

The Incandescent Grottoes

Session 9 24-8-23 A Dragon!

Next Session 28-8-23

In world time 09:30

Shadwell, their newly recruited torchbearer and handy-hench has joined the party at the forestry camp.

Blinking away the afterimages from the flash of presumably magical light, the adventurers head into the now-revealed corridor. They soon emerge into a surprising sight. Located in a now familiar crystal chamber is a sumptuous feast set upon an ornate table, which stands upon a beautiful deep pile rug. To the side is a luxurious bed, bedecked with silken sheets, fine woollen blankets and feather pillows. The whole place exudes comfort, luxury and fine living. The crystals here emit a beautiful rainbow light that strikes a counterpoint to another source of soft light, an ornate lamp hanging from a slender chain above the heavily laden table.

Getting over their surprise at the odd scene, they carefully search the room, avoiding the tempting repast laid on the table. Vlad looks under the rug as Angus searches beneath the bed but the "looking under" doesn't reveal anything and there don't appear to be any hidden or concealed doors or compartments. The chamber has two open passageway exits to the west and they choose the northernmost to explore next. They follow a 20 ft long corridor which emerges into another rainbow-hued crystal grotto, where a short, plump, middle-aged woman, dressed in fine brightly coloured robes is in the process of rising, with the assistance of her orange prism-topped staff, from a kneeling position to greet them.

Marjoram Gryver

She introduces herself in a plummy accent replete with fruity vowels as Marjoram Gryver, an Imperial Prismist of the 2nd Order. She comments that she wondered if they would make it down to here since she's been keeping an eye on them now and again for a while now. Again, containing their surprise at this unlikely encounter in an underground cavern populated by various dangerous creatures, the party take in their surroundings as Marjoram busies herself preparing tea.

The hall is similar in size to the previous one and is also covered in attractive rainbow-hued crystals but the predominant light emanates from a brightly glowing pebble, providing a good clear illumination for reading. There is a large black circular rug on the floor with an object, about 2 ft tall, standing in the centre, also draped in black velvet. Strewn around the rug are many weighty tomes and notebooks, all bearing many bookmarks and scribbled notes.

As Angus and Reme enjoy their perfectly harmless tea, they introduce themselves and chat with Marjoram who seems to be reasonably friendly yet rather guarded and certainly not willing to share her life story with a group of adventuring plunderers or indeed sell them any supplies or items. They do however get the impression that she's quite pleased to have at least a semi-civilised chat over a cuppa although any requests for her to accompany them are politely but firmly turned down. Her research takes all of her efforts, she explains, indicating the piles of books and notes and gazing a little ruefully at the black draped object in the centre of the rug.

Vlad asks if she knows anything about a water dragon, a rumour they had heard at the forestry camp and she informs them that there is some sort of big creature that lairs to the south which has the habit of banging around the place. She imagines that whatever it is must be none too happy to have its movement restricted since she's taken care to "cordon off" this area but she really isn't interested or indeed bothered by it.

Fenella kindly asks if there's anything that they could fetch or uncover to assist her, causing Marjoram to smile appreciatively as if congratulating Fenella's parents on an upbringing well done. She mentions that unusual crystals can be of interest but the trick is actually recognising said crystals of interest but she thanks Fenella for her kindness in offering. She seems to have made her mind up about them and now offers to allow them to pass to the south to explore further but warns them on their return to stand in the cave and call out, "Hello Marjoram" and wait until she tells them it's safe to cross. She accompanies them back into the bedroom/dining room and as they pass through the corridor they hear a distinct "ting" sound behind them as presumably Marjoram's "cordon" goes back up to the sound of a muffled, "cheeribye" in the distance.

Passing through a smaller crystal grotto they follow the only exit to the south and via a short passageway arrive in a larger 50 ft diameter chamber of familiar looking crystals featuring a steaming yellow / orange mineral pool in the centre. A dark shaft disappears up into the ceiling to the northwest and exits are visible to the east and the south. Looking up into the shaft, they see it is dark and reeks of rancid rotten fish whereas the rest of the chamber has a pleasant mineral odour. The pool emits a languid prismatic steam and a robust mineral bath scent, it looks quite inviting so Angus wonders about taking a quick dip but decides to leave it until later. Heading south they notice the sound of running water and see another beach through the eastern exit so they decide to look at this first.

The beach is of a similar white crystalline sand as the others they have seen and standing at the northern end they can see the island and the beached boat further downstream. There are clear tracks of a heavy bodied creature and a large claw print 18 inches across. Angus wonders if it's any creature he would recognise, leading Vlad to quip, "might be your mother" to the usual amusement of all. Above them is a rift leading up to an area that emits a faint dull light similar to that which they have seen in the ooze cult areas. Again, Angus wonders about pausing here, considering climbing up the fissure but they decide to press on to the south instead.

Bloody hell, a Dragon!

Back in the spa room they move south into a large rectangular crystalline chamber where a more pressing concern reveals itself in the form of a 15 ft long crystal-studded wyrm-like creature hissing, fuming and crouching menacingly, a sound of inrushing breath indicating to the adventurers that it's time to fight! They raise their weapons and Fenella begins to cast but the dragon is too fast and emits a huge cloud of gas that covers the party causing both Fenella and Shadwell to collapse as Fenella's spell fizzles into the ether. The others however are still on their feet and rush to the attack with Vlad landing a huge blow with the sword of Sir Chyde that rocks the creature back in surprise. Angus swings and misses as Reme strikes and slices another good piece from the writhing incandescent form.

Pressing the attack Vlad swings again but still off balance from his first blow, misses the dragon which seems to be breathing in again. Angus tries to distract the wyrm by poking a glancing blow at its eye as a sleepy Fenella totters in to try to spear it alongside Reme but they both miss as the dragon breathes its cloud of sleeping gas again. This time Vlad and Reme collapse to the ground leaving it up to Angus and Fenella to save the day as the dragon, surprised at the ferocity of their attack and sensing its last chance raises itself to bite and slash at Fenella, wounding the dozy Druid however Angus has finally got his eye in and with fierce vigour plunges his blade deep into the writhing creature killing it instantly. The dragon slowly collapses, wheezing and hissing as still breathing heavily from their exertions, the two of them observe a bizarre humanoid shadow creature emerge from a side chamber, cackling and muttering to itself, seemingly ignoring the adventurers standing and lying around the dragon corpse. It chatters away to itself, "freeeee, ha ha... freee to fly into sleeps and nightmares make... nooo not prisoner ... it deeeaad... fly away... liberteeee heehee" as it floats slowly at first but soon gathers pace, disappearing swiftly through the northern exit and out to the river, its muttering and cackling subsiding behind it. Fenella applies some bandages as they are joined by a yawning Reme, Vlad and Shadwell to recount the strange event.

Worrying slightly whether they should have obstructed this peculiar entity they soon become distracted by the more pressing concern of the hoard of treasure beneath the deceased Dream Dragon. There is a large pile of coins, both silver and gold and various valuable items. They spend some time sorting through it and looking into the side chambers of the lair discovering the following...

3000 sp

7000 gp

3 * bejewelled bracelets in platinum and emerald 900 gp each

a diamond tiara 1,100 gp

a crystal phial containing a clear sparkling liquid - potion of invisibility

2 * light red potions that look, taste and smell just like healing potions - CLW healing potions

Fenella carefully samples the clear potion and as she fades a little from view they conclude that it's a potion of invisibility, think of the fun they could have with that! The potions are distributed, Fenella takes care of the invisibility and one healing potion with Vlad stowing the second heal.

Batching up as many of the gold coins as they can and congratulating themselves for hiring Shadwell's sturdy frame to the group they trudge back to Marjoram's chambers and call out for the Prismist. Within a minute a muffled cry is heard and an audible "ting" as the magical screen lowers. She is much amused by the party's account of their encounter with the Dream Dragon and chuckles appreciatively as you recount your fierce battle with the draconic creature.

Marjoram isn't particularly interested in their haul of loot but agrees to store it for them in her dining and bedroom chamber, which she adjusts, causing the entire contents of the room to shift over as one, in a motion sickness inducing lurch. Taking a few trips to pile up it all up they see that Marjoram has cast an appropriate illusion on their loot which now has the appearance of a chaise longue and some attractive wall hangings. As their Prismist ally returns to her studies the adventurers consider their plans.

In world time 12:40