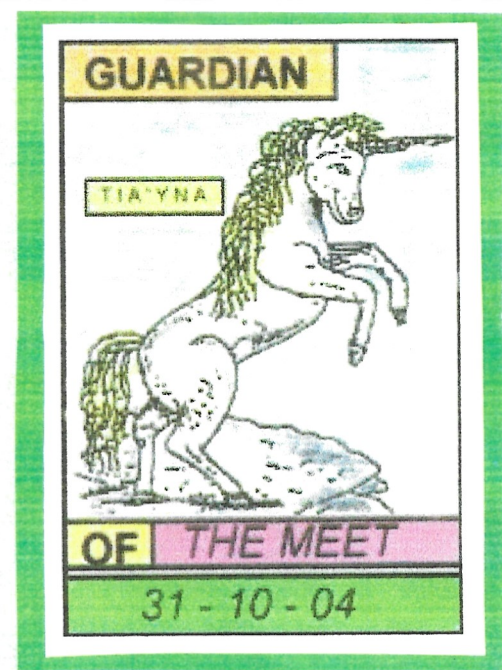


TIA'YNA



Right!! That's the last gully, past that, round the bend, the beacon one hundred canti beyond the bend, then follow Yallow lake downstream to the healer buildings, not far now thank goodness, Oh lak!!!!. A miserable journey in thick mist just got a lot worse, she wasn't where she was supposed to be, there was no sign of the beacon and right in front of her was a big feather bed disappearing in the mist everywhere she looked, in fact the ground under her didn't feel very solid.

Moving very carefully she backed up to solid ground, she knew losing her footing and getting filthy in that muck wouldn't hurt her, but it wouldn't do her passenger any good. How was Kilay anyway? Craning her neck round, she lifted the cover and peered into the carry basket where Kilay was still curled up asleep. The babies weren't, though, Tia'yna wondered how on earth Kilay could go on sleeping when it looked as though there was a wrestling contest going on inside her passenger. She winced as a strong kick showed through Kilay's flank.

The healers had insisted that the Kercat mother-to-be come into hospital for the birth of her babies, she would not be able to give birth without help, the way her bones had healed saw to that, she was lucky to be alive at all and even luckier to have gotten pregnant. The stubbornness that had helped her survive getting trapped in a landslide was working against her now though, she had refused to travel until now, and that was why she was in a carry basket on Tia'yna's back and lost on Dartmoor in a thick cold wet mist. Tia'yna carefully clipped the cover back on the carry basket and turned to the other basket, got hold of the comset and the

Beacon navigator, tried to pull the cover back over and dropped the comset in the pool of water by her front hooves. Gritting her teeth Ti'yna fished the comset out of the water and switched it on, nothing, no signal and a dead screen. Oh just great, now she would not be able to tell central what had happened and she was going to be late getting in and she could look forward to a lecture about being careful with delicate equipment.

Stuffing the comset back into the basket and holding the BNS very carefully, she switched that on and waited for the screen to light up. It flickered and then came up steady, she entered the Moor Plaque beacon's name, Great Mis Tor and waited for the information to show up, okay it was West South West and 800 canti away, so she had to be on the North Eastern edge of Great Mis mire, how on earth had she managed that ? never mind it wasn't important, right now she had to decide on the safest and fastest way to get them both out of the wet and cold. Not for the first time she felt grateful to have the MPB's in place and felt sorry for the human's who did not know why they were there and had no way to tune into the signals they generated

Let's see if she went south of east over black dunghill heading for the Beardown MPB she would bump into that belt of trees running North South above the river and that would guide her South to the main East West track and then West to central, it wasn't the fastest route, but it was the safest because it would swing her around the mire and she did not want to take any chances with Kilay's safety. She entered the MPB's name information and turned to follow the arrow moving in a steady trot in the right direction, she hoped!!!