

The Star Cairns

Session 35 16-10-00 The Great Boat Race

Next Session Monday 23-10-00 At Brian's place.

As the Rhennee barge slips silently out of the Harbour the party notice a light in the tower that stands at the entrance to the bay. The night is dark with a crescent moon obscured behind a partial cloud layer. Avon is careful to observe that the coast is on their right as the sails catch the ocean breeze and the craft makes headway toward the mouth of the Selintan, northwards. Zeppo CLW's himself before turning in. Double watches are set and our friends pass a restful night, gently rocked by the waves of Woolly Bay.

Day One

Early next morning they wake and are pleased to notice that they are entering the river itself, leaving Hardby well behind. The river is busy and they notice many other boats plying their trade up and down this busy waterway. Since many of them are Rhennee barges they are satisfied that they are fairly inconspicuous. Avon discusses the journey with Kalar, the Rhennee Lord and Captain of this vessel and is informed that with standard stopovers they should make Greyhawk in five days. Alvin and Zeppo disappear below to learn spells. Avon warns the others that he has cast Know Alignment on the Captain, revealing Lawful Evil tendencies. He warns them to be careful. Perhaps with this in mind Joe decides to run through an impressive warm-up routine with his sword. Fortunately he doesn't damage anything and the crew are left in no doubt about the abilities of their warrior passenger, whom they have nicknamed, Conan.

They notice some of the Rhennee family on the quarterdeck, including women and children and in particular an old lady in a rocking chair. They see that all aboard including the Rhennee Lord treat her with the utmost respect. Avon warns that if the women and children disappear they can expect trouble. Below Andrea attempts to tend to the Horses but finds a crewman already expertly engaged. After observing his work for a while and receiving a gold-toothed lecherous grin she decides to head topside where she hangs around hopefully waiting to be asked to assist in the rigging.

Passing One Ford the barge drops sail and passes close to the dock where a lot of what they take to be Rhennee language is shouted back-and-forth. An attentive Avon takes note that nobody seems to indicate their presence and the speech at least appears to be like some sort of trade conversation. Within a few minutes the vessel puts on sail and surges onward against the powerful Selintan tide. Avon takes the precaution of sorting out a string and rattle early warning system to their cabins via the portholes. Nobody seems to pay him any special attention. At the end of the afternoon The Gem of Regeneration kicks in for Andrea, somewhat surprising two of the Rhennee crewmen who had seen her half an hour earlier. They depart in deep in an animated conversation, obviously impressed. As the evening draws on the barge drops sail and pulling somewhat out of the main river stream, rests at anchor for the night. The party set watches and on the second watch, Heme and Alvin's, the alarm is raised.

As everyone rushes on deck in answer to the emergency bell, lanterns are lit revealing a dark shape in the air wheeling around the barge. The crewmen arm themselves with spears and harpoons and several climb into the rigging as more lanterns are lit revealing a 35ft long reptilian creature with long sharp fangs, two huge claws and a long, pointed tail. It swoops around the rigging attempting to descend to the meat on the deck. The party join the fray, as Joe expertly looses his bow, one of the arrows striking critically, wounding the flying thing. Avon stands ready with a spell, as Heme's great bow creaks and sings burying an arrow deep into the monster. Andrea invokes Bladestar's Strength ability and attempts to climb into the rigging. Zeppo cagily casts an Aid on Joe as two Magic Missiles streak out from Alvin's hands striking the flying beast. With a ragged cheer the Rhennee loose their spears several of which strike however it's now the monster's turn as it lashes out furiously at the nearest crewman in the rigging. The man is badly injured by its claws but the mere touch of the scything tail is enough to send him plummeting lifeless into the river. The creature swoops again tearing at another hapless Rhennee in the rigging. Again, with but one scratch of the venomous tail the unfortunate fellow falls to his death. The party return fire as Zeppo looses sling bullets, Joe and Heme fire arrows and Alvin casts Magic Missile all of which hit the monster. Andrea climbs the rigging but slips and just manages to hold on as Avon's Colour Spray spell lights the barge with a vivid incandescence. Resembling some huge reptilian pincushion the mighty beast drops like a stone and

with a huge splash crashes into the river. As Joe jumps up and down excitedly, exclaiming, "We've killed a Dragon!" the crew recover the bodies of their comrades and both Rhennee and Adventurers spend a nervous night watching the skies.

Day Two

Early the next day the party observe a brief ritual on the quarterdeck presided over by the Old Woman, as two wrapped bodies splash into the river. The Adventurers pay their own respects to the lost Rhennee sailors. The spell casters retire in order to sleep enough to re-learn spells as Heme leans lazily against the mast keeping a lookout. He notices another larger Rhennee barge some miles behind them and taking an interest notices it beginning to gain on them over the next few hours. At mid-day the others rise with new spells and Heme points out the other boat. Joe causes much merriment onboard by suggesting that they sail on the left side of the river straight into the oncoming river traffic! Well, the crew needed a bit of cheering up.

Avon bribes the First Mate to talk about going faster. The Captain appears and asks, "Why you do this?" Avon explains that they would like to be in Greyhawk pretty quickly. For the sum of 30gp the Skipper offers the go faster option. Encouraged by the persuasive Avon he also offers the don't stop option for an additional 30gp. They are warned that there will be some risk since the barge is not really designed for speed or night navigation. Accepting this they pay up the 60gp and orders are shouted out as additional crew swarm into the rigging, unfurling the previously hidden topsails. Creaking and groaning the Rhennee vessel picks up speed, ploughing a foaming furrow through the rapidly flowing river. As both the Captain and the First Mate carefully watch the sails the party keep a careful lookout behind. Sure enough the ship behind them also breaks out extra sail!

As darkness falls, the additional sails are dropped and navigational lanterns are lit. At half normal speed the barge moves through the darkness, the Rhennee Captain standing alert in the prow for the whole night.

Show me the way to go home

Dawn breaks and immediately full sail is ordered. Looking astern they estimate that the larger vessel is perhaps one hour behind them. Zeppo wonders whether they are also just in a hurry but Avon is sceptical since they put on sail just after their own boat. They consider trying to "fit up" their "pursuers" with the dock authorities but drop this idea after considering things like evidence and false accusation. Avon suggests assembling the weapon and using it on the other boat, which sorely tempts Andrea they are dissuaded by Zeppo's wiser counsel.

They also wonder what to do with the Doomheart when they arrive. Andrea wants to take it to the Gnarley Forest as she has been saying all along. Joe goes along with this, impressed by Andrea's charm and winning manner! Eventually they decide not to decide but since it is now late afternoon and Zagyg's bridge is almost upon them they do decide to jump ship just before Greyhawk. Captain Kalar agrees to this at a suitable bend in the river as with an impressive manoeuvre the barge fetches smartly up against the bank. The cargo door crashes open and leading their Horses the party depart. The door is quickly raised and all sail laid on as the Rhennee vessel heads back out into the Selintan. They scramble up the bank to the cover at River Road, leaving Avon and Andrea hidden below. Within the hour a larger Rhennee barge surges past them, also with all canvas aloft. The crew are visible on deck attending carefully to the overstretched rigging and sails as the craft dashes onward to Greyhawk!

Hit Point Situation

Avon 17(17), Zeppo 26(26), Alvin 20(20), Heme 43(43), Andrea 41(41), Joe 15(15), Raven 25(25)

Reason for XP	Andrea	Avon	Alvin	Hemegretham	Zeppo	Joe	Raven
Opponents	400	400		400	400	400	
Spells		10			20		
Proficiencies	20					10	
Ideas	20	40		20	30	30	
Problem Solving							
Role Play	20	50		40	40	40	
Treasure							
Finishing							
Fun Factor	20	30		20	30	40	
Bonuses							
Penalties							
Total (This session)	480	530		480	520	520	
Grand Total	8695	9140	7010	6550	7440	4650	5010

1. Career total, not Adventure total.