

The Barrowmaze

Session 39 08-08-24 The Whirlwind

Next Session 14/08/24 19.00

Wednesday the 27th day of Besemius, 16:00, The Barrowmaze Room 286-Q2

Rummaging around in the smashed rubble of the two Runic Golems they discover a total of 6 intact Runic Tablets which they place carefully in the Bag of Holding. While they are considering inventory, Leo decides Gerald's brilliant use of the Oil of Slipperiness at exactly the right moment might just work again so he hands over his Oil of Slipperiness potion to the Paladin. With a heavy load of loot and plunder and unanswered questions regarding the glowing orb they set out to return to Helix, leaving the unlocked eastern door for another time. Moving cautiously back to the caves and retracing their route they are able to exit the Barrowmaze via Barrow 20 without incident. Reme and Arnd confirm there are no new tracks or evidence of tampering at the secret sarcophagus entrance, so they reset it and cover the signs of their passage as best they can. They continue across the moorland and into the marshes, returning to Helix at 19:00 without incident.

Helix

After a good meal and a few flagons of ale or herbal tea as one prefers, they turn in and rise early the next morning intending to spend the whole day in Helix conducting their business and relaxing. Some of The Hammers are still bearing wounds from their brutal fight with the Runic Golems but Gerald doesn't want to use his Laying on of Hands power on himself while there is a chance that someone more needy might come along. Leo makes some lewd remarks concerning laying on of hands and oils of slipperiness which surprisingly amuse Gerald enough to cause him to chuckle. In any event Bella takes charge and casts a CLW on Gerald returning him to full health.

Bella and Arnd have both increased their skills through experience and as such Bella is also able to access the 2nd level spells of her deity St Ygg. Tempted by the enticingly aggressive Hold Person spell she nevertheless chooses the Bless spell to routinely carry alongside her usual two CLW spells thereby providing a benefit to the entire party.

Arnd finds that the language studies he has been pursuing his whole career have borne fruit with the Thiefling Read Languages abilities finally making sense to him. In addition, repeated practice of the techniques of his nefarious trade have improved his Thiefling skills.

Leo visits Karg Barrelgut's Dwarven Forge and Smithy and hands over his splendid plate armour for a clean and service. He takes the opportunity to purchase a traveller's cleaning and polishing kit for the armour for 1 gp as he chats pleasantly with Master Barrelgut about the field performance of his excellent armour. Following the pleasant discourse with the dwarves and with an unaccustomed unarmoured lightness in his step he walks over to the Church of St Ygg to lighten his pockets further as he makes a donation of 300 gp in thanks particularly to the services of their adventuring cleric Bella, now an indispensable fixture in The Hammer's lineup. Reme strolls around handing out the bulk of his wealth to the needy, keeping a stash of 500 gp for himself should he ever need such a thing. Many of the unfortunates and needy of Helix and the surrounding area now owe their improved lifestyles to the charity of Reme "The Good".

Visiting Mazzahs

Later in the morning they visit their friend and patron, Mazzahs The Magnificent. Mazzahs is delighted to see them and in his mysteriously ever-changing salon, which has become quite spacious and gained an additional pair of comfy divans, they discuss their adventures over tea and biscuits. He takes the runic tablets off their hands for further research and safe storage, all the while taking extensive notes concerning their encounter with the Runic Golems constructed from the tablets. After the more mundane matters are completed Gerald proceeds to the main news regarding his peculiar dream and the discovery of the orb which glows brightly when he holds it. A fascinated Mazzahs examines it closely but is very particular in not directly touching it since he suspects it is an alignment-based artifact, probably of Lawful Good. Fenella, as a true neutral, has been able to touch the orb without ill effect however the also neutral Mazzahs is a little more circumspect since when one is overflowing with the arcane one doesn't take too many chances.

He asks to keep it overnight for observation although he points out that it seems to "want" to be with Gerald and he has no intention of keeping it. He says these types of artifacts often have a purpose or function and a limited time to enact said purpose. He will attempt to derive something of the detail of this through his observations. After a pleasant and interesting couple of hours they leave Mazzahs and return to The Brazen Strumpet for a relaxing evening and another good night's sleep.

Breakfast at The Strumpet

They are about to enjoy their early breakfast when they are interrupted by Mazzahs himself, carrying the orb carefully in a bag. He has arranged a private room for breakfast where they can discuss his findings... "hmmm, a sort of working... breakfast, what a novel idea," he chuckles half to himself. The wizard explains that the orb is indeed a powerful artifact and he has managed to divine some of its attributes. Clearly it is strongly Lawful Good and therefore should be used by Gerald, who as a Paladin is the perfect fit for this item. It will provide Gerald with the effect of a continual Protection From Evil spell and a reliable (although slightly unwieldy) light source for as long as he carries it. In addition it will also provide him with +1 to all of his attacks and saves. "This will go very nicely with my Luckstone," thinks Gerald, already imagining hordes of undead falling before his Black Iron Sword. Mazzahs also has a theory that it seems to be a holy artifact so he will discuss it with Othar the head priest, he is however certain of its importance and advises Gerald to take good care of it since there is very likely more to discover regarding this... "Orb of Law I suppose," he yawns. Wishing them a good day he leaves for his tower and a well-deserved day's sleep.

To The Barrowmaze

They make good progress back to the moors with no encounters enroute. Arriving at Barrow 20 they use their secret entrance to descend once more into The Barrowmaze, following their path through the caves and returning to the area where they encountered the Runic Golems. Arnd tries again with the door to the north but it continues to resist his attempts to spring the mechanism. Oh well, at least the door to the east is still unlocked.

Reme and Leo square up to the eastern door and open it. They see a similar hexagonal room but this crypt is in disarray. The contents (bones, mummy wraps, burial shrouds, rubble, etc.) of rectangular burial alcoves are strewn around the floor and a large partially cracked open sarcophagus stands in the northeast corner. Leo carefully surveys the room, taking care to examine the vaulted ceiling and looking for any signs of a hidden portcullis. Finally, tapping the floor before him with his sword, he enters the room and looks around as he is joined by Bella and Reme. As they approach the sarcophagus a fierce bone-chilling gust of wind tears through the chamber as the door slams shut! Coalescing from the dust and detritus a spectral entity emerges, rising into a maelstrom whirlwind of dust and tatters which rushes forward to attack Reme, enveloping and capturing him in its whirling vortex!

The Whirlwind

Leo tries to attack but loses his balance on the littered floor and swings wide as Bella gestures and chants over the roar of the wind, casting Bless upon the trio. A dreadful chill and fear begins to pass over them but Sir Leo has long mastered fear and dismisses it as he always does, concentrating on the fight at hand. Grimly Bella stands against the terror the thing emanates while Reme is too busy being hurled around to be bothered by the horror of his situation. Leo swings again and this time does better, slicing into the part of the shape that seems to be the entity while Bella is nearly blown off her feet in the fierce gusts of wind, meanwhile Reme, imprisoned and buffeted begins to suffocate in the freezing cold airless vortex.

Outside, Gerald marshals the party, assigning Arnd to the door, "try anything, just get it open!" he orders. Arnd quickly tries his best but cannot spring the heavy door. Pulling out his set of thieves' tools he tries to work more methodically, forcing himself to take his time as shouts and the sound of blasting winds emanate from within the crypt.

Back inside, Leo leans into a full swing which he feels tear into some sort of substance within the thing as a satisfyingly agonised screech emanates from the maelstrom. Bella tries again with the Hammer of St Ygg but the furious winds again keep her away as Reme is smashed this way and that while agonisingly denied air to breathe.

Arnd fails again at the lock as a frustrated Gerald looks on. He knows the door is too heavy to break down in time and it means everything rests on Arnd's skills, they have no other option. He returns to staring at the patiently working dwarf, willing him to succeed.

Bella catches a glimpse of Reme within the whirlwind and realising his dire situation launches herself forward and calling upon the power of St Ygg she manages to brush against him as her CLW spell completes, healing the rapidly expiring Ranger before being hurled brutally aside, to crash violently onto a pile of rubble. Reme flails around helplessly with his broadsword as the crazed hurricane continues to suck the breath from his lungs when suddenly the door flies open and the others pile into the chamber, Arnd has cracked the lock!

Leo stabs into the centre of the storm, relishing the hideous squealing from the thing at its core as his blade gouges through into some form of substance. Gerald charges in but trips and misses while Fenella's spear drives into the whirlwind. Planting his stance firmly, Arnd stabs brutally with his magical dagger as with a terrible screech the thing falls apart, collapsing in on itself, dumping Reme, bleeding and gulping for breath onto the floor while the dust and detritus contract and fall into quiet and stillness.

They stand gasping and panting in the freezing cold room until they notice a glowing light emanating from the sarcophagus and crumpled against a pile of rubble in a corner where she was hurled, the battered figure of Bella, bleeding profusely as she tries to stagger to her feet. "I'll be alright," she whispers as swaying, she slowly subsides back to the floor.

Friday the 29th day of Besemius, 10:30, The Barrowmaze Room 286-D4

Notes

Bella and Arnd both rise to level 4 in their respective practices.