The Barrowmaze

Session 107 14-10-26 Weird Dreams

Next Session 21-10-26

Wednesday the 28th day of Haenubrius, 15:00, The Western Marshes

Lugging their heavy burdens back through the marshes they encounter four Giant Marsh Toads blocking the way ahead in a kind of defensive wall. Following their pre-arranged plans, Luna commands the Draugr to charge the Toads as Leo advances in support.

Toads of Toad Wall

Following orders, the first Draugr charges and attacks the Toad opposite, wounding it as two Toads waddle surprisingly quickly towards The Hammers. Weighed down by his treasure Leo can nevertheless move to engage the closer Toads, attacking and wounding the nearest.

Two Draugr engage the nearest Toad, joining Leo in his fight, both dealing mighty wounds to the slimy beast. Gerald scowls in conflict as his hated undead foes fight on his side for a change. He exchanges a brief glance with Bella who also wears the same expression of annoyance and disbelief.

A Draugr receives a vicious snap from the Marsh Toad's razor sharp jaws as Gerald attacks and misses, sighing ruefully as he is dodged by a Toad and outperformed by the dead!

Fenella, noticing that Phineas is still wounded from earlier, casts a full CLW on the wounded warrior as yet another Draugr slices into a Toad. Bella almost attacks one of the Draugr before remembering they are on her side, rolling her eyes at the utter absurdity of it all, instead manoeuvring for a better Toad attack.

Morgaine flings her Dagger of Throwing at a more distant Toad for a nice strike before it tumbles back into her hand. Shadwell shoots a crossbow bolt, hitting for good damage as Gerald mutters prayers to St Ygg for at least a bit of luck in battle.

Fenella begins to chant and gesture, as the Draugr continue to slice and dice the Toads. Leo also struggles to avoid attacking the Draugr and is obviously put off by it since he misses the gigantic Toad squatting right in front of him!

Gerald scowls as he stands amidst a squad of undead warriors all hitting their targets as yet again, he misses his attack.

A couple of Draugr gang up on a badly wounded Toad and swiftly finish it off with some devastating sword and axe attacks. As they do battle, the warriors are clearly bellowing out battle cries and oaths yet are eerily silent in The Hammers' plane of reality to which they have been summoned.

Suddenly, Fenella's Wall of Thorns spell erupts from the ground in a complex double L pattern to enclose all of the Toads, even the dead one, the Druid is taking no chances.

A terrible wailing squeal issues forth from the deadly hedge of death, now featuring attractively scalloped topiary decoration along the top edges thanks to Fenella's increasingly high levels of expertise. Toad blood and gore streams from the frantically shaking hedges as the struggling Toads die horribly at the hands of Mother Nature.

As soon as the Toads are screened from them, the Draugr hold their attacks, waiting a moment with weapons ready, before turning and walking methodically back to their summoner, and vanishing as their hour of activity expires.

As the Hammers organise themselves Gerald looks depressed. Stuck in a group with a squad of undead he can't hit anything and they're outdoing him, a Paladin of St Ygg! He is not a happy Paladin and Bella is also not a happy Priest but they do their best to cheer each other up on the tough, heavily encumbered journey back to Helix, taking solace in their own company and their devotion to each other and St Ygg.

By 18:00 they have slogged their way back to Helix and Bollo sends a runner to summon Hoffenung to open the bank specially for them to safely deposit their impressive haul. Hoffenung himself comes out to take charge, managing the deposit operation and conducting the appropriate amount of privileged client obsequiousness as he signs off the documentation and dispenses the receipts to The Hammers.

Leo buys a round for the house to distract the crowd as they bank their treasure and he is toasted royally by the grateful throng who are already big fans of the frequently generous and always convivial Knight.

The usual cures are performed with both Fenella and Bella casting on Gerald and Leo.

Gerald Dreams Again

They turn in for the night and Gerald has a vivid dream…

He is standing by himself near the entrance of Barrow 37 and it is eerily quiet and still on the Barrow Moor. Looking around, he turns his gaze to the east and finds his attention is focussed on the covered Barrow 48 to the northeast. As he looks, the barrow seems to become unnaturally clear and detailed in his dream vision and he hears a distant weary whisper which he knows emanates from the barrow, "brother… help me," and weakly, "I seek confession." Gerald asks, "who are you?" but not hearing anything he moves towards the barrow, closer and closer until… he wakes in bed in Helix. (Thursday 29th day of Haenubrius)

Gerald immediately tells Bella, she had been about to wake him anyway since he was clearly disturbed in his sleep, and she takes the dream very seriously since a priest is needed for confession and she must go if a soul is calling for absolution; somehow, Gerald knows this isn't urgent, not right now at least; and he hears the whisper in his mind again, "soon…"

Gerald and Bella go to see Othar, the Priest of Helix, before going to breakfast. The other Hammers notice they are not there, but then it's not unusual for Bella and Gerald to tarry a while before joining them.

Othar thinks it's rather interesting, "you felt some sort of… call to your spirit then?" Gerald explains he is not really sure but he thinks it could be a trap but Othar disagrees, "a sealed barrow? I don't really see how it could be a trap unless traps were sealed in it originally, which could be a possibility I suppose." In any event Othar agrees that they should both go, perhaps there is a soul to be saved. As Gerald rises to depart, Othar pats him on the shoulder, "we're so very proud of you my boy," he smiles.

As they join the others, they see Gerald has something on his mind and he relates his dream in detail to the group. They discuss what to do, noting that they have two sealed (usually easy enough to break open) barrows currently of interest, 43 and 52; and the covered (requires excavation) Barrow 48.

Leo asks Bollo to spread the word that they intend to excavate one of the covered barrows and will likely be hiring within a few days, for labourers, a dwarf to manage the diggers and some guards to supplement the team. For now, they decide to head for Barrow 43, arriving in good time without incident.

Barrow 43 – A Weird Welcome

Gerald suggests, "the thief" might like to go first and Luna doesn't seem to mind so they shield their continual light sources to allow her Darkvision to function. Descending the stairs she steps into slightly deeper than ankle depth water, making out a 30 x 30 ft chamber with a fountain in the centre. From the scent of the air, the water seems very fresh. She reports back to the party and they light up and descend.

The chamber is very pleasant, although their feet are wet… it's like being in some sort of spa bath with fresh water flowing gently around, whilst a fountain and a pair of bowls set against the northern and eastern walls gently trickle fresh water, making a relaxing tinkling sound.

Leo spots a door in the western wall as Gerald wades up to the fountain, causing a loud splash as a column of water explodes upwards in the form of some sort of water creature which towers menacingly above him. "He's doing it again," mutters Luna beneath her breath.

Leo can immediately see Gerald is being attacked so he races in to strike at the column of water, strangely causing the Water Weird some distress as his sword passes through it but not as much as Leo would expect from his mighty blow (half damage from edged weapons). Fenella decides to step aside and let Shadwell through, helpfully giving him an encouraging shove.

The Water Weird ignores Leo and sticks to its first target, (sp)lashing out at Gerald who is not actually damaged by the peculiar water tentacle but it is clear that it is trying to drag him into the water with the intent of drowning him. Luna gets a stab attack in, but again it doesn't feel like it does as much damage as she was hoping for.

Phineas and Shadwell charge in and both strike the twisting column of water as Bella repositions and smashes her mace into the water creature, soaking everyone except Fenella who is lurking at the top of the stairs, perhaps reluctant to get her feet wet.

Gerald is attacked again, but the agile Paladin ducks and weaves around the attack. Leo decides to change his weapon to warhammer, in order to be more effective against the Water Weird. He decides not to drop his prized sword into the water so he takes the time to sheath the sword and pull out the hammer in preparation for his next attack.

Luna misses and clever Fenella digs out a crowbar from her pack passing it to Morgaine as an improvised blunt weapon. Morgaine hefts the crowbar menacingly, high five's Fenella and steps forwards. Gerald strikes with his sword (huzzah!) causing some damage to the Water Weird. Morgaine runs in with her crowbar jostling into the fight and adds to the creature's woes courtesy of a solid smack with an iron bar as Shadwell joins her, landing a goodly strike with his Barrows Broadsword.

There is another huge splash as Bella slams the mace into the Water Weird, hurting the creature badly and soaking everyone again. Luna slips in another crafty stab as the creature misses Gerald yet again! Leo swings his warhammer but his balance must be off after using a sword since he completely misses the large tower of water in front of him. Morgaine mugs the water column with her crowbar as Gerald clambers up onto the rim of the fountain to attack, almost finishing the Water Weird as water sprays everywhere.

Eyeing up the target and carefully hefting the Warhammer, Leo slams the weapon home, destroying the Water Weird in a great splash as cascades of water slop over the sides of the fountain. As the splashes die down there remains only the relaxing sound of gently running water and the heavy breathing of the assembled Hammers following their energetic battle.

Thursday 29th day of Haenubrius, 12:00, Barrow 43, Room 1.