

The Barrowmaze

Session 44 19-09-24 The True Power of Nature

Next Session 26/09/24 19.00

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

After plundering the first two statues of their ruby eyes Leo loses interest in the next pair so Arnd clambers up and pries the rubies out of the statues to join the treasure in the party trove. Fenella has misgivings about the whole stealing the eyes of statues thing but Arnd and Gerald stand looking up at the remaining statue with the two marvellous and no doubt valuable opals as eyes. Eventually Gerald decides to join in the plunder and climbing up the statue, clinging on with an arm around its neck, he pries the first one loose. There is a brief sound of stone grinding on stone and suddenly a cloud of deadly poison gas jets out of the statue's mouth enveloping Gerald in its toxic fumes. Fortunately for Gerald he fights off the effects of the deadly poison and quickly pops out the second eye, climbing back down to review the loot, a pair of splendid opals worth 1600 gp between them and a brief glimpse of eternity for the daring Paladin.

Turning their attention to the secret doors they choose the one in the statue alcove to the west. Opening the door reveals a large funeral chamber with side passage vaults much as they have seen previously but this one has evidence of a partial cave-in and piles of detritus and filth plus an unpleasant stale odour. Moving into the chamber both Leo and Reme hear a chittering and scrambling sound coming from behind the walls which suddenly gets louder as a swarm of giant rats, dripping with disease, boil from the side passages.

Already on their guard, The Hammers spring into action as Fenella begins to mutter and gesture while Leo finishes a Giant Rat in a single blow. Stepping in to cover Shadwell, Gerald does likewise as Fenella's Wall of Thorns spell goes off. Having observed the shape of room as she entered, Fenella is able to correlate it with similar rooms they have explored and forming the map for the spell in her mind, brings down a choking, writhing, piercingly impenetrable wall of thorns to fill the entire space except for the area around the door where they stand. The whole effect is nothing short of miraculous as Fenella reminds all, including the unfortunate Giant Rats of the true power of nature as the entire swarm die horribly, trapped and impaled by thousands of razor-sharp thorns. With the others amazed and impressed by Fenella's new power, the druid casually mentions that the thorns will remain for about an hour, suggesting they do something else in the meantime?

Returning to the corridor they move to the northern secret door and open it onto a short passage and a circular room with an altar at the northern end. Leo begins with the usual precautions but Reme strides fearlessly past him into the room, up to the altar and straight into the concealed pit trap! Dropping 10 ft, Reme bounces off the wall as he falls only receiving a few grazes from the drop before he realises he's not alone down here as a metallic construct of a (poisonous) Spitting Cobra rears up to attack him. In a single fluid movement, Reme draws Frost Brand and using his skill as a swordsman and the weapon's magical enhancements, destroys the Cobra in a single blow!

As the Cobra disintegrates, he is joined by the others looking down at him. Gerald throws down the Gauntlets of Climbing and Reme clambers out. The whole thing happened in just a few seconds, leaving Reme smiling rather smugly as he looks down at the remains of the Cobra... "I guess there aren't any traps then," observes Leo wryly. With the consensus being, "we've aced this barrow", they search the chamber, finding a pair of golden Jackal statues behind the altar but no secret doors. They value the statue set at 900 gp and Shadwell stows them in The Bag of Holding.

They return to the main passage but still have half an hour to wait for the thorns to disappear so they search the north/south corridor thoroughly finding nothing new. Gerald is seriously disappointed that the Barrow doesn't seem to connect to "The Necropolis" but at least there is still the rats room to search. Since the thorns have now vanished, leaving dozens of bloody Giant Rat corpses behind, they grub about in the foul-smelling filthy room discovering a trove of rather disgustingly smeared coins but nevertheless a fine haul of them since polishing a few off reveal 120 gp and 180 pp for a total of 1920 gp in value.

Barrow 7

Stoically suppressing his disappointment Gerald suggests trying their luck with another Barrow so they exit Barrow 6 and make the short journey southeast to Barrow 7. Taking a closer look they see that this barrow is indeed sealed but in a much more formidable manner than ones they have so far encountered. A heavy verdigris bedecked bronze door is set firmly into the surrounding rock, the familiar skull visage of Nergal leering from the embossed centre of the door. It is circled by a dozen small pentagram designs set into slight depressions in the metal.

Discussing the door Gerald is convinced that this must be the way to the Pit of Chaos. After all, it's in the northwest of the moor and it has a big evil door, what more could one want as proof? Presumably they will have to find some sort of key? Arnd agrees that it could be a magically sealed door and the pentagram depressions are possibly keyholes, so maybe keep an eye out for pentagram shaped keys? Gerald experiments with The Fount of Law, taking it out and moving it around a bit but it remains with its bright cheerful light constant, providing no indication of direction or distance. Gerald recalls Sir Guy's words, "The Fount will guide you as you come closer to the The Pit," but decides that it probably needs to at least be underground to stand a chance of working. They make as good a drawing of the design of the thing as they can and move on. This time southwest to Barrow 4.

Barrow 4

This barrow is sealed by a more familiar stone slab which they set about demolishing. Unfortunately the loud noise attracts a group of wandering creatures and they find themselves attacked by three Giant Toads. They leap up to the party and quickly bite and injure Phineas and Fenella. Leo swings but loses his footing and misses as Reme rushes in to support Fenella, landing a good strike with Frost Brand while Gerald, supporting Phineas also stumbles on the uneven ground missing his swing. Phineas also misses his swing as Fenella spears and kills the Toad that dared to attack her while Bella hammers a good one on the Toad fighting with Leo. Arnd slips around behind Leo and stabs the Toad with his Stoutblade Dagger wounding the big creature.

The two remaining Toads rather crazily decide to fight on and one bites Morgaine for a good wound, no matter, she has shaken off far worse. Leo misses again but continues to be useful as an almost unhittable target. Reme decides to attack with his bow for a change and hits one of the Toads with a magical arrow wounding it severely, leaving the killing blow for Gerald which he swiftly administers as Fenella spears and kills the last one.

Bella casts two CLWs from her second scroll on Phineas and Morgaine using up the spells on that particular scroll so she casts an additional CLW of her own on Fenella. With Barrow 4 now yawning open they descend once more into the darkness.

They find a simply carved out barrow chamber about 40 ft in diameter with a heavy plain sarcophagus in the centre. Leo suggests that Reme look for pit traps as the Ranger strolls casually into the chamber. Searching around they find nothing special so turn their attention to the sarcophagus, which Arnd pronounces as having, "nae traps at all". Resting his shield against the sarcophagus, Leo and Gerald lift the lid and tip it aside as the raving mad, berserk Juju Zombie within leaps to attack!

Leo clumsily retrieves his shield, missing his swing but Reme is on hand to carve in with Frost Brand for a significant wound. Still standing back up after carefully lowering the sarcophagus lid Gerald also stumbles and misses as Fenella spears the Zombie a good one. Popping up over the edge of the sarcophagus Arnd strikes with the Stoutblade dagger for a good wound while Bella misses and Phineas almost drops his sword as Morgaine, guarding Shadwell, falls about laughing at Phineas.

The Zombie swipes at Bella, narrowly missing and in its mad frenzied rage swipes again striking her a cruel wound and knocking her back as she clings tightly to her warhammer. Frustrated at his recent performance and vengeful for Bella, Leo channels his righteous anger into a huge blow that cleaves the Zombie into two parts which slowly and gruesomely separate and collapse back into the tomb. Leaning forward with a satisfied smile, Leo retrieves the Zombie's platinum neck chain (200 gp), while Gerald rushes over to Bella and immediately Lays Hands upon her, completely curing her wounds with the power of his faith and devotion. They exit Barrow 4 and survey the gloomy moorland above as they discuss their next move.

Monday the 2nd day of Setherius, 13:40 Outside Barrow 4