The Barrowmaze

Session 109 28-10-26 The Water Witch

Next Session 04-11-26

Thursday 29th day of Haenubrius, 13:15, Barrow 43, Room 3

Fenella offers the ring of water breathing to one of the others since she can transform into an animal which can survive underwater. Gerald thinks a frontline fighter would be the best so she hands it over to Leo who would at least be able to walk around underwater in his plate armour.

They move back into the pedestal room and prepare to open the door. Gathering the living around the pedestal Bella casts a Bless spell on them and they turn their attention to the door. Gerald sloshes it with water and it swings open, revealing a 30 x 30 ft room. Gerald's eyes are immediately drawn to a white-shafted spear standing on a raised stone stand behind a heavy sarcophagus, from which a steady stream of water overflows; however, this has no effect on the level of water in the room which remains just above ankle level. Surveying the chamber, Gerald notes that the walls are decorated with exquisite mosaics depicting the titanic powers of the oceans.

Gerald thinks he should throw something into the sarcophagus to disable any potential trap, Leo shrugs and acquiesces, so Gerald tosses an iron spike and misses the large overflowing sarcophagus. Slightly embarrassed, he has another go and yet again misses the very large target. As he grumpily hands Leo a spike Gerald notices that the water flowing out of the sarcophagus is now flowing faster and the background glow throughout the area has increased in intensity. Leo lobs the spike right into the centre of the sarcophagus pool, making it look too easy, and there is a splash. Nothing further happens so Gerald and Leo advance into the room as Luna commands her Draugr to follow them in to provide support, much to Gerald's irritation and discomfort.

Glossmira

Leo moves around carefully in the room noticing the elaborate mosaics adorning the walls and a large chest sitting upon a dais before the sarcophagus. As they explore further, they see the water begin to flow even faster causing a bulge in the surface within the sarcophagus as a luminous, phantasmal figure of what might have once been an elven woman bursts from within and rises up to float in the air above them where she glowers at them in abject hatred and contempt.

"Intruders, thieves what do you have to say for yourself before you are destroyed by Glossmira," spits the hovering Banshee spirit.

Well aware of the veracity of the spirit's accusations, Gerald musters a shaky, "prepare to meet justice."

Glossmira howls with scornful laughter at the Paladin's hypocritical stance, "justice," she spits, laughing contemptuously, "thou art plundering thief, worm; thou art vandal, thou art worm, prepare to die!"

Fenella listens with interest, "hmmm, she's got a point actually," but the Druid can't see what's happening from the back so she doesn't try to cast anything yet. Luna calls out her command and the nearest Draugr throw their spears at the Glossmira manifestation but they fly wide and Luna also misses with her shortbow.

The Banshee's terrifying fear manifestation blankets the party. Stout-hearted Knight, Sir Leo is immune to fear and his courage inspires those within 10 ft of him too. Some of The Hammers are too far back to see but Gerald and Phineas are right there and both are paralysed by the awful fear, but Bella, cheered by Leo's masterful presence, overcomes her fear and stands firm.

Bella attacks, striking a mighty blow with her Bless boosted magical mace spraying water everywhere as a terrible shrieking is heard from the surprised Banshee, not expecting such a blow from a feeble cleric of St Ygg. Glossmira glowers evilly at Bella, turning her full attention to her and striking with a whiplash from her glowing claws but Bella neatly evades the attack.

Leo steps in and takes a huge slice out of Glossmira, exploding water across the room and prompting an even more hideous shriek as the Water Witch Banshee begins to realise what she's up against as the two Draugr supporting Leo also strike brutally with longsword and battleaxe.

Writhing in pain and fury, Glossmira gathers her strength to retreat into her underwater realm but Morgaine is just not going to permit that and the tall dark warrior's beloved dagger of throwing tumbles straight through the apparition's head, destroying her, amidst screams of astonished rage.

The water stream from the sarcophagus begins to overflow at a rapidly increasing rate and with some alarm they notice that the water level is rising fast as banging sounds are heard further to the west and east. Shadwell cries out, "oh gods the doors!" Snapping out of the Banshee's fear, Gerald quickly assesses the situation and summarises their priorities, "grab the spear, what's in the chest? we'd better get out of here!"

As the water surges up to their thighs, Leo recalls he has the ring of water breathing, which is nice, he thinks. Phineas runs to investigate and reports the western and eastern doors are now closed as the water rapidly rises so Fenella and Shadwell head back down the corridor to see if they can do anything to the eastern door to allow them to escape. Bella tries to grab the spear but is almost swept off her feet and has to struggle to stay up.

Examining the door with Shadwell, Fenella has an astounding flash of brilliant inspiration and quickly makes an almost monk-like series of light blows against the door, utilising the resonances in the surge of water to place exact stresses and pressures on the door to cause a shockwave which smashes the door open much to Shadwell's grateful astonishment.

Leo dexterously seizes the spear, which he had noticed was sitting weirdly stock still in the forceful flow of water. As he lifts the spear from its podium the surge of water quickly subsides and they note with relief that the water level is slowly going down. Examining the white shafted spear Leo guesses it is actually a harpoon but it sits very nicely in his weapon hand as a short spear, what a shame it is a semi-dishonourable weapon that can be thrown in a cowardly manner, he muses.

Living up to Glossmira's "plundering thief" description of him, Gerald goes to look at the chest, waiting until the water level subsides below the top before examining it, noting a sturdy lock.

Finding it a bit crowded, Luna commands the Draugr to move back out of the room and joins Gerald at the chest. Luna checks the lock finding it unlocked and within is another larger haul of gold (6900gp). Shadwell, returning for an iron spike to keep their escape route open, rubs his lower back, complaining, "oh no, not more gold." Leo organises a search of the chamber as Luna checks the spear for any writing, there isn't any.

Gerald thinks Fenella or Morgaine would be good bearers of the spear and they agree that Fenella can have it, because, according to Leo, "she's always whingeing about not having a spear." The grumpy Druid almost jumps for joy when handed the spear but just about restrains herself to save at least most of her dignity.

As they share out the plunder load, Gerald suggests that next time they might bring a mule. Leo asks what they should do with it when they are delving and Gerald suggests leave it outside. They wonder about hiring a muleteer to tend the mule but then the mule and its handler would probably need a couple of guards at least and even then, those guards would probably be rather nervous, this is The Barrow Moor after all.

As they set out for home the Draugr disappear. Gerald mutters "good riddance" as they trudge across the Barrow Moor, soaked to the skin and freezing cold.

Helix

They get back to Helix; cold, wet, pissed off and tired and after banking their plunder and devouring their dinner they turn in early for a restful night.

Friday the first day of Toterius, 08:00

They bump into Tamson Caldwell who says he has heard they are organising an expedition to a covered barrow and he would like to come along and see what they find. Having worked with Tamson before they agree enthusiastically and the young Ranger says to let him know when they're ready to go and he will join them.

They set out for the last of the current set of sealed barrows, Barrow 52, arriving a few hours later without any problem.

Barrow 52

After smashing down the slab entrance, revealing the usual dark steps leading down, Gerald says, "shall we send in, The Thief?" They shield their continual lights and Luna pulls up her Cloak of Elvenkind's hood and vanishes soundlessly into the barrow.

Luna scouts out a typically dingy barrow chamber 30 x 50 ft with a door in the western wall. She reports back and they turn on their lights and descend into the chamber below. Luna listens at the door but she doesn't hear anything, the others search and don't find any secret doors or concealed areas.

Leo tries the heavy bronze door finding it's locked so Luna tries her lockpicking skills but she can't crack it, so Leo and Gerald set to with crowbars and sledgehammers. Unfortunately, the bronze door is a very sturdy and well installed so it takes an hour and a half before they finally get it off its hinges.

Before they enter the next room, Gerald projects Detect Evil ahead of them and finds a pronounced spike in evil dead ahead.

They cautiously enter a 30 x 30 ft, very dusty and cobwebbed room with another bronze door in the northern wall and a chest in the centre of the cobweb and dust encrusted west wall. Fenella stands by with her Wall of Thorns as Leo asks Luna, "do you want to take a look at the chest?" There is a pause before Luna replies, "…er, yes?"

Friday the first day of Toterius, 13:20, Barrow 52, Room 2