

The Barrowmaze

Session 47 10-10-24 Arnd's Bad Day

Next Session 16/10/24 19.00

Tuesday the 3rd day of Setherius, 13:40 Barrow 25 Room 1.

Barrow 25

After spending the morning fighting Zombies in the flooded Barrow 15 as part of "Barrow Survey Tuesday", both Gerald and Shadwell begin to cough and sneeze (head cold -1 to hit). Fenella remains nice and warm in her Spidersilk cloak and the others are just toughing it out despite the onset of the chillier Setherius weather.

With Leo only slightly damaged by his spiked pit trap fall and seemingly more concerned about his splendid armour they quickly search the entrance chamber before moving on to investigate the door to the west. It opens easily onto a hexagonal chamber, lined with burial alcoves which they proceed to search thoroughly finding 213 gp and a plain silver ring. Suspecting a magical item, they have Shadwell carefully store the ring for later examination by their Wizard friend, Mazzahs.

Returning to the entrance chamber they hear and see the alarming sight of a mob of Ravenous Zombies jammed tightly into the entrance passage and stairs, almost clambering over each other in their eagerness to devour human flesh. Anticipating a grim battle ahead Gerald, Leo and Reme square up and draw their weapons but Fenella is having none of this Zombie nonsense. She immediately begins to mutter and gesture and before the Zombies can enter the chamber she unleashes her most potent spell, Wall of Thorns. The entire entrance corridor and much of the space around the barrow entrance above instantly becomes a writhing mass of densely packed and wickedly thorned impenetrable plant growth, which tears and rends the Zombies as they shriek in agonised torment. The dense growth shudders with their attempts to escape, each struggling movement further wounding the trapped undead until within a brief minute all lies still and calm.

"Glad to see you're branching out," quips Leo, while a stunned Bella whispers, "Holy Hammer of St Ygg!" and Phineas and Morgaine high-five, laughing. Gerald is just grateful the Druid is on their side and comments that this particular spell could be highly significant in their upcoming confrontation with The Pit of Chaos... once they discover its location. "It will stay for about an hour," explains Fenella, "so we have time to explore the other doors."

Moving on to the northern door it also opens easily but somewhat unusually, towards them. This puts Leo even further on his guard and he carefully examines the entrance and the floor immediately before him. Calling Arnd over, the Dwarf also gives it the once over discovering nothing special. Leo enters the room and pauses noticing nothing until Bella joins him and their combined weight sets off the pressure trap, triggering three concealed crossbows, perfectly trained to converge upon the the entrance occupied by Leo. Fortunately one of the mechanisms jams and only two fire but both bolts thud into Leo. Shaking off the damage and contemptuously pulling out and tossing aside the bolts the Knight steps boldly further into the room and just looks at Arnd who shrugs helplessly, "Ah cannae find everything," and guiltily scurries off to the bolt holes hammering in spikes to disable them. Leo chuckles magnanimously but this one is no doubt going to get mentioned again for future gentle amusement at Arnd's expense. Bella insists on Leo taking a full two CLW potions, leaving him almost fully restored.

Dead Dwarf

The room is featureless apart from a narrow passage in the northeast corner which piques Gerald and Fenella's curiosity but Sir Leo insists on completing his methodical search of the rest of the room before considering it. With the room thoroughly tapped and poked, they examine the short narrow passageway leading to a small box room with a locked chest standing in the middle. Arnd goes to work on the chest, declaring it safe from traps as he successfully picks the lock, triggering the deadly poison needle trap therein. It seems it's just not Arnd's lucky day as the deadly poison courses through his body, even his stout Dwarven constitution is overcome as he breathes a quick, "oh shit," before collapsing lifeless to the ground. Everyone stares in horror at Arnd's corpse until Shadwell nudges Fenella out of her daydream. "Eh, what? Oh poison, hmmm yes, I think I've got something for that," she mutters as she summons up one of her selection of powerful anti-poison spells, casting Protection from Poison on the deceased Dwarf, astoundingly reviving him in an instant! As Arnd staggers back to his feet they again see Fenella's casual use of a nothing short of a miracle spell, reminding them all, Fenella included, of quite how powerful their moody Druid is becoming.

Examining the now open chest they discover a neatly arranged set of pouches containing a total of 4000 gp which Shadwell dutifully records and stores in The Bag of Holding. Now that they've uncovered a decent treasure trove and it's also after three in the afternoon, Leo is not sure they should try the eastern door without returning to Helix first. Gerald is still interested in taking a look and Fenella supposes that it is probably just a small chamber like they've seen in the other barrows so why not? They are a little surprised at Leo's prudence yet none would question the noble Knight's valour so it must just be another example of his chaotic nature also leaning towards the cautious as well as the reckless, as and when the whim takes him. In any event Leo listens to their counsel and is persuaded so they return to the entrance chamber and address the eastern door. The door opens easily revealing a 20 x 30 ft rectangular room with a heavy wall and ceiling collapse in the northeast corner

As Leo makes his usual doorway preparations they hear a groaning, grinding sound from above that Arnd confirms is the sound of rock under stress. As if to underline this a thin stream of dust intermittently flows from the twisted ceiling just to the northeast of the door. Leo spots something glinting or glimmering in the pile of rubble in the northeast corner but Arnd warns, "I wouldnae go in there Sir Leo, it's gannae need some shorin' up". Leo remains tempted to investigate and Gerald considers throwing a rock in but since it's a Dwarf warning them of a cave-in they decide to leave it well alone. Returning to the entrance chamber, they find the Wall of Thorns has disappeared and all that remains are eighteen mutilated Zombie corpses piled up on the stairway and around the entrance which they clamber roughly over on their way back to the surface.

They cross the moorland and travel back through the bogs and marshes, finally gaining the road to Helix and returning safely to the town at 17:30.

Hot baths and meals are called for but first Leo deposits his armour at Karg Barrelgut's Fine Weapons, Armour and Smithy where he is given the priority repair service. It will be one whole day minimum but they will see what they can do for the charismatic and noble Knight. Over dinner a refreshed Leo reminds the spell casters that getting the cures in before sleeping is a good idea so Fenella casts her CSW on Reme, restoring him to full health while Bella uses her last CLW on Leo.

Wednesday the 4th day of Setherius, 08:00 - A Day off in Helix

The next morning finds all head colds dispelled and Gerald with a spring in his step since his deeds and actions have elevated his spiritual connection to his god, improving his Laying on of Hands with a more effective cure whilst also allowing him to Cure Disease once a week! He feels fit and refreshed and is sure that their trials and endeavours have improved his combat skills to better face the challenges ahead.

After a pleasant breakfast they visit their friend Mazzahs the Magnificent, who welcomes them warmly into his salon for tea. Mazzahs takes his usual extensive notes, quizzing them on all aspects of their discoveries. He stores the Runic Tablet with the others, now a total of 13 and sets about casting a Detect Magic on the items they have discovered; the gauntlets, the cup and the silver ring. All three of them detect as magical. Casting the required Identify spells (see Notes) Mazzahs determines that the items are...

Gauntlets of Dexterity
Cup of Drinking
Ring of Protection +2

Thanking Mazzahs they retire to lunch at The Brazen Strumpet where after considered discussion they allocate the new magical items. Shadwell will keep the Cup of Drinking with his readied gear as an emergency cure. Gerald receives the Ring of Protection and Arnd gets the Gauntlets of Dexterity. Leo manages to contain the witty remark he was considering and instead leads a toast to, The Helix Hammers!

Wednesday the 4th day of Setherius, 14:00 The Brazen Strumpet Inn.

Notes

Barrow 24 from last week errata - I missed this so I've added it to the google sheet this week.
Each alcove contains 4d40 gold pieces and one contains a Runic Tablet.
 $89+107+117 = 313$ gp

Gerald attains Level 5 Paladin

HP +6, THAC0 16

gains Cure Disease and may now Lay on Hands for 10 hp

Gerald's base saving throws at level 5 are 8,9,10,11,12

adjusted to 6,7,8,9,10 showing the effect of his Ring of Protection +2

then further adjusted to show the effect of the Luckstone to 5,6,7,8,9

if he is attacked by Alignment: Anything Evil, The Fount of Law will also apply a further 1 bonus

Enchanted, Constructed or Summoned creatures cannot hit him in melee

The Identify Spell

This spell actually doesn't exist in the Old School Essentials rules so I have gone back to the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons 2e rules to dig up the Identify spell from there and oh dear, the days of group identifying multiple magical objects in a single go will definitely be over. You can of course have the current set of three items as they are already identified.

The idea of the AD&D spell is to make identifying any magical object a difficult and laborious task however we are playing a lighter version of the game these days and in the style of this type of play I don't intend to bog things down. I will handle this in a separate email during the week where I will present an edited house-rule version of the Identify spell. You will probably be able to get Mazzahs to identify a single item per day or two since it is draining for the Wizard to cast this spell. It is possible that some payment may be required to support the purchase of necessary material components.