

# **Border Watch**

## **Session 3      13-5-02    The road to Fort Belvor**

Next Session Monday 20-5-02    At Brian's place (Note 19:00 start)

### **Evening at the camp...**

Sir James studies one of the black arrows, noting that the charred arrowheads indicate that they might have been used as fire-arrows. Solipsis points out that the road has not been repaired as they were informed, a fact that James attributes to "Military Intelligence", presumably a quality somewhat lacking in Furyondy's finest. Questioned about the other caravan, Malin says he had no knowledge of any other traffic, he was also told that they were the first to try this route in years but who cares, he's being well paid. At this point Snatch reminds Malin (for the first time) to get some snare wire when he gets to town. Solipsis suggests that he try looking in of the ambushed wagons. After some amusing banter between James and Ryan, the Paladin decides he's been too tough on poor old Rizla and raises his wages from 1 gp to 5 gp per month. He will, of course, be continuing to preach to the villain (despite having no ability whatsoever), which somewhat irks Solipsis, who reminds James that he is the only Priest here, Holy Warrior or no Holy Warrior. Fortunately things settle down and Solipsis muses over why the Sergeant would have given them false information concerning the condition of the road. Bod wonders whether there might be some plot involving re-routing of road repair funds. Using his skills as a Fletcher Bod is able to identify the arrows as of Orcish manufacture. Before turning in; Snatch, Bod and Ryan make two trips to the river to fill all of the caravan's buckets with water. There is an amusing interlude when both Bod and James try to out-Lawful each other, suggesting first that the buckets be placed perfectly symmetrically and also with signs saying water and this way up.

Night passes relatively quietly with two wolves attempting to make a meal of Snatch but not quite having the front to approach the campfire. Apart from this they are not disturbed and wake bright and early (as usual).

### **Day 8**

Solipsis suggests looking for tracks so Ryan, Rufus and Bod set off to do so, finding large Wolf tracks off the road and wagon tracks on the road indicating the wrecked wagon train preceded them. With an outstanding display of ability Ryan also finds traces of an even earlier wagon train that had passed about a week before. Searching ahead of the wrecked wagon train he finds a trail toward a copse of trees, as if something had been dragged in that direction.

Meanwhile among the ambushed wagons Snatch and Rufus search around, checking for traps. Back at the wagon train James has called wagons roll and an ever-enthusiastic Malin has the train moving immediately. Soli is rather more cautious but relaxes a bit when Snatch waves them on.

Investigating the copse Bod and Ryan find a pile of slaughtered bodies – The Merchants and Guards of the other caravan (corpses in copses, whatever next!). They note that one of the bodies bears more than a passing resemblance to Jasmalus and start to drag this body back to camp.

### **Ambush**

Suddenly there is a loud snap from the woods and they turn to see a startled Orc in armour, turn and run toward the cover of the deeper forest. Bod immediately legs it after him but pulls up when he sees James and Solipsis riding in hot pursuit. Making the tree line they suddenly crash to the ground as both horses are felled by a cruel pit trap that snaps James' horse's foreleg and lames Solipsis' mount. Fortunately both our heroes both are skilled horsemen and they manage to dismount without damage to themselves. Soli guards the injured horses while James pounds off after the Orc.

Meanwhile back at the camp, another four Orcs emerge from cover 100 yds further up the road and immediately start firing flaming arrows toward the caravan. Bod shouts at the top of voice, "It's a trap! Everyone back to camp!" just as a log trap obviously designed to unseat a rider swoops above James' head. He turns and begins to run back as Solipsis casts CLW on the most injured horse, restoring its leg to full health.

The main group take cover behind the wagons as a volley of burning arrows misses pathetically. Solipsis begins to lead the horses back as a pair of arrows whistle past James' ears. Rufus, having realised that there are only four Orcs, rises and charges them by himself. Bod, Ryan and Rizla return arrow fire as Ryan takes a lucky (or unlucky from his point of view) hit with a flaming arrow. Owch!

Suddenly from behind, two more groups of four Orcs, armed with Broadswords break cover and charge the last wagon in the party. Snatch, lurking in the bushes, takes his chance and backstabs the nearest one finishing it easily. Rufus ploughs into the first of archers and kills the Orc with one blow. Meanwhile James Lays Hands on the other horse, fully curing it. Bod chooses the nearest group of Orcs and charges enthusiastically, yelling ancient Dwarven curses at his enemies. He smashes into them as suddenly another one drops to the ground, signalling Snatch's presence again. A Magic Missile streaks in and flattens an Orc as Sir James urges his mount on in a spectacular leap over the wagon train, that is unfortunately a bit too spectacular as he overshoots and spends some time getting his horse under control. Another Magic Missile flies from Solipsis as Bod and Rufus flatten yet more opponents in what is turning out to be a bit of a failure as an ambush.

Ryan and Rizla use the wagons as cover while raining arrows down upon the Orcs however the party are alarmed to see that two Orcs have made it to Jasmalus and are trying to impale him with their Broadswords, something they seem hell-bent on achieving despite the whizzing arrows and dangerous opponents. Solipsis shoots his remaining Magic Missile and reduces Jasmalas' opposition by 50%. Rufus kills the last of the four archers as James finally gets the horse under control and tries to take the head off another. The remaining Orcs fall to their knees pleading for mercy in Orcish. Bod asks his if it can speak Common but since it doesn't seem able to, he decides to kill it instead. James smacks the remaining Orc with the flat of his blade knocking it unconscious. As the dust settles, eleven Orcs lie dead, their attempted ambush a pathetic failure.

Bod ties up the captive Orc and tethers it to the last wagon, where it is dragged along the ground. Solipsis, heaves the body of the merchant (that resembles Jasmalus) across his horse, as Malin, at Soli's request mans the intact wagon from the ambushed caravan. As they ride they discuss their conclusion i.e. that someone is after something in their caravan and perhaps the other caravan was ambushed because it was similar to theirs. All except Rufus notice Jasmalus scribbling furiously into his little black book, perhaps writing up the exciting events of the day. They notice that their captive Orc is kicking up rather a lot of dust as it is dragged behind the last wagon so Snatch goes and cuts it free, finding that the miserable creature has already had its throat cut! James tries to get a confession but nobody will admit to the deed. In fact the prevailing party attitude is that Orcs are better off dead anyway. A furious James rides on, as Solipsis ruefully decides not to learn the Comprehend Languages spell for tomorrow.

The caravan rolls on until suddenly the first wagon lurches forward, as one of the front wheels collapses! The drivers quickly get to work but are alarmed to find that the spare wagon wheels have been sabotaged! Fortunately they are able to use the intact spare wheel from the fourth caravan as a replacement. After a few hours they get moving again until nightfall when they make camp. There is a lot of discussion (argument?) about the dead Orc and also some discussion about their cargo. Solipsis seems to think that this changes their conditions of employment, since they were told they were only carrying "normal" trade goods. However Bod strongly disagrees and takes the opinion that an escort job is an escort job. In general his views prevail, although the party have certainly concluded that there is something about either Jasmalus or his wagon that is either valuable or important.

### **Day 9 – Fort Belvor**

They spend a peaceful night and get rolling by first light at which point Bod finally admits to killing the captive Orc in "self-defence". James expresses his disgust with Bod's standpoint that at least the Orc is now redeemed. A few hours further on they are met by a patrol of Furyondian cavalry out of Fort Belvor, led by Lieutenant Ellis. As they ride toward the fort he recommends the town inn "The Fighting Man" as a good place to stay and informs them that they are the third wagon train to pass through here recently, a fact that rather surprises them. A bit of further questioning reveals that the other two passed within two weeks, one of them escorted by only four Adventurers, must be a high level group, they conclude. The other was escorted by a group of twelve fighters. Solipsis remembers that the ambushed caravan had at least ten guards. As they arrive at Fort Belvor Lt. Ellis takes charge of the merchants body, no he doesn't recognise him and Malin and co. depart to set up in the merchant's square, covertly observed by Solipsis who notes that they seem to behave pretty much as merchants seem to do.

Revealing himself he checks that Malin has already ordered the replacement wheels and reminds him that the party own a cut of the take for the fourth wagon. He then heads off to the Fighting Man to join the others. Meanwhile Snatch has been doing some trading of his own getting four daggers, 30 sling bullets and two small mirrors. At the armourer's Rufus has his eye on a fine suit of plate armour with an advertised price of 1200gp. After an impressive round of haggling the price is settled at 875gp to be paid in cash by next morning. Rizla gets 1gp for his first week of employment with James, at least he's not dead, and Snatch completes his shopping with the purchase of two grappling hooks.

As they enjoy their ale the party are pleased to find that Malin has bought them a keg. Also some of the locals want to buy these intrepid heroes a drink or two as well. It certainly seems that their valour is appreciated here on the front line. After a few ales a message is delivered to them. The Garrison commander, Captain Mikinus would be pleased to enjoy the pleasure of their company over dinner.

They take the Captain up on his offer and enjoy a pleasant meal during which Mikinus closely questions them about events on the trail. Quizzed about the differences in the description of the road he laughs and says, "That's what you get for listening to a backfield sergeant who won't come close to the fighting." He also says he hasn't heard anything about lizardmen in the area. He explains that large raiding groups of Orcs cross the fords further downstream and split up into many smaller groups that raid local traffic and towns. The party could potentially be facing groups of anything from 10 to 400 Orc raiders! Rufus rubs his hands together in glee at the thought of 400 Orcs and him in plate armour, although some rather leveller heads in the party note the large figure warily. After dinner they return to the Inn to get some well-earned rest. But in the small hours of the morning their pleasant dreams are rudely interrupted by an almighty crash and the sounds of burning and panicked shouting.

### **Hit Point Situation**

I forgot to ask again.

Bod 24(?), Snatch 13(?), Solipsis Full, James 20(?), Ryanair 14(?), Rufus Full.

<b>Reason for XP</b>	<b>Bod</b>	<b>Snatch</b>	<b>Solipsis</b>	<b>James</b>	<b>Ryanair</b>	<b>Rufus</b>
Opponents	35	30	20	25	25	35
Spells			40	10		
Proficiencies	20	40	20	20	40	20
Ideas/Clues	60	40	80	50	40	20
Problem Solving						
Role Play	80	60	70	90	60	80
Treasure						
Finishing						
Fun Factor	50	40	40	80	40	60
Bonuses						
Penalties						
<b>Total (This session)</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>215</b>
<b>Total (This adventure)</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>450</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3904</b>	<b>3510</b>	<b>2783/2783</b>	<b>3568</b>	<b>3113</b>	<b>3195</b>

### **DM Notes**