

# The Barrowmaze

## Session 54 30-01-25 Milborne and beyond

Next Session 06/02/25 18.45

Saturday the 14th day of Setherius, 15:00, Camped near the Cutter Brook ford.

Piling the dead across the road from the camp and setting poor Morris' body apart from the bandits, The Hammers take care of the wounded and arrange the camp to their liking. They notice that Felicity was very concerned about her spellbook which is fortunately unharmed... so it seems Felicity is a Magic User, she did mention casting a Magic Missile they recall. Leo and Fenella ride off and scout around the brook and the edge of the forest, spotting a flock of sheep far off in the distance to the east and observing the waterlogged land to the south, the so-called New Mire, noting some boarded-up farm buildings to the southeast. Returning to the camp they build a decent fire and arranging watches they spend a quiet night.

Sunday the 15th day of Setherius, 08:00, Cutter Brook ford

The next day they rise at first light with about 12 miles further to go to Milborne. Nathan is now conscious and very pleased to thank The Hammers for their rescue. Nathan explains that they are a company of couriers delivering a chest of magical components to a wizard named Tauster in Thurmaster. Nathan recounts the ambush, pointing out that the big blonde-haired guy who seemed to be the leader of the bandits shouted, "get the caster, get the girl, kill the others" and that's the last thing he remembers, fighting furiously to get to his sister as she was brutally beaten. Felicity visibly flinches at the memory and you recall she suffered nightmares during the night.

Discussing what to do regarding the bodies they decide to cover them with foliage and inform the authorities at Milborne who can arrange collection for possible identification and disposal. They are ready to travel by 09:00 in the morning and with a bit of doubling up on horses they cross the ford without any problem.

### **Milborne**

Travelling further they reach a crossroads noting a signpost to the south to Harlaton and to the north Milborne which is now visible across the river. Milborne is a large village, with an oddly half-built bridge and quite clearly a shallow ford nearby where road leads. It occurs to you that if there are freight barges travelling up and down this river as you have been told, they will have difficulty crossing this shallow ford and this is when you notice the water mill across the river and the intricate winching mechanism hooked up to it. Arnd informs you that this sort of gear would be perfectly adequate to haul cargo barges over the ford. They cross the ford without any problem and arrive in Milborne proper at 13:00.

Listening to their stomachs they realise they would like to find some food and noticing The Silver Crown Inn nearby begin to head in that direction until, with a start, Gerald remembers that they have a crime to report, responsibilities to enact and all of that Lawful Goodness to do. Gerald hails a passing villager and is directed to Garyld the constable, who also happens to be the village carpenter. They are also warned off the Silver Crown and recommended to visit The Baron of Mutton on the other side of town if they plan to stay the night. Almost as if on cue, a man is hurled through the saloon doors of The Silver Crown landing outside and crawling off muttering drunkenly to himself. From their brief glance inside it seems to be the sort of spit and sawdust place that they wouldn't usually want to bother with.

### **Garyld, The Constable of Milborne**

They head to Garyld's workshop to report the bandit attack. Garyld is a sturdy strong fellow of about 50 years with a mop of unruly dark hair who greets you warmly, welcoming "The good Sir Knight and party". The Hammers briefly describe the bandit attack and Garyld is immediately all business, beckoning them inside and offering tea. Sipping their tea, both The Hammers and the Shorts describe the incident while Garyld takes copious notes.

Garyld arranges collection of the bodies and explains that since there are no survivors there will be no enactment of further justice. The bodies will be reviewed for known villains and scoundrels and then burned. The guard Morris' body will receive St Ygg's blessing with a small ceremony and his body will be cremated with honour with the priest in attendance.

For future reference Garyld explains that should they capture any prisoners that justice would be swiftly administered. Darius Carman, the magistrate would review the evidence presented and if a major crime such as murder had been committed the murderers would be hanged the very next day. For crimes such as Banditry and assault, short of actual murder the criminals would likely serve hard time in the mines for at least 4 years. Garyld, a kind man, acknowledges that the justice is severe but it is the law and keeps these lands mostly peaceful.

He goes on to further confirm a few recent bandit attacks where the regular Ironguard Motte guards and local militia have not been able to locate the perpetrators. To his knowledge it has happened twice in the last month and he's not happy about it but realises that the wheel of fate sometimes turns in the favour of the wicked and they can't get 'em all but still, it is a bit unusual. Garyld explains that he also has the power to raise a local muster if necessary and directly pursue any wrongdoers but his role is really to provide law to Milborne and not go running around the countryside leaving Milborne unpoliced.

Leo mentions the rising water level in the area known as The New Mire, and Garyld says, yes he's heard about it and it seems to be getting quite bad. He explains that it has only been a problem in the last couple of years and is getting bad enough to cause farms to be abandoned. He's not aware of anything in particular that could be causing it.

They raise the subject of the half-finished bridge and Garyld explains it was a failed business venture started about four years ago and he doesn't know exactly what happened but the common knowledge is they ran out of money. Fortunately the ford is very usable.

### **Discussions at The Baron of Mutton**

They stable their horses at The Baron of Mutton, meeting Andren, one of the twin brothers who run the inn. There is a rougher part and a smarter part of the inn and they are offered bedrooms with two beds each in the smarter part for 9 sp per night per room. For an extra 2 sp they can have a bath too. So for a total of 12 sp per night per room plus stabling 15 sp per room per night. The Shorts arrange their own rooms and you notice they are anxious to talk to you.

Late lunch/early dinner is brought to the hungry Hammers and they sate themselves with the hearty fare of The Baron of Mutton. Eating with them, Nathan Short explains that Felicity is traumatised by recent events and he'd like to take his sister back to Ironguard Motte, so he asks if the Hammers would take on the contract to deliver the chest to Tauster in Thurmaster. Leo seems to be bothered about the contents of the delivery and about the situation in general. He raises doubts over Nathan and Guard Sven's ability to guard Felicity on a return journey to Ironguard Motte to which Nathan opines that they could quite easily travel with one of the trade wagons plus both himself and Sven are decent fighters and they would no longer have any interesting cargo, in any event he is certain the best place for her now is Ironguard Motte. Nathan further explains that the consignment is a wizard locked chest containing magical supplies and they can have the full value of the contract on delivery if they so wish. He is just concerned for his sister and would like to get her back to the city.

Leo accuses Nathan of hiring mercenaries to do his own work and insists that he be more forthcoming but with a hurt look, Nathan says he is being forthcoming, he has told them everything. He says he thought they were the sort of people who helped and that's why he was asking. Leo keeps pressing him on the nature of the cargo and Nathan keeps replying that it is a sealed chest of wizard magical items from the magical supplies dealer Gordrenn, they have delivered things for him before, he says, appealing to the other Hammers.

Nathan and Felicity leave to get some air and the Hammers discuss. Both Gerald and Fenella think the story is legitimate and indeed carrying the chest enroute to Thurmaster might be a good way to lure any bandits out into the open. Leo explains that he was just pressuring them to see how their story held up. Calling Nathan back they agree to take on the consignment to Thurmaster. The delivery is 480 gp plus 5 gp per person for any expenses. He hands over the documentation. Leo thinks it would be fair to arrange a more equitable split of the proceeds and they arrange this for a future meeting with the Shorts. Nathan asks them to drop by Short and Short in Ironguard Motte when they can and they can square up their mutual accounts.

### **Sightseeing in Milborne**

Gerald goes to visit the temple as Leo attempts to visit the Carman Manor but the Knight is politely refused entry by the servants. Magistrate Carman isn't taking appointments currently which somewhat irritates Sir Leo who leaves, grumbling to himself. At the temple Gerald finds a pretty set of gardens and a charming church. It appears to be deserted so Gerald takes the opportunity to pray at the shrine and is favourably impressed by the experience. A very pleasant house of St Ygg here in Milborne. On his way out he bumps into an earnest young priest who seems quite curious about Gerald. Gerald explains a little of his circumstances and recognition appears on the young priest's face, "ah, Gerald... The Paladin". He goes on to state quite firmly, "Well I am the Priest here, The Priest of St Ygg in fact... this is my church." Gerald kindly offers his laying on of hands should anyone need such a thing during the course of his stay. The priest who introduces himself as Semheis and seems quite put out by Gerald's reputation and obviously sees the arrival of a holy warrior of St Ygg as some sort of intrusion upon his turf but they part on reasonable terms with the priest perking up a little as Gerald announces the party's intention to leave the following morning.

Leo and Arnd go for a wander around the water mill area where some of the locals describe the operation of the winching gear. Arnd confirms that it is well-constructed, "they musta learned it from Dwarves," he states with conviction. They also examine the bridge concluding that since they have already managed to build the stone stanchion in the centre then they have completed over half of the work. Arnd confirms that it's well built in his opinion, no doubt they were also instructed by Dwarves. They go to examine the ford and Arnd concludes that the ford looks like it has been artificially enhanced by boulders placed further upstream, instead of dredging it a bit and using a completed bridge. They wonder about the situation where the ford seems to be in use and the bridge stands abandoned.

On their way back to the Inn they visit the boathouse and workshop of Capella. She is a craftswoman and boatwright plus she also makes art pieces from pieces of wood or stone that catch her eye. The pieces are mostly abstract but it is clear she is skilled and has an artist's eye. She greets them pleasantly as she goes about her work. She mentions that she is friends with Garyld who also supplies timber. They ask about the bridge again and get the usual information from her. She points out that taxes are subsidised by the ford and winch tolls and the Carmans are very fair with taxation. Fenella wanders along to continue to press Capella about the bridge but nothing new is forthcoming although Capella is pleased to chat with them, "after all, it's politics and I wouldn't know anything about that."

Leo shows some interest in one of her attractive wooden sculptures and she asks if he would be interested in her piece, *The energy of the river as it finds its way through the land?* She informs the Knight that it is available for 10 gp should he wish to buy it. Leo offers her 1 gp and a round of haggling begins as Leo offers 2 gp, Capella counters with 4 gp with finally Leo, leaning on his impressive charisma convinces her with perfect charm to settle for 3 gp. She packs it up carefully for him, smiling as she hands it over.

They pass by Carman's Smithy and introduce themselves to the two smiths who are packing up shop, one of them a veritable giant of a man. The smiths explain that they don't usually work on armour, mostly casting and tooling heavier gear. Returning to the Inn, they spending a quiet and restful night.

Monday the 16th day of Setherius, 07:00, Milborne

They notice the Shorts are about to leave for Ironguard Motte. After handing the documents to The Hammers the young entrepreneur-adventurers depart to the west as The Hammers depart to the east, noticing a river barge languidly gliding up the river towards Milborne.

They continue along the river following a good track on the northern bank, travelling for just over half the day before spying a farm ahead of them on the northern bank with a farmhouse quite close to the river. A sign announces The Kuiper Farm and Ferry crossing for 10 sp. You notice there are several small boats tied up at a jetty and a large flat-bottomed skiff, which you take to be the ferry.

### **Kuiper's Farm**

Outside, a handsome, muscled man is chopping wood and noticing you he secures his axe and walks over, his hand extended in greeting, introducing himself as Kuiper, the owner of this farm. Making a greeting to "Sir Knight and party" as is so often the case, they pass some pleasantries. He asks if they've come from Milborne and when they affirm this he asks if they have seen his friend Jelenneth who has been visiting her parents in Milborne. He describes a dark-haired young woman who serves as apprentice to the wizard Tauster in Thurmaster. Kuiper tells them he knows she went to Milborne because she visited a week ago on her journey to Milborne and spoke of returning after a week of holiday.

They recount their recent adventure rescuing the Shorts from the bandit attack and tell him about the attack being focussed upon any spell casters in the group and the attempt to kidnap Felicity. Kuiper is now clearly worried, she should be here by now and he is concerned about the attack on a Magic User. He asks The Hammers if they can perhaps help him with a search, pointing out that on the other side of the river near the tributary river, Hog Brook is a place where good herbs can be found, particularly useful for Magic Users such as Jelenneth. He wonders if perhaps she travelled up using the south bank intending to use the ferry to cross to his farm. He mentions there is a bell on the south side to summon the ferry from the north bank. In fact she has done this before on a previous visit so he wouldn't be surprised if she was in the forest now searching for herbs but since they have recounted their bandit story, he is concerned for his friend, "we grew up together," he explains. Would the party mind accompanying him on a search in the forest?

The Hammers agree to help him search. He heads inside to quickly wash and equip his armour and weapons. As Kuiper disappears Leo is suspicious but Gerald attempts to assuage his worries explaining that if this fellow is a bandit and he's leading them into a trap, that's pretty much doing their bandit seeking work for them. They continue their discussion as they await Kuiper.

Monday the 16th day of Setherius, 16:00, Kuiper's Farm