

The Barrowmaze

Session 43 12-09-24 Back to The Barrow Mounds

Next Session 19/09/24 19.00

Sunday the 1st day of Setherius, 13:10 The Barrowmaze room 105

As they pack away their loot Leo states that they should leave right away to bring their important news concerning Sir Guy and The Fount to Helix. He's sure that especially Othar and Mazzahs will be interested so with the others broadly in agreement they depart the newly discovered chambers and head north, back past the foetid pool and west to the top of the wide diagonal southwest passage. Enroute Leo muses on whether they should hire more retainers to support their coming challenges but Fenella points out that they already have enough trouble getting all of the current team into melee at the same time and Sir Leo has to agree that this does seem to be the case. Passing through the eastern door into the open space at the north of the wide corridor, they note the closed door to the west and the apparent dead-end to the north but leave them for another day. More disturbingly they don't see any sign of dead Cultists, Zombies or Skeletons that had fallen here when they last passed. All that remains now are a few bone splinters and some slowly drying blood stains.

Examining the nearby pit, they notice an unpleasant rotting odour and looking down they see lumps of flesh and splintered bones at the bottom. Excited to use his Gauntlets of Swimming and Climbing again Gerald quickly clambers down into the horrid place to search it, succeeding only in acquiring an unpleasant whiff and bloodstains on his armour, he climbs nimbly up the sheer wall to rejoin the others, who give him a bit more space for some reason.

Target Practice

As they continue to the southwest, they notice a faint squeaking and chittering sound from the darkness as suddenly a flock of Stirges fly into the light and swoop down to swarm the front group of the party. The first wave of attacks miss as the armoured fighters fend them off but one wriggles through to get a lucky attack on Bella who suffers deja vu as another bloodsucking creature attacks her within the space of a few hours. The Hammers strike back in a whirling fury of magical blades as Leo joins Bella's deja vu and slices yet another bloodsucker from her neck while Gerald simultaneously glares at him and stabs another to death. Fenella, Reme and Phineas get in on the one-shot murder spree as the remaining Stirges realise too late that this is no easy prey and wheeling to flee are swiftly cut to pieces.

Bella dresses her wound and they continue on their way with Leo and Gerald quietly bickering over who would protect Bella the best while she beams happily at the attention being paid to her wellbeing by the dashing warriors. Reaching the stairs up to Barrow 16 they ascend to the surface, crossing the moors and marshlands, returning to Helix at 15:50.

Helix

They find a contented Othar enjoying a pleasant post prandial digestif at The Brazen Strumpet so they indicate they have some news from The Barrowmaze with Gerald actually mentioning the name, Sir Guy de O'Veargne in the busy tavern. Although he doesn't recognise the name, Othar realises, via Bella's exaggerated nods and winks, that it must be a sensitive matter so he invites The Hammers to his sitting room at the church. They bring Othar up to date on their adventures and although intrigued and quite fascinated by the idea of a clandestine Paladin led raid many years ago he admits he knows nothing of it. He is however disturbed that in addition to their problems with increasing numbers of undead roaming the moors and spilling out onto public roads and farms they may soon be suffering extra-planar incursions, perhaps it's all linked somehow he wonders. He says he will send his acolyte Gamdar, a muscular half-orc you have seen working in the garden, to Ironguard Motte with a message for the clergy there to peruse the Duchy records and see if they can find some mention of this.

Othar fulfils his promise to The Hammers of holding a Cure Disease available unless there is a local emergency, by casting it on Reme, removing the Mummy Rot disease. He will pray for the spell again early tomorrow morning to cast it on Leo before they leave town, disease free. Since they are not healed by this cure, only the disease is removed, Fenella casts her CSW on Reme, bringing him back to full health while Bella casts a spare CLW on Gerald. Leo takes the opportunity to thank Othar for his support and makes a donation of 200 gp to the priest. Othar thanks him for the contribution and they enjoy a friendly leader to leader chat since Othar naturally assumes that Sir Leo, the charismatic Knight, commands The Hammers. Remembering it's his turn to pay the party upkeep, Leo pays off the various services in the town from his account.

They visit Mazzahs, who is also interested in their tale, postulating that there must be a small army of unquiet spirits lurking in that underground labyrinth so they seem to have been quite lucky to find this particular one, unfortunately he knows nothing of this particular holy warrior and the raid in question. Gerald and Bella know that luck is not involved of course, it is certainly the hand of St Ygg guiding his followers but they politely let their eccentric patron ramble on for a while after which he wishes them luck and they depart to their rooms at the tavern for a good meal and a restful night's sleep.

Monday the 2nd day of Setherius

Bright and early the next morning, Leo passes by the church and has Cure Disease and a CLW cast upon him by a yawning Othar while Bella and Fenella make their morning devotions to acquire their spells. Both choose their usual selection with the most significant one being Fenella's new high level Druidic spell, Wall of Thorns. Despite her perpetually half bored expression she finds herself rather excited at the thought of casting it for the very first time.

After a quick breakfast they head to the Barrows Moor, arriving without incident two hours later. Intending to investigate the Barrows to the northwest they go north of Barrow 12 (the first entrance discovered) passing the covered Barrow 8, pausing briefly at the collapsed ruin of rock and earth that constitutes Barrow 13 before moving further to the northwest, discovering the sealed Barrow 7, then Barrow 6 which is also sealed. Beyond this to the north they see the ominous line of the deadly marshlands that Tamson warned them of. They also spot Barrows 4 and 5 to the west, also both sealed as far as they can see and Barrows 14 and 15 to the east.

Gazing back at the covered Barrow 8 Gerald has a clever idea. They could recruit their young Ranger friend Tamson to act as a guide for a party of excavators to come with a wagon and tools to dig out some of the covered Barrows. Once they have managed to excavate some of them, The Hammers could explore them while Tamson and perhaps a couple of guards could escort the workmen back to Helix. It would cost a bit but they do have quite a pile of gold back in Helix. The others are quite impressed with this plan but shelve it for now as they get on with their current expedition.

Satisfied that Barrow 6 is as far northwest as it is possible to go Gerald rolls up his sleeves and along with Leo, Reme and Arnd they use their sledgehammers and crowbars to noisily crack the Barrow open. Thirty minutes later the stone door is shattered and they descend into the darkness below.

Barrow 6

Descending the steps down to the barrow level they see a corridor heading north and after 20 ft or so, two 10 x 10 alcoves in each of which stands an 8 ft tall marble statue of a regal looking woman dressed in a simple yet elegant toga. The statues have Ruby Gemstones set as "eyes" in their eye sockets which glitter enticingly in the flickering lamplight. Leo works his way around the statues searching but doesn't find anything so stands before one of the statues looking up at it.

He decides that the Ruby Gemstones are valuable enough to be worth taking so he climbs up the nearest statue as both Gerald and Fenella warn against a range of vaguely imagined consequences, a trap perhaps? "We can always put them back," Leo replies optimistically as he produces a dagger. Holding on with one arm around the neck of the statue he works carefully with the dagger and manages to prise both of the ruby eyes out of one of the statues as Arnd looks on approvingly. There is a brief pause as Leo pockets them and climbs back down but nothing seems to happen so he does the same to the other one, getting four rubies worth 50 gp each for his efforts.

Meanwhile Fenella's Continual Light pendant has revealed a further pair of alcoves with similar statues, also with ruby eyes a few more feet to the north and a fifth statue standing at the northern dead end of the corridor except this one has jet black opal eyes. They are larger and even more impressive than the rubies, catching the light beautifully as they stare enigmatically down the corridor.

They search around the three new statues and this time discover secret doors behind both the northwestern and the northern opal statue.

Monday the 2nd day of Setherius, 10:30 Barrow 6 Entrance Corridor