suspect if I could get the giants to come to the slo, I could get them to convince the weird leaders of this place to believe that stuff other than stuffy, boring business exists. Still not sure how I'll find Em or Mr. Graves, but at least I can do something.

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After visiting everyone I could, I only got one person to come with me. Pohka Fiananana, of all people. She's a good bit older than me, being Gorg's next-to-oldest sister (he has lots of sisters) but she's a really decent sort. Mr. Fiananana (his wife is dead) is really nice, and when Pohka told him she was going to go into the outlands with me (yes, she actually told him. . .) all he said was "want a pipod?"

So she's going by pipod, I'm going by letter-8. She took the lazer slug and sword, saying that swords are just cool and lazer slugs are just useful, and I've got the lazer handles. She's also brought her pet (friend?), Duke Salmon, a glass howler. Duke's a mute, or so Pohka tells me, but a pretty clever chap. He and Pohka communicate with hand signs, but its not a full language or anything. He's also going on pipod.

Glass howlers are. . . well, the fact that nobody seems to mind them, even though they are transparent, reconstruct themselves if shattered, run around on their fingertips with their legs folded against their chests, and whoop shriek like so many ill-behaved toddlers, has always seemed a bit. . . well, anyway. At least Duke's partially sane.

We're staying in Em's house tonight, because it is outside

the city, but we leave before dawn for the giants. Hope I can find them. When we get there, I'm going to go find Gar Thoris while Pohka and Duke do a little exploring and stuff. Pohka says if we can get thirty giants to come back to the slo with us, that should be enough. She thinks if we bring too many the people will think it's an invasion, but if we don't have enough people will attack them like they did Mr. Graves.

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Got a call from Em on the tureen about three hours before sunup. She was all in a huff; said she had been to a world where there was no night, and she had had to come back early. It was so hot that she had slowly dehydrated past the point where the soup could help her and, finding no water, she had been forced to leave GF's trail and come home. She's stranded someplace (she doesn't know where) with nothing but her clothes and a spoon. I asked her where the pipod and lazer handle went, but she said she doesn't want to talk about it.

About this time Pohka came up, all sleepy and disheveled looking, and stared with unabashed awe into the tureen.

"ey, Em!" she said cheerfully. "Wha'cha doin' in a soup po'?"

"Fiananana? What are you doing there at such an hour of the morning?"

"Oh, jus' cha'in' wi' Em'ly Mul'rave; you?"

"Chatting with Fi, though that was not what I planned on doing. You've met my daughter Cor?"

"Yeh, she's a cham'. 'akin' me to see gian's in a few 'ars."

"Really?" said Em with obvious interest. And so I found myself explaining the whole scheme; how Mr. Graves had been attacked several times and had run away and how the school looked to be totally dead and we were going to get the giants to help us stamp out the priggishness of the slo.

"Hm," said Em when I had finished. "Not a bad idea at the heart, though poorly conceived. I think I'd better be in on it, though; bright as you girls are, you're none too powerful."

"Chaff," said Pohka, though I have no idea what she meant.

"Fi," said Em, "Any luck with Frisky Chest?"

"Naw, a's a har' un."

"How about Aerial Servant?"

"Sho. How yous thin' I do my chores?"

"You know magic?" I interrupted, staring at Pohka with considerable interest.

"Whael..."

"Fi used to come over for lessons with me every week, back before her school work caught up with her. Now she comes when she can get away."

"Naw so much, yah know, now 'a' 'esser's mah 'eacher. 'Es har', 'e is."

"Pick up your 't's, woman," said Em harshly. "I can't hear so well through this spoon, you'll need to be more crisp."

"Ah says, ah can' come so much, now 'hat Besser's mai teacher."

"Oh. Right."

There was an odd silence, so I asked Em what she had in mind with Aerial Servant.

"What? Oh, that was just too see how Fi's studies were going. No, what I need the two of you to do is to bring my a pipod."

The problem with this idea, however, was that Em didn't know where she was, or how we were to reach her. After some discussion of various clues and so forth, Em suggested that we go ahead to the giants, but bring an extra pipod with us and she would call us when she figured out where she was.

"Call us in the tureen?" I asked.

Em replied in the affirmative.

"Its awfully big to cart around with us," I observed.

"Well, what else were you going to do? Bring an entire larder on your backs? Myrtle's Tureen isn't as portable as Myrtle's Spoon, admittedly, but is sure beats packing enough food for a week."

"This is Myrtle's Tureen?" I asked (note to self; cease these redundant observations).

"Well, yeah; how else did you think I was calling you? It and the spoon are linked up, you know."

"Ah 'ough' yah 'i' i' wi' magic, Em," said Pohka.

Em stated that she did, but the spoon and tureen formed a conduit to direct the spell. Then she said, "If you want to go, you'd better get soon" and left us.

Pohka's just about done packing; we'll be on our way soon.

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It's nearly dark; Pohka and I are sitting on top of one of the giants' roofs. She's already asleep, even though we barely got here (she says travel always makes her sleepy); I'm eating cheese and vegetable soup from Myrtle's Tureen (a lot better than the nondescript soup stuff the spoon made) and listening to the chatter of the giants below. I should always travel with a pipodist; it is much easier to keep pace and stay on course that way.

The village is actually pretty small, as far as number of people goes; probably not even a town, just a vil. That means we'll need to either find a larger giant settlement or we'll need to deal with the fellows who chased me through the woods last time I was in the area, who doubtless live in this vil. They could have been just visiting, or be out visiting someplace else now, but it is unwise to bank on these possibilities.

Duke didn't want to come onto the roof with us, so he must be down below someplace, doing whatever it is glass howlers do. Somehow I can't picture them sleeping, but maybe that's just because they are transparent. I'll ask Pohka in the morning.

Too dark to write any more tonight.

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I found this tiny booklet on my roof. One of Gar Thoris's little jokes, I guess. Kind of fun, though, and really really small; use the magnifying glass to read it.

—Bobaq Jai