

The Barrowmaze

Session 29 23-05-24 Dead Again

Next Session 30/05/24 19.00

Thursday, the 21st day of Besemius 06:00, Helix

Before setting out for the moors The Hammers settle a few outstanding matters of business.

Leo pays 25 gp for the party's expenses and Gerald donates a sum to the church of St Ygg, sufficient to reduce his funds to 500 gp as required by his oath while Reme makes his usual charitable donations around town. Fenella wears the gold skull of paralysation on a chain around her neck, alongside her Continual Light talisman. Leo and Gerald each take one of the Oil of Slipperiness vials and Reme takes the Potion of Giant Strength. Suitably equipped and expenses paid to date, they team up with their retainers and begin the journey to the moor. Enroute Sir Leo wonders about exploring a different location, one of the other barrow mounds perhaps? The others are quite intrigued by the proposition and decide they will see what looks promising when they arrive at the moor.

Led by Reme they come to the edge of the moor by 08:30, heading northeast, past the looming dark spire of black stone, proceeding more easterly until they reach the nearest open barrow (20). Noting the shattered covering stone is long overgrown, they peer into the darkness and lighting torches and lanterns, descend into the darkness below.

They discover a 30 ft x 30 ft chamber containing a sarcophagus decorated with bas reliefs of skeletons dancing in the underworld. The lid of the sarcophagus lies broken to the side and it is clear that this tomb has been plundered. They search around for secret doors without finding any but Arnd is able to discern a construction trick involving the sarcophagus, there are barely visible seam lines around the base and some slight scratches in the floor to the side of it. They examine the stone worked skeleton figures more closely, Fenella and Leo eventually discovering a mechanism operated by pulling and twisting one of the skeletons. In response the sarcophagus grinds slowly aside to reveal a slender staircase lined with dust and cobwebs.

Encouraged by the dust and cobwebs indicating that this passageway appears to be unused, they descend in single file, arriving in a stairwell that turns to a short passage to the east which then opens up into a wider north/south corridor. Moving down the corridor to the south they are surprised by 4 Giant Centipedes which attack immediately, one of them wriggling up Sir Leo and amazingly finding a gap in his superb armour, it bites deep, injecting its deadly poison. Leo is overcome and immediately collapses to his death as the other attacking centipedes fail to injure the party.

Stunned, The Hammers try to react but the Centipedes are too quick, luckily for the others the creatures are not so successful in their attacks. Finally they can act as Fenella rushes in heedless of her own safety to cast Slow Poison on Leo which brings him back from the abyss, he immediately strikes in reaction, groggily finishing the centipede that was occupied with dining on his flesh. Bella, Reme and Gerald all attack but their blows miss their targets as Fenella gives Leo her herbal poison remedy which sadly has no effect this time. At last The Hammers get into their stride as Reme slashes with his broadsword destroying a centipede, Bella smashes one flat with the silver hammer and Gerald kills the last one with the black iron shortsword. Victorious they may be but Leo has only a few hours to get back to Helix to receive a Neutralise Poison spell from Othar before Fenella's Slow Poison spell expires whereupon he will die yet again on the very same day!

They hurry back to the surface as Leo's health gradually deteriorates under the effects of the still active poison. Crossing the moors and picking up the path only discernible by Reme they move quickly making their way through the treacherous boglands back to the road and on to Helix, arriving at the church with 1 hour 45 minutes to spare. Othar hears their story and immediately without fuss or ceremony casts Neutralise Poison on the stricken Knight, completely negating the effects of the centipede poison. The poison threat removed, nevertheless Leo is still sorely wounded so Gerald immediately performs Laying on of Hands as Bella casts both of her CLW's on him. Aided by his friends Leo recovers well and they return to the Inn for much-needed food, drink and rest after this somewhat curtailed expedition.

The Next Day, Friday the 22nd day of Besemius, A grateful Leo makes another donation to the Church of St Ygg, 200 gp this time, for once more saving his Knightly arse. Gerald and Bella again provide their healing powers to Leo, returning him to fighting fitness. During their rest the party discuss possible plans for mapping in the dungeons since they seem to sometimes be unsure of their way as they more fully explore the great labyrinth below.

Saturday, the 23rd day of Besemius at 06:00 in Helix, finds them refreshed and recovered, forming up for yet another expedition to The Barrowmaze.

Notes

The Centipede attacking Leo of course rolled a natural 20 which always hits. These creatures have THAC0 19 so they would normally need an 18 or 19 (or 20 of course) to hit Leo's AC1. If Leo were to stand next to Fenella or Reme and thereby gain the benefit of their Rings of Protection, it would only hit on 19 or 20 (and his save vs death/poison would be +1). It was a very lucky Centipede... at least until a "resurrected" Leo stabbed it to death.

2 * 25 = 50 gp of party expenses are outstanding after 2 nights in Helix.