

# The Barrowmaze

## Session 48 16-10-24 Seeking the Pit of Chaos

Next Session 24/10/24 19.00

Thursday the 5th day of Setherius, 07:00 Helix.

After a relaxing afternoon and evening in Helix, they spend a restful night in their rooms at The Brazen Strumpet Inn, waking bright and early to resume their adventures. Sir Leo visits Barrelgut's Dwarven Smithy and is delighted to find that the Dwarves have fully repaired his fine plate armour, labouring throughout the night to do so. Leo gratefully tips an additional 10 gp on the 20 gp charge and rejoins the others.

After a trouble-free journey to the Barrow Mounds they arrive at Barrow 16 and descend once more into The Barrowmaze. Pausing at the foot of the stairs they consult with Arnd who confirms their impression that they have fully explored the area to the west and southwest of this entrance. They are quite sure a nest of Fire Beetles lies to the south and to the northeast is the long wide passage where they had previously observed minions of Set and Orcus clash, pursuing the survivors of this battle of the evils to the east before losing the trail and later encountering the Ghost of Sir Guy de O'Veargne. Gerald points out that there is an unexplored door to the west at the end of the wide northeast corridor and Leo has some kind of intuition about searching the northern wall at the same location so they set off to the northeast.

### **Intuition is my compass**

Arriving at the end of the corridor and carefully skirting the unpleasant, malodorous pit, Leo quickly discovers that his instincts are good, discovering a secret door in the northern wall. Gerald mentally flips a coin and decides to go along with Leo's intuition so they leave the western door and instead open the secret door to the north, passing into a short corridor that opens into a larger room further north. As they prepare to move north Leo discovers another secret door in the wall to the east which springs open to reveal a 20 ft wide corridor which they emerge into the southern end of. Following their instincts and the feeling of heading vaguely north and/or west they begin exploring to the north.

The corridor is lined high with many burial alcoves and there are doors in the eastern and western walls. They search the alcoves, methodically moving to the north where they can see the corridor turns westward, until Fenella feels one of the flagstones move beneath her. As she steps gingerly to one side, Arnd approaches and examines the flagstones, finding a pit trap which he triggers and spikes open. Looking down into the trap they notice that the bottom looks a little unfocussed and blurred so they immediately suspect a portal of some sort. They spend a little while discussing exactly what sort before deciding to try some experimentation. Gerald drops a femur into the trap which falls to the bottom and soundlessly disappears. Fenella makes a test with a torch tied to a rope which she lowers down, noting that the torch also vanishes and when she pulls the rope back up the end is cleanly terminated, not cut, it just ends. Deciding that this dalliance is costing them valuable time they resume their search of the wide corridor and the alcoves, discovering 39 pp and an emerald brooch (65 gp). They also discover two additional secret doors, one at the mid point of the eastern wall and one further to the north near the end of the wall.

### **The Fount Awakens**

Leo leads them around the corner into a narrower western corridor with two doors on the southern wall and an open exit to the north. Ignoring the doors for now and remaining focussed on their north and/or west plan, rearguard Gerald turns the corner and immediately feels a strong sensation from the Fount of Law in his backpack. Removing it immediately he notices that it has become brighter and now seems to hum with energy. He feels it pulling gently towards the west as its light brightens their way.

An excited Gerald swaps places with Reme to lead the group as they move cautiously along the corridor to the open exit and looking inside all are surprised by the bizarre sight therein. Recessed slightly in from the corridor is a gigantic stone skull fashioned into a ghastly sort of framework around the dark passageway, its gaping maw forming the entrance. Gerald looks to the Fount for guidance since this certainly looks like it should be the entrance to some sort of Pit of Evil or Chaos but the Fount is still pulling insistently to the west. Thinking a moment, Gerald wonders if this was how Sir Guy might have been tricked into mistaking this place for the true Pit of Chaos which the Fount is clearly indicating lies further to the west. Disregarding the grotesque passageway, they continue further west as Leo catches a slight sickly scent of decay and foulness ahead, they must be on the right track!

They continue west, past a third door to the south then pausing at an intersection to the south opposite a heavy door with three curious indentations in the place where a lock might be. They quickly realise that these are the same size and shape as the runic tablets they have been discovering throughout The Barrowmaze, so perhaps placing three of them in the door will unlock it. Noting this they resume their careful progress to the west. As the others also begin to perceive the foul stench from ahead of them, there is a deep, almost subsonic boom as if some gigantic bass drum is resonating deep in the bowels of the earth.

Gerald pauses The Hammers and makes a brief speech, explaining that this is his holy quest, to complete the failure of Sir Guy and use the Fount to destroy The Pit of Chaos. The quest is his alone as the bearer of the Fount of Law and he will not think badly or shame anyone who wishes to leave and abandon this heavy burden. There is a brief pause as Arnd waves and heads off back down the corridor, returning, chortling after a few seconds as Fenella rolls her eyes and Sir Leo just nods and smiles. Reme cracks his knuckles and the retainers nod their affirmation, they are in this to the end!

Wordlessly they turn and continue along the corridor finding a sharp turn into a wide northern passage, strewn with rubble, bones and decomposing bodies. Another deep boom reverberates through the stones of the labyrinth as they perceive a discordant piping at the edge of their perception. Gerald notices the Fount of Law is now pulling towards the north, brightening the gruesome way before them.

They continue to the north picking their way between bones, bodies and fallen rubble, passing a wide exit to the west as a large set of double doors comes into view. The stench of decay increasing as they approach, they pass a series of heavily cobwebbed alcoves before halting before the doors. With the Fount glowing brightly and humming with energy Gerald is sure they have reached their destination; this has to be the location of The Pit of Chaos. As Gerald offers up a brief prayer, Bella places her hand on his head to bless him.

They whisper their hurried preparations, Bella will first cast Bless and Fenella will have her Wall of Thorns spell and Skull of Petrification at the ready. Arnd activates his Brooch of Elvenkind rendering himself effectively invisible since he plans to try to make backstab attacks. Leo posits an interesting plan where Arnd should give Gerald the brooch and have Gerald creep into whatever is behind the doors to drop the Fount into the pit but Arnd points out that many creatures have infravision and there's no guarantee of not being seen, plus Gerald is firmly of the opinion that Lawful Good does not creep into the realms of Chaos and Evil, it kicks down the door and marches proudly in!

Standing before the doors they prepare... to breach!

Thursday the 5th day of Setherius, 11:40 The Barrowmaze, Before the Doors.