

The Barrowmaze

Session 92 29-04-26 Shattered

Next Session 06-05-26

Thursday the 8th day of Haenubrius 18:00, Helix, The Brazen Strumpet Inn

Gerald's Knowledge

Returning from his visit to Mazzahs, Gerald informs them he has something important to say and proceeds to relate his account of the history of a major artifact of Nergal, which he has learned from his latest semi-accidental reading of a Runic Tablet, this particular one being discovered in the Ochre Jelly crypt (207-Q4).

Gerald relates his new knowledge concerning the hiding away of Nergal's most powerful artifact, The Tablet of Chaos, in an obscure underground labyrinth known to the locals as, The Barrowmaze. "So, it's here then," comments Leo, with a certain grim satisfaction. Gerald goes on to describe a Lich guardian of this artifact, placed in its hiding place to stand guard over it, which encourages Leo's support even further as he imagines challenging it to honourable single combat!

Taking a sip of his fragrant herbal tea, Gerald states his intention to find and destroy this chaos artifact and Leo continues to agree enthusiastically. Fenella quizzes him whether he has a location more specific than just the giant underground complex where they have been plundering and exploring. Gerald shakes his head and replies, "it's just The Barrowmaze," which is more than enough to have Sir Leo onside for the challenges ahead as he raises his tankard and quaffs it suitably heroically.

With their goals now determined they turn their minds to the more immediate matter of dealing with a potential petrification attack. Gerald considers ripping open some bags and having them available as some sort of curtain to block the petrifying effect before also suggesting the use of the Light spell, which Bella can take. If their petrifying opponent uses a gaze attack then blinding it with Light might well give them a better chance.

Gerald remembers from his chat with Mazzahs that if any of The Hammers did happen to be turned to stone then it is not actually the end for them providing they can recover the "statue" unharmed. The downside is that the Magic User spell to reverse this effect can only be cast at the highest level... it would require a much more advanced practitioner than the eccentric Wizard of Helix. However, Gerald continues, Mazzahs did suggest providing them with an oil of slipperiness (discount cost of 200 gp), which he thought might at least help them defeat a potential gaze attack enemy.

Friday the 9th day of Haenubrius – Resting Up

Everyone recovers a little from their safe haven bed rest and since they've decided to take a day off, Bella and Fenella dispense their healing spells and Gerald Lays Hands on Leo to restore his health fully. Bella notices Gerald still has unhealed wounds so she casts CLW on him, fully curing him and adding a lovely hug and kiss for good measure.

Visiting Turgen's Trade Goods, they collect their newly purchased equipment:

- Leather Armour (Luna) 20 gp
- Spear (Fenella) 3 gp
- Adventurers' polished steel hand mirror (everyone) 5 gp * 8 = 40 gp
- Sacks 2 gp * 3 = 6 gp
- Mazzahs' Oil of Slipperiness (Fenella, Luna) 200 gp * 2 = 400 gp

Saturday the 10th day of Haenubrius – To The Barrowmaze

Up with the light, The Hammers head directly for the Barrowmaze, crossing the Westland swamp without incident, arriving at the Moor at 10:30, then making their way peacefully to Barrow 35 before descending into the dungeon. They move carefully back to the site of the Zombie encounter and Leo ticks off the nearest options from room 189; the closed door to the east or the portcullis further south. Gerald mentions he's got a bad feeling about this area but he doesn't elaborate.

There follows a short stand-up team meeting resulting in Luna listening at the eastern door of 189. When she hears nothing, Leo solicitously gestures her back a few steps and he and Gerald open the door. In the light spilling through from Shadwell's lantern and Fenella's Light pendant they are able to see a single ornate column with a statue of a noble looking warrior woman in armour, bearing a large sword, standing at the ready, for perhaps some long forgotten honour guard. As the light penetrates further Leo discerns two parallel rows of warrior woman columns disappearing into the darkness to the east.

Luna comes up to scout and disappears into the shadows, her darkvision allowing her to survey the long rectangular room. After a couple of minutes, she reappears and reports 10 columns of the warrior women are visible but no other exits or features.

With understandable caution given recent events, and Luna lurking in shadows back at the entrance, they enter the room and move slowly along the avenue of statuary with weapons at the ready. Leo wants to search the walls so he steps closer to the southernmost of the penultimate pair causing it and its sister to the north to animate and attack, and again they find themselves in combat, but not surprised, by two Caryatid Columns. Gerald shrieks, "Fuck!" and Leo smiles, "hello," as they square up to these recently familiar enemies.

Caryatid Columns again

Morgaine and Phineas follow standing orders and Gerald and Leo's shouted confirmation, attacking with crossbows at short range as Fenella transforms into a Bat and flutters to the attack, immediately snacking on the nearest impassive Caryatid as Luna enters the room and shoots with her shortbow.

A nervous combat ensues with an astonishing amount of misses from both sides as The Hammers evade and fence with the impassive animated statues, sharply aware of the danger to their precious magical weapons.

Early in the fight Bella scores a big attack but The Silver Hammer of St Ygg shatters as the Cleric looks down at the broken remains in alarm.

Uncharacteristically, Gerald wants everyone to back off and use ranged weapons but of course Leo just isn't going to compromise his chivalric warrior ethos, which is further reinforced by his magical sword's own compelling sense of honour, so Gerald nervously remains in the melee alongside his friend.

Eventually Gerald finishes the first Caryatid, joining Leo in melee against the last, as The Hammers rain crossbow fire, bat teeth and magical swords down upon their foe. Again, it is Gerald who strikes the final blow, smashing the Caryatid Column to pieces before tragically, just like Fenella's spear, The Black Iron Shortsword shatters against the statue on the killing blow!

As a stunned Gerald looks down upon the remains of his sword, Luna detects a secret door in the southern wall, backing off and indicating the location, apparently it was protected by the Caryatids. Phineas lends Gerald his magical Barrows Broadsword, a heavier more brutal weapon but still one that Gerald is more than familiar with.

A Dusty Room

Opening the door to a puff of dust reveals a very dusty room with a chest set against the far wall. They notice a few faint indentations in the dust where it has settled into tiny pockmarks in a few places.

Fenella the Bat flutters into the room, "seeing" everything. She detects via echolocation piercing the dusty surface, that there are hundreds of tiny holes in the floor set at regular intervals in a grid covering the entire room except for the 5 ft strip on the far side, which is just a floor; she also notices that the chest is secured to the wall with a heavy chain.

Fenella flutters out and transforms back into her usual self, to allow her to speak, also lighting the room significantly now that her Light pendant has reappeared. Gerald is sure that it must be a false floor, designed to collapse when they enter. In case anyone didn't notice he says it again, adding that they should trigger the trap.

Luna, applying her Thiefling experience reckons this is some sort of kill trap and that coincidentally, in the tightly sealed room, the holes have been gradually obscured by dust over a long period of time. To test her hypothesis, she tosses a piece of shattered Caryatid into the room and immediately an inferno of flame erupts from the small holes in the area of the stone, the blaze so intense that they take a few steps back from it. It burns fiercely for about a minute before dying down again leaving the glowing, cracked remnants of the rock steaming and softly hissing on the floor, with the many small holes now clearly visible in the heated area.

Luna nods in satisfaction to herself and throws a second rock against the far wall, where it drops into the 5 ft strip that Fenella had observed previously and as she expected nothing happens. Gerald thinks throwing stones in to cover flagstones would be a good idea but before going too far down this route they try throwing a stone to the same place as the first one landed and it immediately bursts into intense flame, before dying down again after a minute has passed.

They confirm the operation of the trap by tossing small rocks and stones into various areas of the room, noticing that the inferno bursts forth from every location except for the 5 ft strip along the far wall where the chest resides. Luna mentions she could just climb across the walls but nobody seems to notice and they carry on discussing alternatives.

Leo thinks of making a bridge with a plank of wood or something similar, and it looks like it might work if it were rested on top of the chest, forming the long side of a triangle, so they could have a way of retrieving items from the chest, once it's open of course. Luna adds that if any recovered items weren't particularly fragile, she could throw them over to the others at the door, it's only a 15 ft gap.

Gerald thinks a pulley system could be the answer but doesn't elaborate on the construction of such a pulley or indeed where it could be attached to. Luna mentions her wall climbing abilities again and this time it sticks, she will be able to cross these normally dressed walls without any problem (CS ability check not required) unless something knocks her off onto the waiting inferno below.

Luna leans around the door frame and as the others look on, she gracefully manoeuvres herself onto the wall easily traversing the vertical surface, pausing mid-way to smile and wave before arriving at the 5ft wide strip on the far side of the room where she sets herself safely down. Carefully examining the chest without touching it, she notes the heavy chain securing it to the wall. She then makes a detailed (TR ability) visual examination but doesn't find anything however the circumstances and levels of protection they had to pass and her years of Thiefling experience leave her sure of the existence of a deadly trap on the lock.

Saturday the 10th day of Haenubrius 13:30, The Barrowmaze, Rooms 190 - 191