

The Star Cairns

Session 15 11-10-99 Lava's last stand

Next Session Tuesday 19-10-99 At Alex's

Five days have passed since our intrepid heroes entered the second Star Cairn and we find them examining the treasures of the Red and Blue rooms. Astra has the ring, Andrea the brooch (perhaps on loan from Alvin), and Heme is carrying the chain mail and the breastplate. Columbus notices that there is a large rune on the breastplate although he doesn't know what it signifies. Heme finds the chain mail quite a bit lighter than he would expect it to be but he is rather cautious about trying it on. Zeppo gives it the once over and notes that it would be a better fit for the big guy. Astra airs her theory that any of the objects that sparked or burned as the traps went off have lost their magical powers. She certainly doesn't seem to be much interested in the bracelets anyway. They discuss their next move and it is only Columbus that remembers that there is a secret door that they haven't yet explored however the party seem to have had enough of looking behind secret doors so they head for the surface. Climbing the stairs to the first room they are slightly surprised (although Astra has always been a bit worried about this) to find all of the skeletons arrayed in tightly packed ranks across the hall from west to east, blocking the exit. A single skeleton walks forward and hands them a note. It then returns to its place. The note reads as follows:-

Costs incurred during replacement of animated servant (skeletal) * 1	GP1000.
Costs incurred during repairs to fire damaged animated servant (skeletal) * 1	GP500.
Total	GP1500.

Payment due on departure – Regards Ylleck. Have a nice day.

Columbus tries to pass the skeletons but they form a wall of bones that block his progress. Andrea tries the same to see if her brooch will do anything for her but gets the same result. There is a discussion about whether to try to trick Ylleck into accepting the gold-plated lead bars. Andrea is rather nervous about being overheard and counsels quiet. They decide to sleep up, regain spells and talk about it tomorrow.

They pass the night uneventfully. Alvin wonders why Ylleck wants all of this gold and platinum while Columbus reminds them of the secret door that they haven't yet opened. Andrea and Hemegretham, bored with talking, stride purposefully towards the lava men room. The rest decide to follow which is just as well because it would have been embarrassing for the warriors to arrive at the door with no means of opening it. Alvin and Astra discuss the tactics involved in fighting suspected extra-planar creatures. They brief Andrea and Heme only to attack one lava creature at a time since the Protection from Evil spell is nullified if a creature is attacked. Astra starts up her Unseen Servant spell as Zeppo and Alvin cast Protection from Evil on the Warriors. Columbus, who is to spike the door open figures out that an Endure Heat spell would be a good idea so he casts it on himself as Astra's spell drags the magical fire to the door. The door swings open and immediately 3 gobs of lava fly from the rooms hitting Columbus, Andrea and Hemegretham. Columbus wedges the door open as Hemegretham and Andrea rush into combat. The three lava men begin to retreat. Alvin and Zeppo cast Resist Fire spells on the warriors as they engage the nearest creature. A furious melee breaks out and both Heme and Andrea are hit although Andrea gets a good blow in on their opponent. They are both affected by the intense heat although this is considerably minimised due to the Endure Heat spells cast on them by the Clerics. Unfortunately for Heme he lets go of his sword (again) and it falls near the other Lava creatures that are cowering in the corner. Zeppo casts Resist Fire on himself as Heme darts forward to retrieve his sword. Zeppo bravely charges into the room and manages to cast Aid on Andrea who is engaged in a game of "wave my sword around a lot without hitting anything." Heme gets his sword back but in the heat (laughing) of battle forgets Alvin's advice and attacks the nearest creature, breaking the effect of the Protection from Evil spell. As Heme's Resist Fire spell expires he lands a mighty blow finishing his opponent just as a frustrated Andrea finally chops hers into charcoal briquettes. Down on hit points, they sprint for the door making it to the relative safety of the next room. Alvin casts another Resist Fire on Heme as Astra lets fly with a Magic Missile creating two bolts that slam into the remaining lava creature with an impressive shower of sparks. Columbus CLW's Heme as Alvin fires his own single Magic Missile, hitting it with the same sort of firework effect. Meanwhile Astra has filled Columbus' helmet with water and using her Unseen Servant spell guides it above the monster's head. Tipping it up results in a great cloud of scorching steam, but the thing appears to be otherwise unaffected. Too little water and too much heat perhaps. Columbus, Heme and Zeppo rush in ignoring Alvin's shouted advice, and they suffer serious damage from the lava missile weapons, the

searing heat and the Lava thing's claw attacks. Heme collapses again, only unconscious this time and Zeppo, although standing, is in a very bad way. Columbus lands a couple of serious blows to the thing as Zeppo quits the melee to help Andrea and Alvin drag Heme out of the combat zone. Suffering badly from the heat Columbus thumps the lava creature one more time before running for the door. Back at the "field hospital" Alvin, Zeppo and Columbus use their Healing skills, however they have forgotten about the monster's missile attack. A blob of lava flies from the room knocking Andrea unconscious. Things are desperate as the slight figure of Astra pushes past the others drawing her magical sword as she charges into the room. Columbus and Zeppo continue with CLW's on the fallen as Astra misses her first attack and is wounded by the creature. Zeppo and Columbus cast another CLW each on Andrea as Astra swinging her blade in a swift arc makes a critical hit on the thing, destroying it! They notice the temperature immediately dropping, as the remains of the creatures seem to coil in on themselves, disappearing from this world. Astra and Alvin note the likely extra-planar origin of the monsters.

They search the forges and chimneys and Alvin hears something click when he shoves a stick up the 2nd chimney. Astra goes up, checking for traps. That makes two party members now covered in soot. She discovers a concealed space containing a small but heavy chest that is encrusted with slag. Bringing it carefully down she checks it for traps and doesn't find anything. Alvin casts a Find Traps spell that also shows a negative. Making the best use of his spell he goes to the secret door that has not yet been opened and scans beyond it. "There's a trap back there somewhere," he reports to the others. In the meantime Astra takes out her bag of tools and somehow manages to pick the nearly petrified lock. They open the lid revealing a large number (500) of dusty, dull coins about twice the mass of a standard Gold Piece. Cleaning them up a bit reveals that they are Gold! Alvin examines one as the hoard is counted. He recognises some of the runes on the coin as being similar to runes elsewhere in the Cairn. "Suloise," he exclaims. Zeppo wonders where the chimneys get their air from as Columbus decides to see what the inside of a Lead bar looks like. He smashes it several times with his mace until it is almost broken in half. Zeppo pulls the pieces apart, revealing lead all the way through. Astra has another go at appraising the ingots and guesses that they would be worth about 1sp per bar. Alvin wonders whether Ylleck might actually want lead as well and Columbus and Zeppo go upstairs to leave a lead bar and a note asking "How much will you offer for one of these?" Returning below Zeppo causes considerable consternation by announcing that, "The skeletons have all gone," until his silly grin convinces them that "The thwacker's" sense of humour is just as "unique" as ever.

They rest for eight hours regaining spells and recovering from their wounds Alvin casts 2 CLW's and Astra tries changing herself into a skeleton to see if "The bone army" upstairs will let her through. They behave exactly as before. She does notes however that the lead bar has disappeared. As they return to the lower level Andrea whispers to the recovering Hemegretham "Watch it. She can turn herself into a Skeleton now." "I don't like it's unnatural", he whispers back. The Clerics get going and Alvin, Columbus and Zeppo each cast a CLW on Heme while Columbus casts one on Andrea.

Back at the secret door Astra casts another Unseen Servant and dragging the magical fire to the door, opens it. Alvin casts Find Traps and scans the room which appears to be some sort of barracks or dormitory. The red and white chevron pattern is present on all the walls except the Northwest wall, which is plain brick. It is here that Alvin detects a trap, which will be activated by opening. Having identified the trap they search the room, which is obviously long disused, finding nothing. Retreating to the corridor Zeppo ties a rope around Heme before casting Aid on him. Cradling a number of lead bars in his arms the big warrior stands in the doorway and hurls them at the brickwork. It smashes apart spilling a pool of dishwater-like liquid to the floor. Andrea steps in to examine the liquid, which immediately begins to move toward her! Andrea jumps back as Astra lets it have both barrels of her Magic Missile spell but the ooze keeps coming apparently unaffected! Alvin fires up (oh dear) his Flame Blade spell as Zeppo flings oil at the advancing ooze. Perhaps with culinary intentions, Astra lobs some flour at the thing. As the goo splashes around the ooze the party notice that there are two separate oozes. Columbus flings a flask of Greek Fire at the nearest monster as Alvin lights the oil and the corridor erupts in a blaze. Braving the heat Andrea slams her sword into the ooze finishing off what fire had started. Unfortunately the other creature emerges apparently unscathed from the inferno and advances toward the retreating group. Columbus lobs another Greek Fire as Astra throws a standard oil flask. Alvin legs it for the back as Zeppo flails around with his Flame Blade narrowly missing the oil pool. As the Flame Blade packs up Zeppo has another go with his trusty Flail and manages to hit the monster. His is dismayed however to see his weapon fall apart as the corrosive nature of beast becomes apparent. Backing off into the next room Columbus manages to light a torch and flings it at the ooze as it flails rather pathetically at Zeppo. In the meantime Heme has unslung his

bow and a sheaf arrow finds its mark before dissolving. Columbus' torch lands and the whole side of the room erupts in a spectacular conflagration injuring Zeppo in the blast. The Ooze however is no more!

Zeppo CLW's himself back to health and as the fire dies down they return to the room to examine the wall. It appears to be two thin walls with a void between where the oozes were trapped. Following his previous routine, Hemegretham hurls some lead bars at the wall, which falls apart as expected. Andrea moves in and helps to clear a path through to a short corridor ending with a room with a low stone stool with a circular hole in it. They have discovered a secret toilet! Alvin casts Detect Magic and finds a rapidly diminishing magical aura around the brickwork. While he has the spell running he uses it to scan the objects found in the red and blue rooms revealing the following:-

Bracelets	Non-Magical
Breastplate	Non-Magical
Brooch	Magical
Chain Mail	Magical

It is the evening of the sixth day.

Reason for XP	Andrea	Astra	Alvin	Hemegretham	Zeppo	Columbus
Opponents	300	350	300	300	300	300
Spells		70	90		110	50
Proficiencies		90	30			20
Ideas	40	80	80	30	50	60
Problem Solving						
Role Play	50	30	50	50	60	70
Treasure						
Finishing						
Fun Factor	40	70	20	30	70	20
Penalties						
Total (This session)	430	690	570	410	590	520
Grand Total	5310	3280	2720	3890	4570	3070

DM's Notes:-

A lot of value from the Lava creatures which aren't that nasty on paper but that heat damage and the lava missiles do wear you down. A sad performance from the Grey Oozes which only proves that the monsters call roll lousy dice as well.

Astra's perfect 20 on the Lava creature gave her an additional 50xp on Opponents and an additional 50xp on Fun Factor for behaving so heroically and getting away with it. Zeppo gets an additional 50xp on Fun Factor for that line about the skeletons. I laughed and laughed.