

# The Star Cairns

Session 16    19-10-99    The Dedicated Student

Next Session Monday 25-10-99 At Alex's – Levels, stats, research and a bit of Role-Playing.

Having discovered the Secret Toilet, the party discuss their course of action and decide to search all rooms in detail. Columbus gets Hemegretham to empty the gold chest so that he can examine the interior but all he finds is the inside of a box. Heme rather resenting being ordered around refuses to re-fill the box so Columbus puts them back. The search begins and proceeds for an hour or so before Columbus notes that they aren't searching the corridors. They decide to include the corridors as well. As they progress around the level Columbus points out the one corridor they haven't yet explored. "I'm out of spells, we'll do it tomorrow," mutters Astra as she investigates a particularly fascinating spot on the wall. Zeppo, feeling rather light on offensive thwacking capability borrows Alvin's wooden club. Heme goes upstairs with a note that reads, "How much will you give for this?" and a Suel gold piece. Meanwhile the search proceeds painfully inch by inch. They search until the middle of the night, finding nothing and decide to settle down in the Golem room. Watches are posted and a peaceful night is had by all.

Next morning Heme is bemoaning the party's lack of decent fighting types such as himself causing Astra to discuss the issue seriously with him. "I'll think about that," she says, deep in thought. After a breakfast of field rations they resume the search. Heme goes to check the note and the gold piece and finds them both gone. Heme takes up a similar note about the lead bars and a sample lead bar. Whistling while she works, Astra jokes, "We need a Dwarf!" as Columbus wonders whether it is worth searching the floors. A chorus of comedy replies doesn't put him off and he gives the floor a good going over as well.

Two rooms are given a particularly rough time as the party vandalise a couple of stone columns, completely wrecking them rather than investigating them. Alvin is saddened at this wanton destruction but apparently powerless to prevent it. They hear the Magic Mouth spells in the hallways, on Columbus as well now, so Astra dumps all of her magical items with the Clerics and proceeds to search the mannequin rooms. After 1-½ hours she is only ½ finished so a bored Columbus leaves his armour behind and enters the room to help. At this point Alvin casts some sort of spell on the items left behind but Columbus and Astra are not aware of this. Nothing is found and at mid-day, by their reckoning, they break for a frugal lunch. Finishing with this section they head back to the unexplored area and Alvin casts Find Traps, detecting an Alarm type of trap on the corridor. Columbus wants to throw something in and gets a lead bar, which he throws into the corridor. It clatters noisily along the floor. Astra thinks they should run down the corridor as fast as possible which they do triggering a loud ringing, very similar to the one in the first Star Cairn. They skid into the centre of the room, which is lit very dimly by a continual light torch. They search the rooms but find only a few metal hinges and locks which Columbus puts in his pockets.

They search the remaining rooms but still find nothing. Columbus keeps some of the Wraith room sand as they discuss what to do about Ylleck. Astra and Alvin reckon that whatever happens they have figured out where the fifth Star Cairn is. Obviously it must be at the apex of the pentagon otherwise why all of these funny-shaped rooms.

They stand facing the skeletons as Alvin tries a Protection from Evil on himself. He approaches the skeletons but they do their usual act and prevent him from passing. They further discuss Ylleck, Alvin and Astra agreeing that she must be Lawful Evil and can therefore be relied upon to stick to a contract. Alvin wants to leave the cairn and the heroes decide to try to get out after a good night's sleep. Heading down Astra asks Alvin for a look at the rod but Alvin decides against it explaining that the scholarly Necromancer might be scrying them. Astra appraises her gold necklace and Columbus' gold ring. They are worth about 100gp each.

They settle down for a good nights sleep and spend another uneventful night. Alvin notes that they seem to heal quicker than normal in this particular cairn. Columbus checks upstairs, finding the lead bar and a screwed up piece of paper that seems to be Astra's note. Returning below he finds the group calculating whether they have enough gold to pay Ylleck's maintenance fees. Fortunately having found the Suloise gold they have plenty. Alvin casts Detect Magic on the Suel money, the ring, the necklace and the empty box. They are not magical.

It is mid-morning as the Adventurers confront the wall of skeletons. They place the 1500gp on the floor and call her name. Suddenly, she is there standing on the stair behind the giant skeleton in plate armour. She is not happy, complaining about the awful noise caused by the party despite her perfectly reasonable warning. She spies the gold and it immediately disappears as indeed does she and her bodyguard. A tense few minutes pass as the party wonder whether they have been double-crossed and their fate is to die slowly and terribly, entombed with this legion of undead. However evidently Law rules this particular scholar and she re-appears scowling furiously as she whips a small pair of spectacles from her nose. They have indeed paid their dues for the repair and replacement of her minions but they have caused serious disturbance to her work, not to mention walking around a delicate magical research area with a gigantic magical aura radiating from Alvin's backpack. She ignores the party's pleas for reasonableness and rants on for a few minutes on the subject of fools and philistines who obstruct serious research. Zeppo whispers to Heme that it's obviously been a while since she was laid and they giggle like a couple of schoolboys until Ylleck suddenly stops and frowning sits wearily down on the step hugging her knees. She looks up with a dangerous glint in her eye and says, "Make me an offer!" Astra's attempts to determine what a reasonable offer might be are treated with a withering stare. Hopefully she suggests perhaps 100gp. They see Ylleck gesture briefly and suddenly five bolts of Magic Missile soar above the line of skeletons and slam into the party. It must be a warning since no further attack is forthcoming. Almost simultaneously the group realise what she wants and they empty all of their gold onto the floor in front of them. As they are counting out the coins, Alvin notes that somehow they are short of 50 Suel gold pieces. Hmmm. Ylleck stands, and declares this offer to be sufficient. Fixing the party with a withering stare she reminds them never to return. "Goodbye forever!" she hisses and vanishes, along with the gold and the giant skeleton. There is a brief pause and the wall of skeletons shuffle back to the walls.

The party depart quickly gratefully breathing the fresh air of a particularly bracing day. They head for the creek to wash up and Alvin asks everyone to empty their pockets. They all do this except Columbus who admits to having hidden the 50gps. He can't see what the fuss is about since they now have not only a reasonable amount of money but also a sample of these particular antique coins. The others are not entirely impressed by this explaining that had Ylleck known she was being tricked it could have been the end for all of them. They trudge back toward Fishton, Columbus wondering why this group can never see simple common sense. On the way back Andrea spots a humanoid figure on the skyline, quickly ducking into cover. Alvin wonders whether they should investigate and is met by a definite "No!" from Zeppo. The others agree and taking additional precautions they continue along the coast and arrive at Fishton unmolested.

### **Fishton**

The party are charged 5 sp's for the communal barn and 7sp's for the stabling of their horses. Columbus pays them with 1 gp, which causes more food and drink to arrive. Astra, somewhat disappointed since she can't spare the coppers to give to the children summons up the energy to perform her juggling and tumbling act. She is stunning! Fishton has never seen the like of this and probably never will again. The villagers' eyes light up as ever more daring and dangerous stunts are performed by the diminutive Elf. Daggers, swords and even Hemegretham's Mancatcher are tossed spinning into the air as she leaps and tumbles only to snatch the objects back in the nick of time and send them soaring up again. Even the party are impressed as they see their usually serious companion prance and caper, every inch the carnival entertainer, milking the applause and grinning broadly at the crowd, which by now consists of the entire village. She carries on into the night until at last the crowd reluctantly disperses, leaving their very best food and drink as payment for the fabulous evening's entertainment. Settling down for the night the others realise that for a short while they had seen another side to Astra, unburdened by the cares and worries of an Adventurer.

Next morning the villagers cluster around the party as they leave, burdening them down with loaves and fishes etc. Astra performs a short impromptu juggling act and is every bit as fantastic as the previous night. The party ride out of town accompanied by skipping laughing children and applauding adults until they are at least a mile down the road. They won't ever forget this party in Fishton.

## Hardby

Arriving at the port town of Hardby the party put up at the New Inn in the by now familiar “Adventurer’s Suite” and discuss their next moves. Heme is rather depressed claiming that he has been; “Talked out of all the money he had in the world.” He glares at Columbus and orders a cask of Ale to be sent up. Sitting in the corner quaffing flagon after flagon he mutters about the lack of decent values in this band of rogues. Astra takes a long bath and a good meal and Zeppo manages to sell the silver flute for 800gp – phew, some money. He checks in with a generally aligned temple (There is no specific temple to Trithereon in Hardby) and passes some time in meditation. Alvin heads for the small office of the Wizards Guild and after a hard evening of research discovers a few promising leads. Columbus went straight to an armourer and had his precious helmet repaired.

The next day Columbus and Astra head for the market area and are offered disappointing prices for some of the trinkets that Astra has appraised. A quick tap on the shoulder with the hilt of Bladestar and the manager of the shop becomes the latest recruit to Astra’s string of charmees and offers 300gp for the lot. A top dollar price - which they accept, leaving quickly before the manager can ask for a date.

Hemegretham who has had a confidence shaking time of late, having been routinely felled in almost every combat, wonders about the suit of chain mail he is carrying. Zeppo offers to take it to the temple for identification, which he does. Fortunately there is a high-level Cleric in town and he is able to get a first class identification/detect curse for 100gp. Trithereon is obviously well pleased with his servant Zeppo. On the way back Zeppo acquires himself a replacement Flail, knocking the price down to book. He arrives back at the Inn and informs Hemegretham of the good news. He is the proud possessor of a magical suit of chain mail +2 that also has the properties of a Ring of Fire Resistance. The item is completely uncursed, there are no strings attached. A delighted Hemegretham immediately orders another cask of Ale. Things are looking up he thinks as he lovingly caresses the finely wrought links.

<b>Reason for XP</b>	<b>Andrea</b>	<b>Astra</b>	<b>Alvin</b>	<b>Hemegretham</b>	<b>Zeppo</b>	<b>Columbus</b>
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Opponents						
Spells		10	50		10	10
Proficiencies		220	20			
Ideas		30	30	30	10	40
Problem Solving						
Role Play		70	70	40	30	40
Treasure	200	200	200	200	200	200
Finishing						
Fun Factor		80	20	20	20	30
Penalties						

<b>Total (This session)</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>320</b>
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<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5510</b>	<b>3890</b>	<b>3110</b>	<b>4280</b>	<b>4840</b>	<b>3390</b>
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### **DM's Notes:-**

Here endeth the 2<sup>nd</sup> Star Cairn, “The Dedicated Student.” Well done everyone. The next session is mainly centred on levels, xp and character sheets.