

Winter's Daughter

Session 2 4-5-23 Into The Barrow

Next Session 1-6-23

Examining the dark entrance Fenella decides now is the time for her Detect Danger spell which she duly casts and with Angus and Vlad in the lead they cautiously descend the stairs into the dark, coming upon a square room with statuettes on plinths in each corner, presumably of religious significance since they are a cherub, a holy symbol, an opened book and a large candle in a heavy candlestick. Before they can examine them further and as Fenella's detection spell alerts her to immediate danger, with a loud disapproving shriek they rise into the air and swoop down upon the party attempting to smash into them!

A tense battle ensues as the swooping statuettes crash into the group, berating them continually in shrill shrieking voices for their lack of prowess and their vile tomb robbing. The party gamely set about fighting to their best ability however the swiftly moving items are quite hard to hit and they take some damage from violent concussions with the objects, Angus and Fenella in particular suffer badly at first. Vlad quickly dispatches his opponent which disappears in a flash of gravel and dust and turns his attention to Angus's darling little cherub as Fenella gulps down her healing potion. Reme soon disposes of his tormentor and turns to join Fenella as Vlad finishes off Angus's cherub much to the Ranger's chagrin. They all turn to batter the remaining statuette attacking Fenella and it is quickly over, the only remains of the tomb guardians a scattering of dust and gravel on the already dusty floor. Angus drinks his healing potion and is disappointed to feel only slightly better.

Looking down at the now disturbed dusty floor they notice the dust had concealed a faded but colourful mosaic. Fully clearing the dust they reveal a depiction of Sir Chyde atop a white charger, piercing the heart of a fairy knight with his sword. An inscription in a language which bright sparks Fenella and Vlad are able to identify as the archaic Dolmenwood dialect of common known as "Old Woldish" reads, "Here lies the noble Sir Chyde, slayer of Frost, defender of the King". Reme and Angus are impressed since they could only make out the words for "Frost" and "King". They also note corridor exits to the east and west and a set of double stone doors to the north with the inscription "The Most Dear". Also the mosaic bears some clear scratching as if something heavy has been dragged over it from the east. Checking the stairs they notice the scratches also ascend to the tomb entrance.

The Mirror Room

Lighting a new torch from the expiring one Angus decides that perhaps it would be better if he used his shield rather than carrying a torch so since she has already cast her spell for the day Fenella agrees to take the torch in one hand and wield her spear in the other. Deciding upon the east corridor they proceed with shields raised down the corridor which Fenella has already identified as potentially dangerous. At the end of the corridor they pause to survey the circular room with exits to the northeast and north and an ornate dusty full-length mirror with a fine silver frame hanging from the southeast wall. A plinth of white marble stands in front of the mirror, the floor scratches leading across the room to the plinth. Scanning the room with her Detect Danger spell Fenella identifies the mirror as dangerous so they decide to ignore it for now, heading instead towards the northern corridor. As Vlad steps in front of the mirror (despite looking to the north) he feels a terrible chill over his entire body as he becomes frozen still. They pull him back to the corridor and examining him, Fenella notes that his eyes are still mobile so she surmises it could be a temporary paralysis that can often be cleared by curative magic, holy water or perhaps sunlight so they carry "Vlad the Slab" back up the stairs and into the daylight where he quite quickly unfreezes apparently with no ill-effect. Returning to the mirror room Angus prepares a blanket which he throws over the mirror completely covering it and with the last minutes of her spell Fenella is able to confirm the mirror is no longer dangerous. Returning to their plan they pass the northwest exit, a descending stairway, to explore the short corridor to the north.

The Hall of Statues

They find a long room with seven statues of human guards presented as if carrying out duties to their lord. The statues are equipped with real weapons: A flanged mace, A morningstar, a battle axe, a warhammer, a longsword, a halberd and a spear. Along one side of the room is a mouldy wall-hanging partially obscured by yellow and purple mould. **GM Note.**

After much discussion of whether the statues might animate and spell their doom they enter the room to discover the statues are indeed just statues holding dusty but good quality weapons. One in particular stands out, the sword with its distinctive wavy fullering. Fenella goes to examine the wall hanging being cautious of the mould since she is aware that the spores can be dangerous if disturbed. In the light of the torch she can see that it is a faded battle mural showing Sir Chyde on horseback in battle with the armies of Fairy, his right hand raised but obscured by the mould and two snarling hunting hounds fighting at his side also partially obscured. Fenella steps back and reminded of the sword in the mosaic which also had this unusual design, guesses that this is indeed Sir Chyde's sword and therefore her rightful property. She easily detaches it from the statue and decides it might best be used by Vlad since he is the party's Fighter and her own choice of weapon is the spear. Vlad gladly accepts the loan of the fine weapon and looks forward to using it as soon as possible.

The Hall of The Hounds

Leaving the mouldy tapestry for now they proceed through the exit to the north and down a short corridor, turning at right angles to the west and ending at the threshold of a larger room. The room is a large rectangular chamber of similar proportions to the statue room but with four, apparently decorative, columns running along the north/south axis and a large stone double door to the south. There is a corresponding exit to their entrance across the room on the west wall. The columns and walls are decorated with bas-reliefs of human armies in battle with the forces of Fairy. The northern part of the room lies in shadow so they move to investigate more closely revealing statues of two larger than life (6ft tall) hounds secured by long metal chains and collars to a large double door in the north wall. Deeply inscribed on the doors is the phrase "Call to the Companions". Angus theorises that if they knew the names of the hounds they could call them and perhaps cause the doors to be opened. He guesses that the names might be found elsewhere in the tomb. Vlad gives the heavy chains a jangle and a tug but things remain as they are. Standing right next to the huge stone hounds Vlad becomes aware of just how big, ferocious and powerful they look and decides to leave it be, at least for now.

The Chapel

Crossing to the west corridor they enter and follow a mirror image corridor, turning south to an easily opened stone door. Inside is another rectangular room with an altar and decaying old wooden pews with a corridor exit to the south. A statue of a holy crusader stands upon the altar holding a thick red candle aloft. A ragged tapestry hangs upon the west wall depicting Sir Chyde and the crusader greeting each other apparently at the gates of heaven. As they stand discussing their situation they notice suddenly to the south, an ethereal vision of a beautiful woman dressed all in white, with a star upon her brow. She appears in empty space and says, "The ring... The ring holds the key... My eternal salvation", before disappearing into mist.

Ignoring the chapel for now they return to the stone hounds room and decide to open the southern stone doors. A few minutes with the crowbars does its work with Vlad exhibiting particularly impressive flexing, easily breaking the seal as he begins to slowly swivel the heavy doors open.

GM's Notes

I omitted to make it clear that the tapestry in the Hall of Statues is partially, not fully obscured. The writeup text describes the view of the tapestry as it should be, mostly visible.

A **fuller** is a rounded or bevelled longitudinal groove or slot along the flat side of a blade that serves to both lighten and stiffen the blade. A wavy design would be very tricky to create and is therefore extremely fancy.