

Bladestar

Session 2 23-2-99 The hands of Death!

(proposed) Next Session 2-3-99 **Start at 21:00** (Any early arrivals very welcome)

...The party conclude that they must contact Roger Daventry this very night!

It's getting on for early evening as the party loiter by the morgue discussing events while Astra goes to somewhat extreme lengths to avoid being caught with her skin tight leather leggings down as she straps the fabulous dagger to her leg. They decide to return to the precinct to hassle the overworked officers some more.

A thoroughly pissed off desk officer refuses to even look for the duty roster and heads into the back office muttering something about "bloody jumped up part-timers!" Alvin quickly finds the roster and starts to investigate the complexities of the Watch shift system. At this point Astra is successfully pick-pocketed but in a rare moment of inattention doesn't notice anything. Alvin discovers that Daventry will be on rest days for the next two nights (Yes, shift workers really do say such things, I used to be one). Since he came off duty this morning, maybe he'll be out and about?

Astra, determined to irritate the City's finest some more hovers by the door to Sgt Coddle's office and is accidentally jostled by a Watchman trying to pass her inquisitive form in the doorway. She assumes the worst and checks her possessions to find a flint and steel missing. In a very rash move she confronts the Watchman and discovers Sgt Coddle's degree of loyalty to his own men. In short Astra is to "piss off, or spend the night in the cells." She pisses off.

"The Shadow" also attempts to dip Andrea but the touch of a man's hand on her body is enough to alert her to foul play! She spins and sees a figure donning a black hood speeding toward the door. Hot pursuit ensues but to no avail as the thief melts into the crowd outside, it is the Thieves' quarter after all!

A discussion about how to locate Daventry continues until Astra remembers the pub where a lot of Watchman in this quarter hang out, The Bow and Dagger.

The Bow and Dagger

Our friends slip in at about 6'ish to find a rapidly filling place of semi-ill repute. Weapons and armour are permitted and to tell the truth, our band of vagabonds do feel quite at home in this honest (for the Thieves' quarter) dive. Astra buys a round of Ales for and the rather busy barman is engaged in conversation. Some blah blah blah later Astra discovers that our man is sitting in a corner of the bar playing dice and drinking with some off duty Watch colleagues. Wandering over, Astra manages to distract Roger about 1% from his dice game. Daventry is a close-mouthed and grizzled veteran of the force, bearing many a scar and he barely notices Astra until she mentions that she is a Watch Marshal. He then excuses himself from the game and heads for a smaller table which miraculously clears as he approaches. They sit and regard each other for a tense few moments until Roger decides to speak. Astra gets the standard Hugh story except she learns that our idealistic young Watchman was fascinated by weaponry and was a keen subscriber to "Swords and Spears" magazine. In general Astra finds Daventry a tough, taciturn, hard man that has seen enough of life to want to keep it at a distance. He decides he's said enough to this "slip of an elf" and gets up and returns to his dice game before Astra has finished questioning him. He grudgingly accepts the Ale she sends over to his table.

After Astra imparts her information, the team decide to investigate the crime scenes.

On the Street

They take a look at the scene of Faros' demise, a reasonably wide connecting street between two larger thoroughfares but any potential evidence has been destroyed by the passage of many feet. Arriving at the scene of Hugh's death they find a narrow dead-end alley with a pool of light cast by a municipal street lamp. At the dead end are a set of heavily padlocked warehouse doors. Alvin roots around the lighted area destroying any tracks that might have been there while Astra surveys the padlocks and decides not to bother. She then suggests searching further out of the light and Andrea, with a truly spectacular tracking roll, manages to find traces of a struggle, heading into/out of the pool of light. At this point Andrea realises the importance of the dagger, with Alvin putting two and two together just seconds after her. Astra suddenly seems very happy to hand over the splendid weapon. They wrap it up in a cloth and stick it in Hemegretham's backpack.

It is now 22:00 and our friends discuss their next actions. An astute Astra realises that Daventry respected her warrant as a Marshal and not herself. Perhaps this throws a little more light on the character of the grizzled veteran. A discussion about the runes on the dagger (which nobody can read) culminates in the inevitable party split as Hemegretham, Alvin and Andrea head off to seek out Raven and his Helm of Comprehend Languages, leaving Astra to tail Roger Daventry. A muttering Hemegretham complains that, "Any old fool with a dictionary should be able to read the runes without having to track down some geezer with a poncy name like Raven," however perhaps the others have missed their old adventuring companion and they head off to the Foreign Quarter to search for him.

What Astra did

Using her cloak of Elvenkind in addition to her thieflly abilities, Astra is 99% invisible in the dimly lit type of street found in this quarter of the City. If she can avoid bumping into anyone she can be confident of moving freely, undetected by normal sight. She returns to the Bow and Dagger and de-cloaks in shadow. Entering the now heaving bar she checks for a back entrance. Of course there is one. Roger Daventry is still in his corner playing dice and quaffing ale. Astra is fairly certain that he has observed her and is disdainfully refusing to pay her any attention. She leaves via the front entrance and cloaks again. Musing upon the futility of trying to cover two exits with one observer she settles into the shadows.

At about a quarter to midnight Roger leaves the bar and Astra stealthily pursues him. He walks for a few minutes and enters a small rooming house in a slightly better area than the pub or indeed the Watchhouse. Astra attempts to follow but the lock on the door defeats her. She decides to watch the building from the outside. A light appears in an upper room and a figure strides back and forth for about 10 minutes before disappearing from sight. At about a quarter past 12 the light goes out. All is quiet, so Astra decides to return to the Adventurer's Guild to meet up with the others.

What the others did

The others return to the Adventurer's Guild. Andrea thinks they should find a Sage or a Priest to examine the dagger but a stubborn Alvin insists that it is a purely magical matter and where would they find a sage at this time of night. (DM note 1). Tallow the steward refuses to unlock Raven's storage chest without his permission and suggests the party try The Red Serpent Restaurant, a few minutes walk away. Our friends will remember Raven taking them for a meal in the newly opened establishment just before the Sentinel adventure. Entering the establishment they are lucky to find Raven seated before an enormous meal of spicy food scoffing it down as though he hadn't eaten in a week. He scribbles a quick note authorising your use of the Helm and bids you farewell, promising to return to the group once he has concluded his current business responsibilities.

Back at the Guild Alvin uses the Helm and reads the word 'Bladestar' on both sides of the dagger. Andrea still wants to find a sage but Alvin and Hemegretham want to go to bed. So as the clock strikes midnight and far away a chilly Astra keeps watch on an off-duty Watchman, a black cloud of a gaseous form rises rapidly from Hemegretham's pack and coalesces into a vaguely humanoid shape. There is a brief moment of stillness and the thing moves directly for Andrea, who has instinctively drawn her weapons. The apparition quickly envelopes her and her eyes glaze over as her weapons clatter uselessly to the floor. Alvin completes a Command spell and orders Andrea to resist but it appears to have no effect as she struggles against some terrible inner conflict.

What Andrea saw

Standing on a disc of perfect white light surrounded by darkness she feels it pressing in on her inexorably. She summons all of her considerable will to resist but barely manages to slow the darkness as it washes over her rapidly chilling body. Mercifully she loses consciousness.

Back at the struggle

Suspecting the inevitable, Hemegretham grabs Andrea's arms as they begin to rise toward her throat. Using his considerable strength he is just able to prevent her from strangling herself. Alvin attempts to Turn Undead on the thing but to no avail. He whips out his famous lasso and manages to loop it around Andrea without entangling Hemegretham (no mean feat). Tallow has been rummaging around behind the reception desk and leaps across it waving a coil of rope. Andrea is quickly trussed up like a turkey and Alvin does what he can for her as she struggles desperately with every muscle and sinew to tear her arms free. At about five to one Astra returns and is thus able to witness, as the clock strikes one, a black cloud rising from Andrea, which quickly dissipates into nothingness. As the temperature begins to return to normal, Andrea's struggles cease and she slumps, apparently unconscious. A Detect Evil cast on the dagger by Alvin reveals a strong presence of Evil.

Next morning over breakfast in Andrea's room

An exhausted Andrea tells the party her version of things and is tended to and CLW'ed by Alvin. In the conversation that follows a few things emerge. Alvin, "He (Hugh) was interested in Weaponry." Andrea, "Was Faros (the first victim) a Thief?" and Andrea, "The dagger seems to attack things that are **not** evil". Seeing that Andrea is alive and rapidly recovering (although she feels like she's just run the Greyhawk marathon) Alvin departs for his Temple where he has been summoned. (DM note 2). Hemegretham decides that he doesn't want the dagger in his pack anymore and the group see the wisdom of giving it to the weakest party member.

Unseen-Uni The University of Magical Arts

They stand outside the imposing pyramid as Astra opens her mind to request admittance. Rather unusually the whole party disappear and materialise in a small book lined study before a elderly man dressed impressively in the robes of a senior Wizard Instructor of the University - not Astra's usual low-level tutor. He says his name is Scriborus and he is very curious about the dagger. Examining it he determines that he will require a full day of study to assess the dagger's properties. He tells them to return at six this evening and before Astra can get a word out, they find themselves standing outside the University again.

Protect that Neck!

Shopping suddenly seems in order so the party head off to sort out some protection for their now rather vulnerable-feeling necks. Astra persuades a bemused cooper to knock up a sort of wooden collar for each of the party, which is paid for by Andrea. As the others while away the time until six, Astra checks in with her tutor at the Thieves' Guild for the standard anti-garrot technique. The Thieves' Guild use a specially cured leather neck brace that can be easily concealed under clothing, unlike the heavy and clumsy wooden versions that they have purchased. The leather neck protectors are available for, almost... free. Astra is made to understand that the Guild will require a small favour of her... one day.

Back to ~~Unseen~~ The University of Magical Arts

Promptly at 6 the party are teleported back into Scriborus's study. As the open fire crackles pleasantly in the background our heroes are told the worst.

The dagger is inhabited by a creature known as a Haunt. This type of creature can be laid to rest if it fulfils some crucial task. Only hosts of similar alignment may be possessed without the Haunt rejecting the host which induces self-strangulation!

Scriborus informs that party that they must determine the Haunt's alignment and its task. He wishes them luck and teleports them back outside. It is now about a quarter past six.

Reason for XP	Andrea	Astra	Alvin	Hemegretham	Zeppo
Opponents					
Spells			70		
Proficiencies	30	30			
Ideas	210	140	140	60	
Problem Solving					
Role Play	40	50	30	40	
Treasure					
Finishing					
Fun Factor		20		10	
Penalties					
Total (This session)	280	240	240	90	
Grand Total	390	450	450	140	70

DM's Notes:-

1. It is not entirely beyond the realms of possibility to find a Sage at that time of night in Greyhawk City. Indeed some of these types are confirmed night owls, sitting up well into the small hours poring over arcane tomes. Whether they would accept visitors is another thing entirely. Temples of Greyhawk are also usually open throughout the night, although it's entirely your decision if you want to wake your High Priest or Abbott or whatever.
2. 22:30 Dave had to leave and will be away next week. Therefore Alvin is called to deeper meditations and contemplations. (Clerics, choose your Gods - we can get a lot more out of this stuff)

House Rules :-

- Treasure XP is to be equally divided between all party members unless there are circumstances where an individual is wholly or mostly responsible for recovering the treasure. In this case the character will receive a larger proportion of the XP than the rest of the party.
- Creatures killed or defeated in battle earn XP for the character. In the case of a group action where the group as a whole is responsible for the defeat the XP will be shared.
- Standard CLW's cast in unremarkable circumstances score 10XP. CLW's cast in combat get more according to how sweaty the situation is.
- Clerical Turn Undead scores a base 100XP as use of a power, however bonuses can be awarded for spectacular dice rolling or cunning use of the ability. The XP is recorded as a spell.
- Mages may learn all of the first level spells available to them regardless of Intelligence limit.
- Dave's rather useful spell training rule goes here.