

# The Barrowmaze

## Session 73 21-07-25 Betrayal

Next Session 28-07-25 19.00

Wednesday the 22nd day of Vadrius 13:00, The Northeast Spiral Staircase Room

They stand at the top of the spiral stairs as Gerald briefs them on his reconnaissance.

Gerald knows he has left areas behind him unchecked but he still feels he wants to pursue the bandits before they escape and he's sure Jelenneth would agree, to which she nods enthusiastically, whispering, "spellbook, yes!" Sir Leo is also of the same opinion, "let's get them quickly" and Fenella speaks up in agreement, "I'm for the chasing."

Gerald leads them to the room below. On his second peek into the corridor, he confirms that the light seems to be unnatural here, it's as if there is some sort of background illumination in the corridor area in addition to the brighter glow from the "archway". The join him in the corridor making sure that Jelenneth is in the middle and well protected, despite her wondering if she wouldn't be better at the back. Fenella explains that enemies can come from behind too.

Gerald and Leo lead on and as their line of sight into the room to the south improves, Leo can see what appears to be a rudimentary altar with a skull and a statuette of their old "friend" from The Barrowmaze, Nergal, the vanquished lord of death. "Ahhh death cult," sighs Gerald, rolling his eyes at the thought of the futility of death worship. Leo tries to remember some details about Nergal but can't quite put his finger on it but fortunately Fenella's memory is up to the task and she briefly whispers that Nergal was apparently the Lord of Death until his two feuding sons Orcus and Set overthrew him. As far they know, the Pit of Chaos was a Nergal project that they destroyed. That's the story anyway, and it's about as much as even Bella knew on the subject.

Gerald wants to quickly open the door to the north before moving onto the altar room but the door is locked. Gerald says, "we can smash it or go on to the altar room." The others agree that the altar room is their next priority. Remembering good dungeoneering practice Leo prods the flagstones ahead of him with his sword, checking for traps, "as Arnd taught me," he reminisces.

As Gerald and Leo step into the room, they see three figures in armour and priestly attire, hidden from the view of the corridor, in the northwest, northeast and southeast corners of the room.

Fenella, Jelenneth, Morgaine and Phineas, out in the corridor, see a group of figures step into view from around the corner at the far western end of the corridor, quickly forming into some kind of formation allowing each to have a sightline.

Fenella makes a snap judgement and decides not to cast a spell.

At the western end of the corridor, a Priest in robes and armour gestures and quickly casts a spell which strikes Fenella and she feels the wash of magic across her but the Druid shrugs off the power of the spell. Ninety feet away down the corridor, the Priest frowns his disapproval at this display of resistance.

Meanwhile inside the chapel of Nergal, the Acolyte in the northwest corner casts a spell at Gerald and he suddenly becomes blinded by the Light spell cast onto his eyes.

The archers at the western end of the corridor draw their bows but do not loose their shots.

Morgaine gets off a crossbow shot at the enemy Priest who is clearly in view. The crossbow bolt flies and thuds into the Priest, spurting blood as he staggers back in surprise, grunting in pain but his group of bows and swords at the end of the corridor seem to be instructed to remain on standby, holding their fire for now.

Blinded, Gerald stands and listens, as he shouts to Leo that he cannot see. Feeling the wall behind him and remembering the location of the Acolyte that cast the spell on him, he shuffles quickly down the wall to where he thinks the priest should be and swings a blind attack with his sword, unfortunately missing as she moves to avoid his attack.

The Acolyte in the northeast casts a spell at Leo who resists the effect, whatever it was, as he charges to the Acolyte that blinded Gerald in the northwest corner. Swinging mightily, he slashes through the priest's armour like it was paper, spurring blood across the room as he kills her in a single blow. Unfortunately for Leo his hope that the spell affecting Gerald would now be dispelled is proven wrong since the Light spell has a fixed duration and doesn't require the Priest's concentration or indeed their living presence to function.

### **A Treacherous Surprise**

At this point the Mage who is supposed to have been drained of spells and with no spellbook to recover them from, casts a spell on Fenella. Trusted, protected and in an ideal position for her treachery, Jelenneth's Light spell hits Fenella and blinds her in shining light. Her perfidy completed, Jelenneth runs along the corridor to meet up with the Priest and his group at the western end of the corridor. Fenella utters a stream of foul curses in Druidic and realising the helplessness of her position, moves to Phineas and Morgaine, the two guards quickly guiding her safely behind them.

The final Acolyte in the altar room casts a spell at Leo and he is overcome by the Hold Person spell and paralysed on the spot as Phineas fires his crossbow at the Priest leader but misses.

The Priest looks down and gripping the crossbow bolt firmly in his fist, yanks it out with a scowl of pain. He drops the bolt and casts CLW on himself, completely healing his wound. Half smiling, almost apologetically, he looks back down the corridor at them as his wounds disappear, "touché," he whispers.

In the main corridor, Jelenneth saunters a few steps down the corridor and leans against the wall as she eyes up Phineas and Morgaine. She seems to have gained in height and demeanour as she sheds the role she was playing from a nervous and sneaky girl into a very confident woman, somehow of greater stature than before.

"Morgaine, Phineas, I suggest you drop your weapons, nobody wishes to hurt you and if you surrender you will be treated reasonably." They notice that there is now no trace of a Haranshire accent, the Jelenneth they and Haranshire had known, is apparently a fabrication. She speaks clearly and with authority, the rest of the attackers paying her heed and waiting on her word.

Phineas, regarding her from down his crossbow sights can only think, "my gods, she's hot!"

Morgaine, meeting Jelenneth's steady, commanding gaze feels the aggression piling up inside her. This arrogant girl commanding her and betraying her friends, no fucking way! "Fuck you girl!" she yells, "for now I let you live, I go into this room with my friends," she bellows, carefully leading Fenella as she hisses to Phineas, "stop the hard on man, come into this room, now!"

Morgaine leads Fenella to the altar room, urging Phineas to follow as the Priest of Nergal, with a dismissive wave of his hand, casts a spell, overwhelming Morgaine's resistance as Light streams from her defiant eyes.

### **Phineas, Last Man Standing**

Phineas hears a soft boot step of a man moving out of the shadows behind him; a flamboyant dark-skinned fellow, lazily flourishing a rapier, who introduces himself as Hakhan. He regards Phineas with a reasonable look and says, "honestly I wouldn't do anything fighty old boy, you have lost this one but you can always live to fight another day, eh? ... So just drop your weapons and put your hands behind your back." Phineas, as an experienced mercenary, sees the impossibility of the situation and does as he is asked. "Good lad, very reasonable," the bandit replies. He tries the same thing with the blinded Gerald who tells him where he can stick his surrender, so he has one of his people cosh the Paladin from stealth. He calls out, "Jelenneth, situation secure, no further threat." Calling back along the corridor, Jelenneth congratulates him, "well done Hakhan, I knew we could rely on you."

## Jelenneth and Leo

The Hammers, apart from Leo, are led off with warnings to take care with "The Witch" and their weapons, armour and items are removed from them. They are not treated roughly but their captors do not discuss anything with them and they are swiftly led off through winding passages and stairs to cells where they are imprisoned, passing Jelenneth and the Priest leader, who she refers to by name as Ranchefus as they confer agreeably.

After a while Jelenneth wanders into the altar room where Leo stands paralysed. Approaching him she smiles affectionately and gazes at him directly in the eye, examining him carefully and stepping back to admire the now de-armoured Knight. "Mmmmmm, very nice she murmurs as she gestures and mutters something, flourishing her fingers at him. Leo fails to resist Jelenneth's Charm Person spell and suddenly, regardless of the current circumstances, realises just quite how beautiful and utterly compelling this woman is. Everything she has achieved and her brilliance in maintaining her role, she is completely astounding, he has never met anyone like her before.

Jelenneth looks deep into Leo's eyes and with a keen understanding, nods slowly in satisfaction. **(Charm Person – 7 days until next save against - NOBODY ELSE KNOWS THIS)**

Jelenneth gently fits shackles around Leo's wrists, "just for your own protection for a short while, trust me dear, you'll be fine."

Closely examining his still paralysed body she runs her hand over his chest, slipping it inside his shirt and gliding over his powerful chest muscles and biceps, giving them a covetous squeeze. "Mmmmmm, every bit as lovely as they look," she whispers. With the Knight in a semi-embrace, she toys with his hair and softly strokes his neck, dropping her cloak to better enjoy the touch of his body against her bare arms. With irritation, she notices the wound designs carved into her forearms and with a casual Dispel Magic removes the illusion, causing them to disappear completely. Smiling in satisfaction, Jelenneth returns her full attention to Leo, softly whispering her truth into his ear and reinforcing her hold over him.

She explains that she is Leo's most important ally and friend and that she can tell him the truth regarding the current situation. She is in negotiation with two dangerous factions both led by powerful leaders, Ranchefus of the followers of Nergal and Hakhan the bandit captain. "Both parties outnumber us, darling... so we have to take care to behave exactly as they believe things to be. You see, they must be sure that you are my prisoner and your friends must also believe that you are exactly the same as they are, a captured hero, loyal to your comrades and just the same fellow as you were before I explained things to you, but most importantly Leo, my dearest, you must attend to me and my wishes and trust me that I will arrange all for our benefit. We have a very bright future together my Knight," she sighs softly in satisfaction.

"So, Sir Leo, just play along with your role as a captured hero, especially to your friends when you meet them. And remember, we must work with these people for a certain amount of time... you can trust me Leo, I will take care of everything, remember that... remember it, trust me... I will take care of everything," her soothing, soft voice whispers deeply into Leo's consciousness and Leo believes her. **(CHA reinforcement of Charm Person Spell - NOBODY ELSE KNOWS THIS)**

## Fenella and Gerald

By touch, Fenella discovers that she has been imprisoned in a small 10 x 15 ft cell with Gerald who she attempts to care for as he slowly returns to consciousness. They explore the small cell by touch until their sight eventually returns. Fenella explains to Gerald how Jelenneth betrayed them and ran off to the other side; it was a trap she concludes but it just doesn't make sense, why are we here, after all Jelenneth went missing too, why is this happening?

They are visited by the Bandit Captain, Hakhan. He says he dropped by to see if they were concerned about their friends but apparently Gerald is so consumed by rage that he is unable to think about anyone else, in any event they have not been harmed and will be treated reasonably as prisoners. "After all, we do have to look after you, don't we Fenella?" he says cryptically as he slides the view plate back into place and leaves.

## **Jelenneth and Leo - Part Deux**

Leo is led off to a nice room, albeit still with a guard, "a servant for you, dear," explains Jelenneth. His wrists are loosely secured in front of him with shackles and a foot long chain between them and as he comes out of the paralysis. Jelenneth says she is looking forward to their dinner later... "We can dine very well on the bandit's takings," she explains, smiling fondly at Leo. He notices she is now dressed in fine silk and her lovely dark hair is brushed and arranged with simple elegance. She is a stunningly beautiful and brilliant woman he thinks and he's so glad she is his friend and if he dares to believe it, maybe more.

Seated upon a comfortable divan together, they chat pleasantly, sipping an excellent Ahlissian wine. Jelenneth explains, Ranchefus and his religious lunatics, they're a bunch of nutters, I've kind of got him under my thumb a bit but we've got to be careful. I have some control over him but he is strong in body and will so I must be wary. There is something I need here Leo, beneath the caves, Ranchefus has his own ideas about it but we shall see.

Leo asks about the wrist shackles, and she says not to go on about it too much, Ranchefus' guards are around and this is for show, remember, you're a dangerous prisoner, as she winks conspiratorially at Leo. She tells him a little about Hakhan and the group of bandits, yes, they are the group that has been preying on Haranshire, "but let's just say they... came under my influence." She smiles fondly at Leo, "there's a bit of an uneasy truce between the nutters and the more practical side of banditry and magical research, just keep that in your beautiful, noble head my dear and take care of your Jelenneth and all will be well."

Wednesday the 22nd day of Vadrius 18:00, Various cells and rooms beneath Broken Spire Manor