

The Barrowmaze

Session 45 26-09-24 Boomerang Dagger

Next Session 03/10/24 19.00

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

Having disposed of a ravaging nest of Giant Toads and a crazed Juju Zombie barrow guardian they exit Barrow 4 and survey the gloomy moorland as they discuss their next move. After some good-natured bickering regarding the relative striking performance and recklessness of certain party members with Fenella exercising her superior intelligence via withering sarcasm they decide to investigate the nearby Barrow 5 to the northwest.

At Barrow 5 they demolish the stone door and descend the steps into a diamond shaped chamber of neatly worked stone. A statue of an elder statesman orating stands in an alcove to the north and two stone doors block the ends of short passages to the east and west. Proceeding cautiously, they search the area but don't discover anything so they turn their attention to the western door. Pushing on the stone, Leo finds it opens easily and as Arnd wedges the door they enter a familiar type of burial chamber with multiple short alcove-lined passages. Taking the time to search carefully they uncover the following treasures...

An Amphora (200gp), Electrum Goblet (50gp), Ancient Scrolls (Holy Writs worth 400gp), a nice-looking Dagger.

Concluding that the well-preserved dagger could be magical they decide to present it to Morgaine who is the only fighting party member without a magical weapon. She will run it through its paces of stabbing and throwing and see if she can work out what it does. In any event they can get Mazzahs to magically identify it when they return to Helix.

Fenella notes that it seems quiet and peaceful down here, for a change nothing has attacked them, perhaps it's just an old tomb? With this happy thought in mind they cross the entrance hall and examine the eastern stone door which also opens easily to Leo's careful push. They find a spacious burial chamber with a large open sarcophagus containing a mummified figure which perhaps surprisingly does not rise to attack them. Still suspicious both Gerald and Leo survey the room and ceiling and ask Arnd to do the same. Arnd replies that he hasn't noticed anything... "Oh mah gahhhd, what's that!" he yells pointing at the ceiling above Reme where an oily grey pseudopod is reaching out to the oblivious Ranger.

Luckily Reme happens to step away from the thing just as it attempts to strike him with its toxic tentacle, so naturally he draws Frost Brand and repays the compliment slicing deep into the acidic jelly-like form. Fenella sensibly moves away as Gerald charges in and leaping into the air, slices the Grey Ooze from the ceiling killing it instantly, leaving a slowly evaporating pool of highly acidic slime on the floor.

Cautiously searching they find no other threats or concealed entrances so they relieve the peaceful mummy of its burial items...

A wrought Silver Ring (300gp) and a Bloodstone Gem on a chain around its neck (75gp).

Leo wonders whether they should investigate Barrow 15 now but after a short discussion they all agree it's getting a bit late in the day and it would be more prudent to return to Helix, plus they are also more than a little curious about Morgaine's dagger. Aply led by Ranger Reme, the Hammers make the journey back to Helix without incident, arriving at 16:50.

Helix

Visiting Mazzahs they find the eccentric wizard, as always, interested to hear their tales of the Barrows and The Barrowmaze, taking notes and nodding encouragingly. They present him with the dagger and he casts Detect Magic, confirming it is a magical weapon as Morgaine claps in spontaneous delight. One Identify spell later a wide smile breaks out on the Wizard's face as chuckling to himself he leads them out into the garden for a demonstration.

A somewhat singed target dummy is set up at the end of the garden and Mazzahs asks Morgaine to strike it with the thrown dagger which she does, unfortunately missing the target however the dagger magically swoops back through the air and tumbling boomerang-like returns to an astonished Morgaine's still outstretched throwing hand. Mazzahs has her try again and this time the dagger strikes true embedding in the target before yanking itself out and tumbling back into Morgaine's grasp as Mazzahs collapses in delighted laughter.

They have discovered a Dagger of Throwing +1 which will magically return to its wielder's hand after striking or missing its target. (The +1 attack bonus also applies to melee use).

Returning to the salon for tea and biscuits Leo shows Mazzahs their drawing of the locked metal door barring their access to Barrow 7 and he agrees that the pentagrams probably need some sort of corresponding key which they should keep their eyes open for. Of course it could be anywhere.

They return to the Brazen Strumpet where Leo cleverly suggests that they use up all their cure spells before turning in so Fenella casts her CSW on Morgaine and Bella casts her remaining CLW on Leo.

Tuesday the 3rd day of Setherius, 07:00 Helix

Talking over breakfast Gerald is 99.9% certain that his quest lies behind 'that' door but the matter of needing a particular pentagram key is vexing him. Fenella helpfully points out that holy quests aren't usually easy to complete and the Paladin ruefully agrees. Assembling the full complement of Hammers, they set out for the Moors and trusting to Reme's capable guidance arrive about two hours later, crossing the bleak landscape to Barrow 15.

Breaking the stone seal with sledgehammers and crowbars they clear the way and descend. They find a circular 50x50 ft burial chamber. The chamber is supported by four stone columns and rusty iron gratings barring the way to passages can be found on both the east and west walls, unfortunately the entire chamber is flooded with dark water. Careful testing with swords reveals the depth to be about knee-deep for the humans, so Arnd decides he will sit this one out and remain with Shadwell to guard the entrance. The others wade through the water to explore the vault. Examining the gates they find both are rusty and will probably yield quickly to some well applied strength but in the meantime Leo calls them over to the north where he has discovered a secret door. It opens easily revealing a 20 ft corridor ending with a shelf upon which lies an urn and a metal box with a mechanism on the front, the corridor is also flooded. The urn contains (presumably funeral) ashes but they are cautious with the box and bring it over to Arnd to examine while Bella makes a commendation of St Ygg over the ashes in compensation for the disturbance of the dead.

Arnd declares there aren't any traps and opens the box, immediately triggering the poison needle trap! Fortunately his tough Dwarven constitution, exceptional even among his own sturdy kind, shrugs off the poison and he discovers a pair of gauntlets inside. Shadwell stows them in the Bag of Holding and they wade back to examine the western iron gate.

After some muscle powered persuasion the gate yields and they pass through the short passage into a circular chamber where the flooding is just high enough to despoil two sarcophagi. There are some skeletal remains and many books and scrolls but their contents have been ruined by the water and they find nothing else of value. Sloshing back out again they try their luck at the eastern gate.

Submerged Zombies

As they prepare to force the gate, there is a splash and slight surge in the water from the east as something emerges from the darkness. A group of Zombies, hungry for flesh, lurch towards the gate. Given the reasonably safe circumstances, a gate and a not too challenging enemy Gerald decides to test his standing with St Ygg and attempts to Turn the undead but fails utterly to find the presence of the deity's favour. Fortunately, Bella is on hand to raise high the holy symbol of St Ygg and the wrath of the god is called down upon the Zombies by the Cleric, Turning them all and sending them scrambling for the far side of the chamber. Leo smashes the gate open and the Hammers pursue them into another circular, flooded vault.

Gerald decides that his martial prowess will have to suffice and drawing his magical Black Iron Short Sword attacks the nearest Zombie, striking a good wound. Reme does likewise with Frost Brand as Leo confirms his role as target-in-chief by missing yet again. Fenella is also unlucky with her spear attack as Morgaine's dagger whistles through the air, also missing but spins around in a tight arc to tumble back into the delighted guard's hand while Bella thumps her cowed Zombie opponent with The Hammer of St Ygg.

The Turned Zombies strike back, avoiding Bella at all costs but as a result Phineas is unfortunately clawed twice taking some bad wounds. The Hammers continue pressing the attack as Gerald strikes another goodly blow on his almost destroyed enemy as indeed does Leo on his, achieving severe damage in a single strike with Reme finishing another in the same fashion. Fenella destroys a Zombie with a spear thrust as Morgaine switches from her new toy to her trusty short sword wounding the nearest Zombie. Bella strikes true as does Phineas but as the Zombies return the favour Phineas again suffers two attacks. Badly wounded, he begins a fighting retreat, hoping to lure his opponents past Fenella and Reme.

Leo finishes his Zombie and looks for the next as Gerald does the same, Morgaine brings one down and Reme utterly destroys the Zombie fighting Phineas with a single blow of the mighty Frost Brand. With the undead comprehensively defeated, Bella casts CLW on poor Phineas, bringing him back to the safer side of heavily wounded (slightly over half hp). Searching reveals nothing of value so splashing back through the water they rejoin their companions and now thoroughly soaked, they depart Barrow 15.

Tuesday the 3rd day of Setherius, 11:30 outside Barrow 15.