

The Incandescent Grottoes

Session 6 3-8-23 Why won't you Die!?!

Next Session 10-8-23

Observing the neatly piled, tattooed body parts and of course wondering if anything valuable might be concealed beneath becomes too much for Fenella's curiosity so she carefully removes the legs, arms, heads and finally the torso, revealing that there isn't anything concealed inside the coffer. Oh well, maybe beneath the next pile of dismembered limbs she thinks. Exiting the room they examine the next northern door in the corridor, the one with the sound of running water in the distance. Opening the door reveals a corridor of 30 ft or so, also of the same crumbling sandstone. Following the corridor they emerge into an open cavern with a white sand beach bordering an underground lake. The walls of the cavern are covered in a glistening black fungus with long dangling fronds and the cavern is filled with a light mist that obscures the view for more than 20 - 30 ft. There is a collapsed stone bridge leading to the far side of the water. The entire area glows with a dull pearlescent radiance.

Angus enters the cavern and wanders over to the collapsed bridge. From the entrance Fenella notices that the shore on the far side of the water is dressed stone, standing about 2 ft higher than the water level. Angus looks into the water where he sees the bottom, about 3 - 5 ft below the surface and notices the stream flowing at a moderate rate left to right in front of him. He spots some engraved text on one of the blue algae covered bridge posts and pauses to read... "She Who Adored the Faceless One". Wandering back after a cursory glance around he re-joins the group and they decide to leave the beach and return to the corridor to explore the remaining exits.

Vlad opens the next northern door and sees that the construction in this familiar type of rectangular room has degraded significantly with piles of sandstone rubble and cracked paving slabs visible. Entering, he disturbs the delicately balanced tension in the partially collapsed structure causing a large portion of the ceiling to crash down heavily upon him, knocking him to the ground and causing some significant injuries. He painfully extracts himself from the rubble and tries not to bleed too profusely as he quaffs his healing potion for disappointingly little effect. Hmm, should they search the room? They consider it quite seriously but opt instead to try the last remaining door to the south.

The Coffin Corpse

Angus opens the door and they are unsurprised to see a fastidiously clean rectangular room with a stone coffer within. As they approach the coffer, Angus takes the lead and heaves off the lid to find a mummified skeletal corpse wearing a silver crown. Suddenly the eyes light up with a bright green glow as the thing rises, grabbing at Angus's throat, squeezing malevolently tighter and tighter. Fenella stabs at it but misses as Angus smashes his sword down on one of the bony arms, sending splinters flying. Reme also misses but Vlad connects and more splinters of bone fly off the thing as a terrible dread descends upon them causing abject fear and terror in Vlad, Fenella and Angus, leaving only Reme unaffected by the creature's baleful influence.

Fleeing as if all the pits of hell itself were at their heels Fenella and Vlad burst from the room and sprint off up the stairs as Angus struggles wildly in the ghastly thing's death grip, squeezing ever tighter. Flailing around in terror with his shortsword he manages another strike as a stoical and mostly unafraid Reme swings and misses again. Choking to death Angus slams his sword down yet again, shattering the bones and dropping the creature back into the coffer apparently lifeless. Staggering back gasping for breath Angus and Reme are both horrified to see the thing's eye sockets light up again as it draws itself up, apparently intact, its gaping skull grinning obscenely. Beating a hasty retreat with Angus wheezing at Reme, "to me!" and with the skeletal monstrosity lurching after them they make it halfway up the stairs before encountering Fenella and Vlad hurrying back down, now free of the terrors. Forming up their battle line they take on the seemingly unbeatable horror with the advantage of the higher ground! A rain of blows crash down upon the thing, apparently splintering and damaging it badly as it lunges and grasps for the brave adventurers but it is the magical sword of Sir Chyde, that causes the real damage as swinging mightily Vlad connects, adding to the magical damage he has already inflicted, shattering it into bony pieces! This time, the remains... remain.

Exhausted by the terrible fight they rest a moment on the stair keeping a wary eye out as Fenella pokes around in the remains with the end of her spear to find the silver crown which she imagines might be a very valuable piece... portable too, she thinks as she tucks it into her backpack. Battered, bruised and becoming rather hungry they depart the grottoes and trek back to the forestry camp arriving as the light is fading, to the warm fire and good fellowship of the forestry workers.

Spending two nights at the forestry camp (and 2 gp per head per night) they rest up and with the aid of the camp cleric's healing spells they recover fully by first thing in the morning. Returning along the track to the grottoes they muse upon the latest rumour from the camp...

"A ruined accursed temple filled with great treasure lies in the caves."

... before making their way back to the top of the stairway where they defeated the Coffer Corpse. After a re-search of the corridor below they conclude that there is nothing more to find in this area and turn their attention to the heavy wooden door at the top of the stairs to the west. Trying the handle Vlad finds it opens easily revealing a large rectangular room about the size of the previously explored mushroom grotto. It is constructed of the familiar dark pockmarked stone with rainbow-hued patches of mould adorning the walls. Creamy-white, moon-like puffballs float at the ceiling, bumping gently, with dangling mycelia hanging down. The room glows dully with same dim illumination typical of the dark stone areas. Angus warns against touching any of these inviting fronds... adventurer's caution don't ye know.

They notice an open exit to the south which connects to the eyes statue room as expected however the double doors on the northern wall are somewhat different, made of a grey sandstone, each one engraved with a two foot wide representation of a three-pupiled eye. Opening the doors releases a putrid stench into the room, a vile stink of rotting fish. Overcoming the urge to vomit they note the small square antechamber, a second set of doors also on the north wall and the sound of water flowing in the distance. The doors feature a closed eye motif carved into them which they briefly inspect but keen to avoid the stench they quickly open the doors and proceed into a wide corridor.

The air is a bit clearer here but still the unpleasant fishy odour wafts from the west where there is a chasm with the sound of rushing water clearly audible. The 10 ft wide corridor continues in both directions featuring faded murals on the walls, the one in front of the party featuring a naked, smooth-skinned, beardless man depicted walking to the east. Deciding against the smelly western chasm they head east, noting the series of murals continuing to show the gradual dissolution of the walking man into a smoother and more shapeless entity, climaxing in an image of a shining blob of ooze as the corridor ends with a 10 ft wide open entrance into a large 15 x 30 ft room featuring 3 statues of various oozes on the north wall (dripping - pink, mounded - green, tentacled - blue). To the south stands an imposing pair of 12 ft high double doors made of a glittering black material, obsidian perhaps, with heavy brass ring handles. The doors are flanked by two statues of 10 ft tall skeletons with swords, standing at attention. There is an inscription carved above the doors. As they cross the threshold they notice it is chillingly cold here.