

Invisible Stalker

Single Session 15-2-00 Damsel in “this dress”

In the port town of Hardby, the shadows are lengthening as a small group stroll from the port area into the relative quiet of the walled town. Having just completed a tour of duty on the Pirate protection vessel, “The Surf Dragon” (DM note 1). They are considering a possible future as an adventuring party, after all they are right next door to the famous Abor Alz range; where legends speak of deep, dark dungeons in which lie fabulous fortunes for those bold enough to brave the dangers.

They are:-

Len:	Halfling Thief (Malcolm)
LooLoo (yes really):	Human Fighter (Karim)
Larry:	Human Magic User (Simon)
Llewellyn:	Human Cleric (Andy)
Rasputin:	Human Fighter (Jan)

Suddenly there is the crash of a door being thrown open and a white form explodes into their midst, throwing several of the group to the ground. Llewellyn instinctively attempts to turn undead but the white form is very much alive and is revealed to be an attractive young lady clad in only a long white nightdress. She is plainly terrified and appeals to the party for help. She identifies herself as Rebecca, a local dressmaker, and claims that she is being stalked by a ghost – a man she herself killed! Llewellyn wraps his cloak around her and kindly soothes her enough to allow her to recount her story.

“It all began several weeks ago. A man approached me in the street and started making advances. I told him I wasn’t interested but he wouldn’t leave me alone. I ran back to my shop and locked the door. I thought that would be the end of it but he started following me. I would look out of the window of my shop and he would be there, watching me. I would go to the market and he would follow me – always at a distance but close enough that I was aware of his presence. Last week, I don’t know whether he got tired of waiting or felt that the time was right, but he grabbed me as I was returning from the market, put his hand over my mouth, and dragged me into a back alley at knifepoint. We struggled and fell and when I turned to look I saw the knife sticking out of his throat! He was dead! I ran back to my shop and locked myself in my room and stayed there until morning. Later that day I informed the city guard what had happened but by then the body had disappeared from the alley. Several times since then I could swear I’ve been aware of a presence nearby, watching me. I put it down to my imagination and tried to get on with my life. Tonight after I closed the shop I was brushing my hair when I looked up and saw him appear – *in my room!* He whispered “I have come for you Rebecca,” and he held out his arms as if to grab me! I ran – right into you! Please, you must save me from him! You must!”

As the party consider this a ghostly whisper is heard, “I will have you before the night is out, Rebecca. Any that oppose me will die!” With this Rebecca becomes hysterical and it takes both the kind hearted Larry and the charming Llewellyn to calm her. The party agree to protect her despite the world-weary protestations of the cynical Halfling Thief Len who wants to bugger off for a drink.

Entering the door the party scout around and discover a small two-story house. The ground floor of which is the dressmaker’s shop. There are cupboards and shelves containing bolts of cloth and garments for sale and a long counter. There are 4 glassless shuttered windows and a fireplace in the western wall. Behind a red curtain at the back is a small room with chair and a teapot and kettle. There are some storage cupboards for food, a flight of stairs leading up and another door, which leads to a small changing room. As they look around downstairs, Rasputin has the peculiar feeling that there is someone standing behind him. Quickly turning around, he sees nothing. He shrugs and continues to survey the shop. Strangely enough Len also has a similar feeling but discounts it when he turns and also sees nothing. Upstairs the party finds a modest sitting room, also with a fireplace and one shuttered window. A door to a workroom where Rebecca’s current project, A brightly coloured Jester’s costume with many beautiful little brass bells is supported on a tailor’s dummy. A door to the south leads to Rebecca’s bedroom, which has a well-built bed and a large wardrobe. Through a door lies a privy and washroom. Looking under the bed Rasputin notices a china pot. Above the bed is the holy symbol of St Cuthbert of the Cudgel. As the rest of the group enter the room they find Rasputin searching through Rebecca’s underwear in the wardrobe. There are a few remarks about dressing up but fortunately Rebecca doesn’t hear them. Reluctantly Rasputin returns the items to the wardrobe as they discuss the situation.

Llewellyn and Larry from the first have stated that they will protect the lady throughout the night however Len and Looloo were looking forward to that drink and aren't really keen. Noticing some dissent their charming hostess offers Herbal Tea. Llewellyn and Larry ("Dedicated to my Art"), both teetotallers, happily take tea with Rebecca as Len and Looloo stride off towards the nearest pub in disgust. Rasputin hulks around as Rebecca serves up some food, cold meats etc and responding to the big Fighter's not-so subtle hints returns with a jug of wine which he quaffs gratefully.

Meanwhile at "The Ship's Biscuit" the lads make the acquaintance of the landlord Reginald who chats away happily until he is called away by other customers. A fight breaks out in the corner and two desperate characters lay into each other until they are thrown out onto the street. Len and Looloo sigh miserably – Hardby's just getting too respectable these days... Returning to the Dressmakers they persuade Rebecca to show them the scene of the attack, however lacking Ranger/Tracking skills the group finds no evidence in the alleyway. Returning to the shop they ask her about her clothing, which she says she has thrown away since it was badly bloodstained – Fortunately the sack is still awaiting the binmen and our heroes are shown a badly bloodstained dress. Maybe she is for real?

Len excuses himself and goes off in search of some mud with a clay-like consistency. When he returns to the shop he makes an impression of Rebecca's key. Whatever could he want that for? A Yawning Rebecca heads for bed but is advised by Larry to wear daytime clothes in case they have to run for it. She does as instructed, washes, and brushes her beautiful long hair 3000 times before settling into bed watched over by Llewellyn and Larry. Looloo lights the fire in the sitting room and drawing an armchair up to the warmth props his feet on the grate and his sword on his knees. Downstairs, Len sits against the now locked front door and instantly falls asleep while Rasputin lights the downstairs fire and sits on the counter. This is the peaceful scene as the bells of the Hardby watch-tower chime the witching hour!

Dozing on the counter, Rasputin is startled to hear a click, which he suspects may just be the dying embers of the fire, but no – there it is again and Len also wakes. They check the front door which is now unlocked! Len steals upstairs to inform the others and returns after a brief conference. Suddenly they all hear a noise in the sitting room. Rasputin and Llewellyn rush into the room to find Looloo slumped on the floor. A quick examination reveals a dart in his neck although he is breathing normally. Rasputin noticing the wide open shutters looks out but sees nothing. He quickly fastens them again before returning downstairs to find Len collapsing to the floor and the front door wide open. Calling out for help he too is struck by something and collapses in a heap on the floor. Llewellyn charges down the stairs as a desperate Larry advises the frightened Rebecca to hide under the bed. Meanwhile in the sitting room Looloo staggers back to his feet throwing off the effects of a definitely un-ghostly sleeping dart. Llewellyn bursts through the curtain into the dimly lit room and is dismayed to see his fallen comrades, who both have deadly wounds in their backs. A quick scan of the room reveals no immediate threat and he bends down to examine their condition as with a "thunk" a dart buries itself in the wall next to his head. Looloo appears in the entrance followed by Larry who has had the foresight to bring a Lantern. Convinced that they are fighting an invisible enemy Llewellyn backs up to the wall as Looloo rushes into the centre of the room, all blind-fighting senses alert to the slightest movement. As Larry holds the lamp up Looloo slashes into nothing - but feels his blade bite into flesh! There is grunt of pain and something pulls away from his sword. Llewellyn returns to his patients and starts to treat them, Healing and casting CLW, as something swishes just past Looloo's ear. He returns a mighty blow and strikes again – was that a flicker in the air, perhaps the outline of a person! Suddenly an explosion of smoke bursts into the centre of the room. In a last ditch effort Looloo surges forward and with one great blow strikes down the invisible creature. As the smoke clears a mortally wounded human figure is revealed dressed entirely in black. He has another fresh neck wound to add to the scar of a recently healed knife wound, although he won't be getting up from this particular blow. With his last breath he whispers, "Rebecca, if only I could have touched you, just one more time...", before departing this life forever.

A search of the body reveals a blowpipe and a supply of darts with discoloured tips, a bloodstained knife and several items of Thief's equipment. Particularly of interest are the climbing gloves and shoes. He is also wearing a dull gold ring. Rebecca identifies the man and is quick to lavish praise upon her protectors, particularly that handsome Cleric and his noble Wizard friend. The watch are called and the man is identified as a known criminal called Ialgo. With Rebecca's testimony clearing the party of any wrongdoing the watch are happy to dispose of the body. Another crime solved by Hardby's finest. Of course, the hapless Rogue has been stripped of anything useful by our friends. Llewellyn casts Detect Magic on the items and discovers that the ring is magical! When he recovers Len will be able to sell all the Thiefling kit in one of the dodgier parts of town.

Llewellyn, knowing when he's onto a good thing asks the lovely Rebecca out for a date and she happily accepts. Party poopers Len and Rasputin will be out of commission in Rebecca's house for a couple of days, but what the hell! A Cleric needs a bit of patience.

Reason for XP	LooLoo	Larry	Rasputin	Llewellyn	Len	
Opponents	50	10	10	20	10	
Spells				20		
Proficiencies				10		
Ideas		10				
Problem Solving						
Role Play	30	50	30	50	40	
Treasure						
Finishing	200	200	200	200	200	
Fun Factor	20	10	10	30	20	
Penalties						
Total (This session)	300	280	250	330	270	
Grand Total	300	280	250	330	270	

DM's Notes:-

1. Although not immune to sea-sickness, the maritime experience of this party will render them highly resistant to all but major occurrences – ie. Storms and Gales. After all, even the saltiest sea dog can lose his lunch in a force 9 without embarrassment.
2. The amount of times I mentioned those bloody bells! A dressmaker's shop would contain plenty of thread with which to string alarm bells over every entrance. Oh well, a very good start from the role playing perspective, even if two of you crossed into the darkness rather quicker than you were expecting. The next series of adventures will feature this group for approximately 4 sessions before we return for an epic series of Star Cairns.