

The Barrowmaze

Session 68 05-06-25 Personnel Changes

Next Session 12-06-25 19.00

Friday the 3rd day of Vadrius 20:00, The Castle Keep, Ironguard Motte

They finish their discussion with the Ironguards and depart via Lord's Gate to their nearby rooms at The Golden Lion where they discuss their plans.

Leo wonders what they might do with the original magical ring once they have it, will it keep causing springs to appear? Gerald doubts that the effect happens right away but they'll find out soon enough when they have the ring. In any event, he thinks it would be a good idea to hand it over to Tauster in Thurmaster. Suggestions of storing it in the Bag of Holding are quickly dismissed since presumably everything inside would get wet and the bag doesn't block magic; it's just a container that is larger on the inside than on the outside.

Gerald wonders about using it to irrigate a drought-stricken area but on further reflection realises that in their travels they have only seen lush and naturally well-watered lands, indeed it rains reasonably often in Haranshire and as a river valley it already has its fair share of water. Leo thinks of it as rather more of a business proposition but comes to the same conclusion as Gerald, he can't see a market around here for it. Fenella reviews her spells and informs them that regrettably she doesn't have anything that could "de-magic" the ring and that arcane magic isn't her sort of thing anyway. They remember that Mazzahs back in Helix has previously cast the Identify spell for them and presumably Tauster might agree to the same, especially with an object exhibiting such a peculiarly intriguing behaviour. In any event they must wait two days for the ring. As they settle in for the night, they notice Arnd arriving back later than usual.

Saturday the 4th day of Vadrius 08:00, The Golden Lion Inn, Ironguard Motte

Arnd has Other Business

Arnd is packing up his belongings as if preparing to travel and in addition the clasp of Elvenkind and the Stoutblade dagger that were on loan from the party are resting on the table before them. Turning to address them Arnd says, "Aye well, I think it's probably fair to say that ah've paid off ma obligation. Thanks, fer savin ma life an everything but I have some business o' ma own to transact. Maybe we'll get together again in the future." Gerald is completely flummoxed by this although Leo is rather more relaxed, if that's what he wants to do, then by all means do it, whereas Fenella appears to be deep in thought at Arnd's news.

Gerald calls the others aside for a quick whisper conference as Arnd stands politely by doing his best not to hear. Gerald wonders about letting Arnd keep the clasp and dagger, while Leo suggests that maybe they could just let him have the clasp? Fenella surfaces from her deep contemplation and points out that with just the three of them in the party they will need everything they can use, so she doesn't want to hand over any magical items whatsoever. She explains the properties of the clasp in detail and after hearing her brief lecture both Leo and Gerald agree with her.

With this business settled Arnd thanks them again for saving his life and says he expects they'll meet up again one of these days as he leaves the room and exits the party. Fenella takes the Stoutblade Dagger and the Clasp of Elvenkind, pinning it to her spidersilk cloak. Looking up, the Druid voices her concerns now that Arnd has departed. "We're not a lot of people now, only three of us and sometimes a fight is just pure attrition, fifty or so Wild Dogs for example." Leo asks her, "What exactly are you saying?" Fenella replies, "I think we might want to think about hiring some fighters or something." Gerald immediately thinks of visiting the lovely Captain Sind. Surely a captain of the temple guard will be the person to consult about hiring mercenaries he explains before moving eagerly to the door and smoothing his hair as he departs.

Arriving at the temple Gerald seeks out the good Captain and finds her doing paperwork in a side office. In answer to his enquiry, she explains that she doesn't associate with the sort of people that Gerald is describing and the temple guard is staffed by trained soldiers who are dedicated to serving St Ygg, so the services of sellswords and vagabonds are completely unnecessary. After a moment's thought she suggests maybe trying the Silver Standard Trading company offices since they use a lot of contracted guards. With the information imparted, she smiles at Gerald until he reluctantly departs. Returning to the Inn Gerald shares the information and collectively they recall the Silver Standard company from their time in Helix and indeed there was a guard garrison right next to it so perhaps it is the right place after all.

Let's Get the Band Back Together

Arriving at the Silver Standard warehouses they ask for the person in charge and are directed to a sturdy battle-scarred fellow called Osen whom they recognise as a familiar face from Helix. After a moment he also recognises them and greets them warmly, albeit in his brusque no-nonsense manner. Leo asks about hiring on some fighters and Osen chuckles to himself, explaining that it's not every day he gets to say something nice. Slightly bewildered, Leo asks him what he means and he explains, "we recently signed off a group of our mercenaries who have finished their ticket for now and they are celebrating in Ironguard Motte. There are two of them that I think you know and they're right now here in Ironguard Motte, and if I'm any judge, after hearing them talk about the times they have had with you then I imagine they would be very happy to sign up again."

Osen directs them to the pub around the corner where there is a brash and bawdy celebration going on and sitting in the middle are indeed Morgaine and Phineas who shout their delighted greetings across the room. Lots of banging of flagons and huzzahs are exchanged as The Hammers join them at their table. "I don't know if it's that god of yours Gerald but we've just signed off and we're ready to sign on with you if you need us," grins Phineas as Morgaine collapses in fits of laughter, falling off her chair and climbing back up again to toast the remaking of the Helix Hammers. Fenella breathes a big sigh of relief at this happy coincidence that Gerald of course informs them is surely just the will of St Ygg. In any event they are well pleased to have a decent sized group again and particularly with companions they know they can trust.

Returning to the Inn in an improved mood after their recent personnel changes, they are accosted by Dalen who informs them that the ring will be ready, not tomorrow morning but the day after. He also discreetly informs them that a delegation headed by Segrath, the court wizard, has departed to negotiate with the Dragon, Inzeldrin. In answer to Gerald's worries about his safety Dalen informs him that Segrath is accompanied by Lieutenant Hardaway and a dozen elite guards, which is good enough for Gerald.

Leo checks with Priscilla about his armour and she's a little surprised that he would check. Leo says he's not worried but he doesn't have a delivery date. She asks if he's sure it's ok, she could go and make them work faster... "for you Sir Leo, anything," she says, gazing up at the handsome and charismatic Knight. As Leo happens to mention burnishing his pectoral plates, she fans herself, sitting down for a while to recover. Leo finds himself sorely tempted by the pretty serving girl's obvious affections and his chaotic nature tugs at his conscience but he decides it would not be a fair tryst to make and instead decides to settle for Knightly propriety and courtesy. Sighing ruefully, he departs for a cold bath.

Sunday the 5th day of Vadrius 08:00, The Golden Lion Inn, Ironguard Motte

They spend a relaxing day with nothing special on their schedule.

Monday the 6th day of Vadrius 08:00, The Golden Lion Inn, Ironguard Motte

Smedley and Dalen deliver the ring in a gift box marked "another Brin masterpiece". Dalen explains he needs to make sure all is in order. The ring is revealed to be a masterwork copy of the Goblin ring; it looks exactly as they remember it and the arrogant jeweller has even mimicked the original maker's marks on the ring. It's a fantastic job as Smedley is eager to confirm. Satisfied, Dalen bids them good day and departs with Smedley in tow.

They collect their gear and horses, meet up with Phineas and Morgaine and leave the city, riding along the Main road to pick up the Haranshire road to the east. As they ride they bring Morgaine and Phineas up to date on the situation omitting only the rather sensitive subject of the Dragon. After a full day's travel, they set up at their now usual camp site where Gerald is delighted that there are more people for watches. The weather is getting really cold now so they build a blazing campfire and settle down for the night.

I Hate to be a Boar

Just before midnight on Gerald's watch, they are surprised by a pack of berserk wild boar who burst from the woods and race to attack. Gerald is the only one able to immediately react as the others scramble from their bedrolls in answer to his shouts.

A group of Boar rush at Gerald, darting this way and that trying to gouge with their sharp tusks. He avoids the first but the second tears into him, gouging into flesh. Fenella dodges an attack, staggering to her feet as Gerald while fending off another of the three Boars attacking him misses his riposte. Phineas makes it to his feet but Morgaine is attacked and only just avoids the frantic squealing animal.

With the Hammers on their feet and weapons drawn the fight continues as Fenella guesses that right next to a Wild Boar is not the best place to cast a spell and she's right as she is gored immediately by the beast. She stabs back furiously with her spear badly wounding the Boar, giving better than she got.

Gerald deftly avoids a Boar attack as Morgaine shouts "Mr Peeg will die!" as she is wounded by its goring tusks. Gerald swings around avoiding another attack and slicing into the nearest Boar for a good wound. The animals are tough but a couple of good attacks should see them fall thinks Gerald. Moving to protect Fenella, Leo swings down The Sword of Sir Chyde with a mighty cry of "Bacon!" finishing off the Boar that Fenella had injured.

Again, Gerald dodges an attack and again he strikes back, wounding his enemy. A Boar tries to attack Sir Leo's fine armour and hurts its tusks as Morgaine fends off an attack as Phineas arrives to help, wounding the frenzied animal.

Picking up Leo's battle cry Morgaine yells, "Mr Bacon!" as she slices a few more pieces from the attacking Boar while Leo does the same across the camp. Morgaine and Phineas continue to play with their food with Phineas slicing a bit more off as Gerald swiftly kills another Boar.

Gerald is gouged again but his wounds are not significant and he redoubles his attack almost finishing his opponent. Leo, now using "Pork Sausage!" as his battle cry finishes a yet uninjured Boar in a single blow while Fenella skewers another killing it instantly. Phineas hits and finally kills the one attacking himself and Morgaine while Fenella kebabs the last one and suddenly all is quiet.

Gerald Lays on Hands on Fenella curing her back to full health. Morgaine claims her wounds are but a scratch while Gerald insists that his still bleeding wounds are nothing, "I'll be fine," he grimaces. Fenella shrugs and uses her CLW on Morgaine's less serious injury curing her almost to full health. Smiling at Fenella Morgaine says, "you were always my favourite."

Stoking up the fire against the bitter cold they return to their bedrolls and spend the rest of the night peacefully.

Tuesday the 7th day of Vadrius 08:00, The Camp next to Lyrchwood

They wonder about taking some of these potentially tasty dinners back to town and Shadwell suggests rigging some rope to sling a couple over the horses which they do, sharing walking time between the group as they travel back to Milborne arriving around 19:00.

They are about to give the boars to the Inn but Leo and Gerald become a bit sniffy about it being for charity and not for profit. Andren, the innkeeper is not against sharing some of the bounty with the less well-off but also wants to share some of the profit for the hard-working Inn where they comfortably reside at very reasonable prices. He suggests, somewhat sarcastically, that maybe they'd like to take it to the church instead to which Gerald agrees until he remembers that the priest, Semheis, is missing and the church is closed, not that the priest would have had much idea about butchery anyway. There is no "proper" butcher in town and the two Inns are the places where the butchery skills reside. In the end they agree to an equitable split and Andren can at least make something on the transaction.

Shadwell diplomatically points out that they might like to send a wagon down the road where there are three deep frozen Boar just the other side of Cutter Brook and Andren immediately calls for one of his team to sort it out. "Can't just leave it out there for the animals to eat, eh?" he chuckles, rubbing his hands together.

Leaving the innkeeping business well alone they retire to bed and spend a peaceful night.

Wednesday the 8th day of Vadrius 08:00, The Baron of Mutton Inn, Milborne

A Meeting with Carman

After a delicious breakfast of smoked eels and toasted bread and butter they visit the Carman manor house and Jaspar shows them up to meet Carman. They find the Master of Milborne standing at his window overlooking the half bridge, quietly chortling to himself. As they enter, he turns briskly and sits at his desk and gestures to them to sit. "Well Hammers, how's it going?" he asks appraisingly as Jaspar serves tea.

Gerald informs him that they have a copy of the ring, showing it to Carman who is quite perplexed that such a little thing could cause so much trouble.

Gerald also informs him about the poisoning attempt on Fenella and Carman is curious at why Gerald thinks it had to be administered in Milborne. Fenella explains the sequence of events and he nods his agreement... "I see, that would be a very serious matter... hmmm, we haven't seen anyone suspicious in town however I'm the magistrate here and I can tell you we don't take these things lightly. That's an attempted murder and murder is instantly punished by death in Milborne," he gestures to the gibbet, folded against a building in the square below. "If it's banditry or violence then they serve hard time in my mine in the Blandryde Hills," he explains.

Leo asks what he mines and Carman replies, "copper, a little silver and various other minerals used in alchemical ingredients. We have mercenary guards because part of it is a prison but the majority of it is a working mine with honest men and women mining there."

He points to the location on a map of the district, "... to the north, quite the labyrinth it is, that's the lowest entrance. There're others higher up and then further north are the abandoned Garlston mines."

Gerald wonders if the abandoned mine might be a perfect hideout for bandits or other villains. Carman replies, "I doubt whether it would be perfect lad because things have a bad habit of caving in, it's not a place I would care to send loyal troops and servants into myself but if you are keen to take a look, just remember to keep looking up."

They go on to discuss the exchange of the ring. Carman wonders what they will do with the other ring.

Gerald says, "obviously it belongs with a Magic User... maybe it could be useful somewhere where there's not enough water" and Carman says, " well, that's not round 'ere lad."

With business apparently concluded Leo asks about the half built Milborne bridge and Carman, chuckling under his breath and settling into his chair calls for another pot of tea, "now, that's quite a story," he says...