

The Barrowmaze

Session 63 22-04-25 Dragon Talks

Next Session 28-04-25 19.00

Tuesday the 24th day of Setherius, 19:30, Thurmaster

Discussing The Dragon

Returning to Thurmaster, following their diplomatic encounter with Inzeldrin the aged Green Dragon and self-styled Queen of The Mire, they are met by a guard with orders to bring them directly to Marlen's office before speaking to anyone else. Over Leo's mild protests at not proceeding directly to the Inn for drinks they accompany the guard and find Marlen waiting for them with Tauster also in attendance. They both listen attentively as The Hammers describe their meeting with the Dragon.

Marlen asks what the Dragon will do. Leo explains that she has retired to The Mire and does "pest control" keeping the Lizardmen to the south. Gerald chimes in to add some details regarding how far the people of Thurmaster might venture within the Mire without any fear of encountering the powerful creature.

Leo adds, it is the Dragon that is taking the occasional livestock and Marlen agrees that must indeed be the case rather than raids by the long absent Lizardmen. Fenella explains that the Dragon has no intention of causing any trouble and wonders, "is this something we should keep secret?"

Marlen explains this is the reason he wanted to see them immediately when they returned, he believes that the matter should be treated at least with some discretion if not outright secrecy whereas Tauster is of the opinion that the people have a right to know. Marlen disagrees and thinks that the citizens will be more contented if they are ignorant of the potential for mass destruction lurking to the south. Both make their points cogently, albeit with some irritation at the other but it becomes clear that Marlen is indeed talking Tauster around with some support from Fenella. Tauster finally admits that much against his initial instincts he is becoming persuaded that it might be a good idea to keep it quiet.

Sir Leo makes it clear that as far as he is concerned, it is the decision of the Thurmaster ruling council and gazes off into the distance, conjuring up a mental image of a flagon of foaming ale in some detail while Arnd mutters in irritated support.

Fenella points out that some nutter could turn up trying to make a name for themselves by "killing" a dragon so it is probably better to keep it quiet. Marlen agrees emphatically and explains that Thurmaster is beginning to do quite well again and he's not prepared to let "stories" of things that "might be" threaten this new-found prosperity.

Both Gerald and Leo claim, "The Dragon is protecting us" and Marlen immediately contests this, fretting over the possible threat the mighty creature presents and asks for a concrete agreement that party neither possess or can produce. With his image of a flagon of ale rudely interrupted, Leo explains that Inzeldrin also took care of the last remaining couple of Fomorian Giants, so at least indirectly she is beneficial to Thurmaster's defence.

Finally, Marlen asks whether The Hammers think that the Dragon is a threat given that she is 20 miles inside The Mire and the villagers go at most about 5 miles to the south? The Hammers reply as a group that they think the current situation is stable and there isn't a threat from The Dragon. Lynton has been keeping studiously quiet but when asked he also thinks the matter should be kept quiet but also points out that his father needs to know.

In summing up they agree with Fenella that the Dragon is a powerful force on the southern side of their territory but it doesn't seem interested in them plus it protects that southern flank very effectively.

The agreement is made not to publicise the presence of the Green Dragon and avoid the question when asked. With this, the business is concluded and The Hammers head for the Inn, enthusiastically led by Leo and Arnd.

The Hound and Tails

Their drinks are served by Weismar who seems a little put out with how busy his Inn has become, he even wonders if he should offer two sorts of stew!

Sir Leo thinks of Shadwell and they visit his room where he lies in bandages being well attended to by the staff of the Inn. Leo suggests a magical cure and on reflection they realise that Fenella still has CSW and Gerald has Laying on of Hands.

Fenella casts her CSW on Shadwell, bringing him back to his full health. He exclaims that although he has seen it a lot of times it still amazes him as he sheds the bandages from his now completely recovered body. Fenella permits a brief hug of gratitude from the stalwart fellow.

Wednesday the 25th day of Setherius, 08:00, Thurmaster

Over breakfast they discuss what they should do. Leo thinks they should probably return to Parlfray's Keep and report back and furthermore bring Lyntern back home. Lyntern reluctantly adds that he cannot think of any reason why they shouldn't.

Leo says he's done pretty well for a first outing and sizing the young man up, he can see quite an improvement in how he behaves and carries himself, in fact he would make rather a good Knight in training if that were his calling, which coming from Sir Leo is praise indeed. Lyntern exclaims he says he has had the time of his life but jokes that he can't tell anyone about it, his father excepted.

Weismar wanders around looking exhausted even though he now has several staff helping him maintain his newly prosperous Inn.

They collect their horses on a cloudy, chilly day and head for Parlfray's Keep, a half day's travel. They pass some routine traffic on the road as usual, exchanging the usual pleasantries before moving on. In all cases they notice that they are treated with deference, respect and some excitement, even more than a Knight and party in full colours would normally be afforded, so they presume that word of their exploits must be getting around.

Parlfray's Keep

At 13:00 they arrive at Parlfray's Keep and meet with Squire Sandior Parlfray, holding court by his favourite fireplace. He is pleased to see his son returned safe and sound and, of course, Lyntern launches off into one of his dramatic relatings of events, including all the wounds and heals as his father winces with the description of every blow. Leo says he says he's a very good soldier, he follows orders and has the makings of a good knight. Lyntern eventually gets through everything except the Dragon since Leo has reminded him not to discuss it with the servants present.

Sandior is impressed they cleared out the woods and took out a Hellhound which might have been the root of the problem in the first place, so Squire Parlfray is more than happy with the clearing of the Redwood and presents them with the handsome sum of 1000 gp per head. He congratulates them, his son included, on their excellent job and asks them partly in jest whether they would consider renaming to something such as, "The Parlfray Professionals?"

Lyntern whispers to his father and after tea is served the servants are dismissed and as they settle into the comfortable leather chairs by the fire, the decanter is opened and Sir Leo gives an account of the Dragon adventure.

Sandior rolls his eyes and whispers, "Oh my gods, a Dragon, a real Green Dragon... one moment," he goes to retrieve a book and leafing through it finds the entry he is seeking, "hmm, and not a nice one," he concludes in disappointment.

The Hammers go through the same points previously discussed with Marlen and Tauster and eventually Sandior says, "I can't say you've improved my day but you haven't ruined it either. So, I agree it's not wise to go on about a Green Dragon lurking in the Mire and yes, there are certain... benefits too so it's really not worth worrying about it too much." With a final confirming nod from Lyntern, he thanks them for their risky reconnaissance and protecting his son during the expedition.

Squire Parlfray appears impressed and says he can see a difference in his son... a maturing... and it's making him think somewhat, perhaps opening up some potential for Lyntern to undertake a potentially more heroic future than just the heir to the title.

Leaving the Parlfrays at the mansion house they wonder about what to do next. Leo is interested in heading south into the Thornwood, just seeking events and trouble in more-or-less any direction. Gerald wants to travel west to Krynen's farm and see if there are any messages or further developments.

They spend the night at the expensive Sheridan Inn for free, which Barclay informs them is courtesy of their newfound friend The Squire, who has added a further 500 gp per head to cover their risky negotiations with the Queen of The Mire.

Thursday the 26th day of Setherius, 08:00 - On the Road

Lyntern turns out at the gate in dress academy uniform and salutes the passing Hammers with his sword. "It's been the most wonderful experience, I daresay we will meet again my friends," he declares, automatically striking a heroic pose as he speaks.

It's a dark miserable day with a steady rain falling and they travel mostly in silence, eventually arriving in Thurmaster at 13:00 to find there are two letters waiting for them, care of the Inn, one addressed to The Helix Hammers and one to Gerald of St Ygg, with a little heart drawn in the corner.

The party's communication covers reports from Garyld, Kuiper and Krynen stating that they have been looking out more than usual but haven't seen any sign of the missing girl. Garyld suggests that the Hammers might like to visit Milborne if they are not otherwise occupied. As they try to remember what is happening at Milborne, recalling the half-finished bridge and river navigation issues, eventually they remember the unexplained flooding of the New Mire which has occurred over the previous two years causing flooded farms to close, ruining the livelihoods of several families with others still nervously eyeing the advancing waters.

Gerald retires to a convenient room to read his personal letter and it is indeed from Bella, the Cleric of St Ygg from Helix. It begins, "My dearest darling Gerald..." and after a few intimate phrases of devotion and love continues. She writes generally about life in Helix, relating some entertaining stories of the townsfolk and bringing Gerald up to date on the latest gossip. Things seem to be ok in Helix and Gerald reads with satisfaction that there are no longer any roving skeletons plaguing the good travellers of the district.

Gerald has a strong feeling that they have closed a major chapter of evil in The Barrowmaze however there must yet be further signs of darkness to investigate and purge, but at least all seems to be well for now. The letter finishes with Bella's reminiscence of the first day she met Gerald, The Holy Paladin and recalls her delight at being permitted to accompany The Hammers and their "Shining Warrior" on their cleansing delves into The Barrowmaze. She signs off with, "your dearest, devoted, Bella, and a neatly drawn heart surrounded by a multitude of tiny kisses.

Gerald optimistically decides to compose a letter in reply whilst journeying westwards to Milborne. Sir Leo informs Tauster of their plans and he agrees to inform them if there is anything they should know.

It's nearly 20 miles to Krynen's farm but after some refreshments at The Hound and Tails they decide to go for it, following the normal northern towpath they estimate they will be travelling in the dark for the last 5 miles so they hurry to leave Thurmaster by 14:00.

As they pass through The Redwood it begins to get dark fortunately this time there are no howls or barks, just the normal sounds of animal life surrounding them. Fenella feels very comfortable and secure in this lovely arboreal setting.

Travelling through the dark with torches and lanterns lit, they arrive at Krynen's farm at nearly 21:00. Maxim ferries them over and the Krynens offer them a good stable for an overnight stay, hot food and drink for them and blankets are provided. The Hammers inform them about the wild dog clearance of the Redwood and they are delighted to hear about it.

Friday the 27th day of Setherius, 08:00

The weather is brighter and nicer today but it is cold, only just above freezing as they prepare to leave. They estimate that if they push it a bit they can get to Milborne at a reasonably decent time, a distance of about 25 miles. They travel on the south side of the river fording the Hog Brook enroute to Kuiper's farm and ferry.

Crossing Hog Brook, they encounter Oleanna the wild Druid who melts out of the undergrowth. She greets them warmly, smiling and chatting a little in common but mainly speaking Druidic with Fenella. Neither she nor her friends have seen any sign of Jelenneth. She notes that the Orcs are more active in the south of the Thornwood although it is their natural place and they are not invaders. She asks if there is anything from their side and they tell her about Inzeldrin, the Green Dragon and she is highly impressed, her eyes widening, "Wow! What a wonder you have seen." She chatters away with Fenella asking for all the details until with information and good wishes exchanged, she melts back into the forest.

They arrive at Kuiper's place and chat with him. News has reached him of their exploits in Eastern Haranshire, "apparently you have been doing amazing things," he smiles. They chat a bit about it all and Kuiper is mightily impressed, especially regarding leading the Thurmaster muster in battle against The Giants, "I didn't know they had it in them!" he exclaims.

They continue their journey to Milborne, this time along the north bank. As it gets dark, Shadwell steps on something, which turns out to be a venomous snake which instantly strikes! Fortunately he jumps back in time to avoid the potent venom as with a fluid single movement, Gerald draws and strikes with the black iron shortsword and slices the snake in two, instantly killing it! Shadwell is relieved to be saved once again by the holly warrior of St Ygg. They resume their journey eventually arriving at Milborne at 21:00.

Friday the 27th day of Setherius, 21:00, Milborne