

THE DOOMGRINDER

Session 39 16-1-01 The Cairn Hills

Next Session Tuesday 23-1-01 At Brian's place.

Day 3 - The morning after the battle

"Why doesn't one of the Clerics look at this charm thing?" says Avon, examining the silver skull pendant. Zeppo takes a look and recognises it as a symbol of the evil demi-god Luz. The pendant seems cold to the touch and rather heavier than it should be for its size. Avon appraises its value as minimal and attempts to find a hidden compartment, perhaps containing something heavy? However he finds nothing special. Joe wants to wear the symbol of overbearing Evil that the forces of Good have been battling throughout the bloody Greyhawk wars. The others are not impressed and eventually dissuade him from this reckless act. He keeps the token in a belt pouch.

They prepare to leave and as a light rain begins to fall Joe complains loudly about Andrea's somewhat laissez faire watch keeping technique. The Ranger is furious and a tense eye-to-eye argument breaks out between the two warriors. An exasperated Joe calls her, "A ridiculous little woman" and as the little woman in question punches him in the mouth an unfriendly tussle breaks out. Words and punches are exchanged until Zeppo calls out for them to stop playing around and get ready. "Is that the other Guard?" is Joe's sarcastic remark but Zeppo just shrugs it off. Andrea and Joe exchange a final long stare that promises more to come before packing their kit.

Avon wants to find somewhere defensible so they can recover their wounds and spells, Andrea is in favour of resting but the consensus is to move on. An hour further down the trail Andrea notices a track, crossing their path. Examining it she estimates a large heavily armed and armoured party, perhaps 20 on foot and 10 mounted heading north. There are claw marks among the tracks, which have been made within the last 24 hours. There is some jovial discussion about the possible threat to the Arch-Mage Tenser, who lives to the north in the mighty tower at Magepoint and they continue on their way with increased vigilance.

Further down the track they encounter Edric, Margaret and a man who does not speak. They say they are pilgrims and they are called to seek the Green Lady. At a cairn somewhere in these hills they say a holy man is gathering a flock of the righteous to protect her and share in the miracles she will perform. They seem rather eccentric but friendly with it and offer to share their lunch with the party. Surprisingly for travellers on the road they seem to have an abundance of fresh food with them. When questioned about this Edric replies that the Lady provides for her faithful. Presumably she protects them as well muses Andrea noting their meagre weaponry (quarterstaves) in these monster infested hills. They take their leave from the pilgrims, who strike off at an apparently random direction and disappear into the distance.

They make camp near a river and Joe uses his rope handling and tailoring skills (he can stitch, even heavy fabric) to construct a serviceable shelter rigged to the many pine trees. They spend a peaceful night, punctuated only by the howls of a wolf pack well to the north. Next morning the rain has stopped.

Day 4 – Natch Metalmeshweaver

Andrea pesters Zeppo while he is performing his morning devotions and is jokingly warded off with an instruction to perform three Hail Trithereons. Left in peace he is able to appeal to the power of his patron deity and is awarded his impressive range of spells. He casts CLW on Andrea as Alvin cures himself and Zeppo. As they get the gear together Andrea melts into forest intending to rustle up breakfast. About an hour later she returns with a story about a gnome adventurer that she met in the forest. He claimed to have been a member of an adventuring party but dissatisfied with their somewhat lacklustre performance, left and decided to seek out better prospects. She is busy describing how she lost this somewhat dubious character in the woods (even Andrea's stocky little legs are enough to outpace a gnome) when a cry comes from deep in the forest. "Hello – where are you?" Andrea suggests moving on quietly and the others seem agreed when suddenly a small voice is heard right behind them. "You're not taking me seriously are you" It is indeed the gnome who introduces himself as Natch Metalmeshweaver an Adventurer from Grossetgrottel. He repeats his story at length, waxing lyrical about the adventures he has had and the dungeons he has explored. If

half of this is to be believed, he must be a mighty fellow indeed. Avon makes a shrewd guess at the spell used to deceive them and suggests that Natch is, typically of many gnomes, an Illusionist. Drawing his sword he confronts the little fellow challenging him to prove his skill with the short blade he wears but is fended off with some diplomatic wit. Whatever he is Natch is certainly not stupid. After a while he draws his sword and demonstrates at least a basic skill with the weapon as well as a nimble dexterity while not actually engaging in sparring. Avon who has managed to position himself behind the small fellow and appears to be ready to murder him decides not to when the gnome draws attention to his presence. Zeppo makes a remarkably accurate guess at the gnome's character (alignment) as Avon says something rude in Elvish. A dry remark, also in Elvish, demonstrates Natch's familiarity with the language. Despite misgivings, "They threw *him* out" from Andrea, the group allow Natch to accompany them, providing he shuts up! In return he describes some of the route ahead and the situation at Fort Leman, where he has been recently. Joe gives him some space on his horse, providing he doesn't tell any more adventuring stories! Zeppo casts a Continual Light on a short stick, which he then places in a bag that Joe has made. This done they depart Eastward.

Midway through the afternoon they spy a mounted party to the north riding toward them. As they draw nearer it is evident that the group are heavily armed orcs, 13 of them, riding dark horses. They pull up about a hundred metres away and one large armoured figure advances. Andrea rides forward and address the creature in Orcish. He says he is Grivak The Strong, leader of this group and fortunately for them he is on a mission so he can't spare the time to squash a puny adventuring group. Andrea makes the standard insulting reply and orc protocol fulfilled both sides ride on their way, the last orc defiantly mooning as they ride off to the south. It is only after this encounter that it dawns on the party that despite the usual orc paraphernalia of skulls, bones and scalps there were no emblems visible on their shields and helmets. Most un-orc like. Furthermore, orcs riding horses?

As the light fades they make camp, Natch advising that Fort Leman is now less than half a day's ride to the east. They light a fire and Andrea is able to hunt down two rabbits to supplement their trail rations. Double watches are set and Zeppo and Joe remove their armour as the party settle down for the night. During the middle watch the sound of movement is heard out beyond the circle of firelight and gradually a group of decaying, shambling creatures encircling the camp shuffle toward the party, their vile claws reaching out in expectation. Ghouls! The alarm is raised and the party form a circle with Avon safely in the middle. Zeppo has enough time to fasten his breastplate before combat begins. The clerics, brandishing their holy symbols call down the celestial power of Rao and Trithereon causing two of the vile undead to flee in terror. The others advance slowly but relentlessly as bows are strung and a volley of arrows fired. Avon hits one of the monstrosities as Alvin casts Magic Missile striking another in a shower of magical sparks. Hastily reloading they manage another volley but miss as the undead reach them. Zeppo and Heme dodge their attacks but Andrea is hit by the Ghoul's claw and bite attack. Fortunately for her she is not overcome by the paralysing effect of the monster's touch. Both sides seem startled as suddenly an exact copy of a Gold Dragon, although only 6 ft long appears in the midst of the Ghouls, silently clawing at their attackers. Apparently Natch has Phantasmal Force in his spell book. While the Ghouls are distracted the party strike, as Avon's arrows fly true and Andrea and Heme dispose of their opponents in traditional swordsman's fashion. Alvin's Spiritual Hammer appears and Zeppo casts Prayer. Fighting back the Ghouls are able to wound both Alvin and Heme who fortunately both resist the paralysation effect. An awful stench is noticed and Avon worries that the Ghouls may have a Ghast with them, as is often the case. Joe, still using his bow fires at point-blank range and finishes one Ghoul as Heme carves another one clean in half. Andrea and Zeppo battle with their opponents as suddenly Natch collapses. Avon's bow strikes again as Joe removes another undead abomination from the face of Oerth. Andrea smashes another as Heme, having located the Ghast (Yuck), fells it with a single mighty blow!

All is quiet. Alvin and Zeppo cure Andrea's wounds as a pale Natch struggles to his feet having slipped over in the heat of battle. The stench is so disgusting that they move the camp and settle down to the remainder of the night. They are not disturbed and the sun rises to a bright windy day.

Hit Point Situation

Don't know – Forgot to ask.

Avon (17), Zeppo (26), Alvin (20), Heme (43), Andrea (41), Joe (23), Raven (25)

Reason for XP	Andrea	Avon	Alvin	Hemegretham	Zeppo	Joe	Raven
Opponents	260	240			260	260	
Spells					80		
Proficiencies	20	10				20	
Ideas	10	30			10		
Problem Solving							
Role Play	60	50			40	60	
Treasure							
Finishing							
Fun Factor	40	40			50	70	
Bonuses							
Penalties							
Total (This session)	390	370			440	410	

Grand Total	9770	10050¹	7460	7535	8440	5840	5010
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1. Career total, not Adventure total.

DM Notes