

The Barrowmaze

Session 83 17-12-25 Spidersilk Hunter Rescue 2 (side trek)

Next Session TBA

Tuesday the 30th day of Patebrius 11:00, The Blackened Forest

The Spider Colony

Moving a little deeper into the eerily phosphorescent forest they are quickly attacked by fiercely territorial Web Spiders and their companions the vile Bloodthirsty Spiders which swarm instantly to the already injured, gouging and slicing into their open wounds. With their superior armour and magical weaponry, The Hammers quickly finish their attackers but both Bella and Gerald are wounded. They discover another two cocoons but slicing them open reveals only desiccated animal parts.

Seeing a larger group of spiders scuttling towards them, Fenella casts Wall of Thorns and traps them in her terrible "hedge of death" killing them all, including a deadly-poisonous Crab Spider. While quietly congratulating herself, Fenella notices a small representation of a human figure, crafted carefully from sticks and twine, perched upon the undergrowth. "Dark witchcraft of some sort," she muses dismissively before moving on.

Luna dismisses things in her own unique fashion blending skilfully into the shadows and hefting her magical dagger "Stoutblade" as she anticipates further attacks. Tamson keeps an eye on the increasingly nervous Karla Monson while scanning the forest with his Ranger's eye.

Gerald and Leo take the lead to the southeast, their path littered with skeletal remains of creatures misfortunate enough to have encountered the deadly colony. Crunching the bones beneath their armoured boots they continue until Gerald spots another large cocoon to the east as Fenella notices yet another stick figure, now realising there are many of them, apparently placed with care and attention throughout the foliage. Now that she's looking, she even sees a circle of intertwined fibres and a collection of eight sticks pointing outwards in a radial direction, forming some sort of a wheel. The symbol reminds her of something but she can't quite recall it. Bella examines the symbol but she also can't quite seem to place it.

So they approach the cocoon as yet another swarm of spiders cascade down from the branches and skitter directly to the attack. Gerald shouts, "charge!" and proceeds to walk briskly forwards as Leo chuckles to himself. The Bloodthirsty Spiders scent Gerald's bleeding wounds and immediately target him as the Hammers move to the attack, each in their own fashion. Gerald is bitten again by a Bloodthirsty Spider as Bella also takes a nasty wound from one of the bloodthirsty creatures. Fenella fends off a Web Spider as Luna stealthily moves to a better attacking position and Tamson finishes a Web Spider with a longbow shot.

Leo seems to be in one of his flailing around periods where he doesn't hit anything but eventually he connects and one of the Web Spiders is almost killed by his attack. Tamson draws his Longsword and closes to melee but misses his first attack as Fenella spears a spider killing it instantly. Gerald slices another spider in twain as he taunts Leo for his lack of success in this encounter. Hidden in the many shadows and in the perfect position, Luna backstab attacks with Stoutblade and instantly destroys a Bloodthirsty Spider as the rest swarm over Bella and Leo but they fend off their ghastly fangs.

At the sight of the spiders swarming over the heroes, the doubly traumatised Karla starts to panic, "ohhh nooo, it's happening again!" and she runs over to hide behind Fenella, trembling in horror before running off in a panic.

Luna, who is now visible since she broke cover to attack, moves to melee the Bloodthirsty Spider attacking Bella scoring a good hit with Stoutblade, damaging the spider badly.

In mid-battle they notice a large movement beyond the current fight to the east as a huge Brood Mother spider emerges, its corpulent form rolling a freshly weaved cocoon before it. "Holy Shit!" cries Gerald as he misses his attack cursing his "Leo's Luck". Unaware of his friend's use of him as a bad luck oath, Leo hefts the mighty Sword of Sir Chyde and with his great strength and martial skill, instantly slices the spider in two. Tamson swings his longsword and kills another spider as Bella, noticing the severity of her wounds, unhesitatingly casts CLW on herself.

The group of spiders accompanying the Brood Mother rush towards The Hammers as Fenella casts an Entangle spell at them, catching them all in the writhing forest undergrowth that rises at her command. Behind the Brood Mother, Fenella notices a larger stick man figure, formed into a sort of shrine with incense smoke rising from a small fire. Fenella and Bella exchange a glance and both realise that they are witnessing the work of a Hag; a hideously cruel, evil creature that seeks to oppress and dominate with magical means of cruelty and horror. The eight-pointed icon, formed of sticks and twine is of course, a representation of the forces of Chaos which Gerald has also recognised as he redoubles his efforts to defeat the arch enemy of his Lawful ethos.

Mostly recovered after her self-administered cure, Bella assesses the situation and since they are momentarily between melee encounters takes the opportunity to cast Bless on the party. Luna and Tamson sensibly climb to gain the rocky high ground above the Brood Mother, preparing missile weapons as they go. Fenella realises she has mistakenly engaged a Crab Spider in melee, a highly poisonous enemy whose bite can almost instantly kill, and therefore as the only one in the party capable of curing poisonous attacks, she is the last person who should be fighting a poisonous enemy. She also notes that the huge Brood Mother is dripping with venom and decides to leave that one to Gerald and Leo.

Leo charges to attack the Brood Mother, unfortunately missing his sword strike as the surprisingly agile creature sways aside but of course he has engaged the great spider in melee, effectively pinning her down from attacking the others. Gerald charges in to join Leo but emulates the Knight all too well as his blow goes wide. Fresh from disposing of her Crab Spider, Fenella closes to the second rank behind Leo and makes an extended spear attack which strikes and wounds the monster while Tamson shoots from the high ground but still misses despite the Blessing and the high ground advantage.

The Brood Mother's deadly poisonous fangs miss Gerald as he fends off the monstrosity with Leo yet again missing his mighty sword attack. Luna shoots her shortbow from the high ground next to Tamson but also misses. Bella lets loose with her sling also missing but Tamson's arrow thuds home into the Brood Mother's quivering carapace. Sir Leo finally gets his eye in, slicing deeply into the great spider's body with the brilliant steel of his magical sword as Fenella plunges The Spear of The Druid into the creature, finishing it as ichor gouts from its many wounds.

Fenella and Bella observe the stick figure shrine and the small fire while Fenella realises her Entangle spell will soon expire releasing the captured spiders including at least one with a deadly poisonous bite. Seeing the Entangle begin to collapse, Gerald lights a torch from the small fire and hurling both torch and lamp oil into the entanglement sets it ablaze, immolating the captive spiders in the nick of time.

Leo slices the cocoon open and they find a struggling, terrified man; the missing hunter Aldo Sorenson, fortunately mostly unharmed and not yet a living spider nest. Karla comes running back into the group pursued by a group of spiders as even more spiders descend menacingly on silk threads from the forest canopy.

Hoping that the shrine is the focus of the Hag's unnatural influence over the forest spiders, Fenella kicks it over and sets fire to it which indeed causes the spiders to cease their unnatural aggression, backing slowly off from the heavily armed adventuring party. They will still be a menace but now they are a natural menace that the party are confident they can deal with.

Having rescued Aldo and discovered that a Hag has been operating in the Blackened Forest, they depart and return to Helix.

Tuesday the 30th day of Patebrius 14:00, Helix - Rescue mission accomplished.