

The Barrowmaze

Session 105 22-09-26 The Barrow of Traps

Next Session 30-09-26

Wednesday the 27th day of Haenubrius, 11:10, Barrow 38

They enter another typical barrow corridor, descending the stairs before emerging cautiously into an antechamber area which continues for 20 ft before expanding into a more open space disappearing into darkness west to east and visible to the walls 50 ft north to south.

The chamber seems to be in good order and there is very little dust. The floor and wall stones are exceptionally well-fitted, showing great care and expertise applied to the construction of this unusual barrow. Leo notices that the two corners he can see via his continual light pendant have been perfectly curved with similarly impressive stonework and the walls have been polished to a marble-like sheen, presenting a sheer surface. As his light reveals more, he sees that artfully inset into the stone are fresco paintings of god-like figures of chaos and death cavorting in their carefree and casually cruel fashion.

Whilst Leo and Luna are examining the walls at the eastern end of the chamber Gerald walks forwards past the curved entrance area and into the fresco adorned portion of the room triggering a dart trap which fires a multitude of razor sharp missiles from both north and south. Most of them hit Gerald, slicing with razor sharp precision into gaps in his armour and even penetrating the chainmail in some places. Receiving massive damage from the assault, Gerald collapses in a pool of blood as the rest of Hammers stand aghast before a chorus of "Gerald needs to more careful!" recrimination breaks out.

Leo moves quickly to pull the groaning but still conscious Gerald from the trapped area where Bella and Fenella can examine him. As the healers see what they can do Leo wonders, "what is this place?" Gerald Lays Hands upon himself for the second time this week, with St Ygg's beneficence working its miraculous healing. Bella also casts a CLW on him, for his own good. "I think I've found a trap," Gerald grimaces. He explains, he felt a very slight movement in the floor when he trod on it. Leo tosses a torch into the suspect area but nothing happens, it just lies next to the very few darts that missed Gerald.

Bat Reconnaissance

Fenella briefly explains her intentions and then transforms herself into her favourite dungeon reconnaissance animal, a Bat. Using her echolocation, she perceives the entire 70 ft by 50 ft chamber, ending to the west in an alcove where a pedestal stands, supporting a medium sized urn. Upon the wall, hangs a metallic horn of the type used for signals in hunting or battle.

She flutters around the chamber making a thorough ultrasonic squeaking survey of the topography before descending quite low to an interesting reflection from the floor which she perceives as very narrow and precisely fitted seams dividing the main length of the chamber into four 10 ft east to west zones running the whole width of the room. Returning to the group, she transforms back into human shape and explains the situation to them.

Luna considers climbing the sheer walls but weighing up the risk of her wall climbing skill level (50%) against the potentially lethal damage decides to shelve that plan. Gerald has the bright idea of using some of the rubble they created when destroying the door slab to test out the nature of the traps in the room. It's a good idea and they enthusiastically gather the rocks to at least satisfy their curiosity.

As they return to the chamber with their rocks, they notice that the darts and the torch lying on the floor in the first trapped zone seem to be "melting" gradually into the stone. "Magic," concludes Gerald and he's probably right but without some sort of Magic User they can only guess.

As they prepare a pile of rocks Fenella considers which animal forms might assist in recovering the urn and the horn from the far end of the room without triggering any traps.

Rocky Pétanque

Leo chucks the first rock, landing it next to the torch and triggering the same hail of darts. "Hmmm, again, that's disappointing," he mutters. Gerald suggests the next zone and Leo chucks another, landing it squarely within the second zone. Immediately three large scything, razor sharp blades swing at speed across the width of the room. Leo flings another rock but misses the third zone, instead triggering the scythes in the second zone. He then clumsily repeats the botch triggering the scythes again.

He gives up and asks for help and Luna steps up and tries but she also misses. With some irritation Leo chucks another and hits the fourth zone, triggering a heavy crossbow bolt fired with considerable force along the length of the room whizzing past Gerald, giving him a fright but fortunately no damage.

Luna tries to hit zone 3 as everyone takes a few nervous steps away from the centre of the room and her rock drops dextrously onto the target triggering a seemingly random cascade of jets of intense fire spurting up all over the floor. It looks as if anyone caught in the conflagration would be at minimum burned horribly. "Is this actually worth it?" asks Fenella sceptically but the others reckon that if something is this well protected then it must be highly valuable or incredibly useful or both.

After a short break to consider plans Fenella concludes that she could transform into a relatively small bird that is strong enough to manipulate items and small enough to manoeuvre in this space. After some discussion with the others, she settles on using a Raven. Gerald has a relatively small grappling hook which a Raven could carry so they tie the hook to a 50 ft length of rope.

Fenella transforms into a Raven and flies across the trapped areas. Reaching the far wall, she is able to lift the horn with her claws and with a lot of energetic flapping she flies back and deposits it on the ground.

She hops around waiting for Bella and Luna to have a look at the horn, just in case there is a warning against touching the golden urn. They examine the horn's beautifully engraved designs of shipborne northern warriors, carrying battle axes and heavy swords and helmets with horns charging to battle. The horn is in very good condition and is very beautiful, also the cord also is very artfully woven leather, supple and fine. Shadwell hooks it to his belt for safekeeping.

Leo wants a 120 ft rope, which they don't have but they plan on tying two lengths together which make the rope too heavy for the Raven. They all have some problems with this, Gerald even providing the insight that, "she's only lifting one end," but Fenella the highly intelligent Raven can't communicate that a considerable weight of the 50 ft rope would need to be lifted because...

Physics Class

The rope, when lifted by the Raven constitutes a right angled triangle of forces with **angle A** held by one of the Hammers providing a "local ground" and **angle B** being the far end of the rope, supported by the Raven. Without letting any of the rope touch the ground the entire weight of the rope must be lifted by the force providing the elevation, in this case the upward lift of the Raven. If the rope is allowed to trail along the ground, then the length of rope to lift is shortened by the length of the rope lying on the ground. Of course, we can also introduce friction as the Raven flies away with one end of the rope but that's probably going too far.

Hemp rope 50 ft is 5 kg

Silk rope 50 ft is 2 kg

Small grapple hook 1 kg

Assuming The Hammers have a silk 50 ft rope then it's just about possible that a highly motivated Raven can, at full frantically flapping effort, carry 2 kg plus a small grappling hook 1 kg, over a short distance such as the 45 ft to the far end of the trapped area and still be able to hook it into the urn's handle.

Fishing for Gold

Unfortunately, this all comes out as, “caw caw caw,” yet somehow, they seem to get the message and reduce the load to a single length of 50 ft of silk rope, with Leo leaning out over trap zone 1, secured by Gerald hanging onto him, holding the other end of the rope as Raven Fenella takes flight with the hook tightly gripped in her claws. Thanks to their careful planning she makes it over the trapped zones and hooks the rope to the golden urn. Leo promptly tugs it off the pedestal and it clangs loudly to the floor.

Fenella flies back to the group as Leo hauls the urn over the traps, triggering first the crossbow, then the fire; through which the rope just about survives, then into the scythe zone where the rope is unfortunately sliced in two leaving the urn hooked to the grapple, gently rocking to a halt in zone 2.

Shadwell produces a 10 ft pole (!?!) and Morgaine, who has very good dexterity, grabs hold of it and tries to manoeuvre it into the handle of the urn. She fluffs the first try and just manages to shove it a little further away. On the second try she manages to move it a bit closer to them. After a bit more figuring out, Fenella flies over and recovers the grapple, returning it to the others. They tie it to the remaining long part of the rope and go fishing for the urn, bringing it back within a few attempts and causing a hail of darts as the urn makes it over the final trap. Excellent Teamwork!

Leo wonders about exploring another Barrow but Fenella, transforming back to herself wants to examine the loot. They value the plain golden urn at 500 gp and Luna takes a close look at the horn. It is perfectly preserved and looks just like new.

Our Friends from Valhalla

Luna experimentally blows the horn producing a surprisingly deep tone, which resonates seemingly further than their immediate surroundings, reaching out for... something. The light dims around them and they feel a chill breeze as an answering call comes back from another similar horn that seems to approach from a great distance. As they look around for the source, they hear the sound of marching boots rapidly drawing nearer. Materialising out of a swirling black mist a squad of Draugr warriors (2d4+4) march up to Luna and stop, staring impassively right at her, weapons at the ready.

Both Bella and Gerald grip their weapons as this clearly unnatural force of chaos warriors manifests and appears to be awaiting Luna's command. Luna asks them who they are but they just stand, impassively watching her, the one who blew the horn. Leo suggests walking outside and seeing if they follow.

As the party move to leave the Barrow the warriors move out of their way and as The Hammers depart the warriors follow obediently behind them. Gerald mutters, “that horn needs to be destroyed,” as he grumbles about summoning things long dead. Emerging from the barrow they notice some additional barrows through the mist to the east.

With the benefit of her scholarly intelligence, Fenella is aware that the culture of these warriors is profoundly chaotic, and indeed the symbols on their shields are chaotic symbols... these warriors are probably berserkers.

Gerald and Bella as solidly Lawful followers of St Ygg are not at all happy with this situation, along with Phineas and Shadwell, they don't like even the idea of a squad of Chaotic undead warriors doing their bidding, although the Chaotics; Leo, Luna and Morgaine are excited to see what they can do and Neutral Fenella doesn't give a damn. Phineas does however find his mercenary side weighing up the benefits... eight more swords and axes has an appealing sound however you look at it.

Wednesday the 27th day of Haenubrius, 13:50, Barrow 38