

The Barrowmaze

Session 96 03-06-26 The Sword, Cloak and Boots of a Hero

Next Session 24-06-26

Thursday the 15th day of Haenubrius, 08:00, Helix, The Brazen Strumpet

They travel to the Barrow Moor without incident and decide to investigate Barrow 10 which is not far away.

Barrow 10

Gerald and Leo square up to the sealed stone entrance and hammer and crowbar it open in about 20 minutes and The Hammers descend cautiously into a simple circular barrow, lined with amphorae and featuring a plain stone casket in the centre.

Fenella examines one of the amphorae and finds that it's empty and decorated with pastoral scenes of village life. It's quite nice but not exceptional quality and they would fetch about 35 gp each in Helix, however they are a bit awkward to transport being easily breakable. Shadwell advises that they probably don't represent a good value proposition for the effort of bringing them back intact.

Examining the casket they note that the lid is raised slightly on stone rollers. They slide the lid open revealing an empty space, apparently unused. Gerald asks Luna to check it out and she hops inside the casket and searches thoroughly, determining that there is nothing concealed within. She also takes the opportunity to lay down and suddenly sit up in the manner favoured by waking vampires, amusing all as Gerald draws his sword reflexively, "that's not funny Luna," he grumbles but everyone else seems to disagree.

Following Leo's lead, they spread out to search the walls and give the place a thorough going over but find nothing is concealed or hidden, this is just an empty and seemingly unused barrow. Leo wonders if this was the demo unit for potential clients to come and try it out for size, which again amuses everyone. After the brutal battles of their recent expeditions this is a light-hearted and welcome diversion for a change.

Chuckling to themselves they return to the surface and move on to Barrow 19.

Barrow 19

Gerald and Leo dismantle the door and they descend into the gloom ahead.

They see a statue of an Elven warrior in an alcove to the west. By his appearance, the warrior seems to be a Ranger and he is carrying an elegant Elven shortsword, causing Gerald to sigh ruefully in memory of his Black Iron sword recently destroyed by a Caryatid Column. Leo thinks of looking behind the statue but it's a bit of trouble for the armoured knight to get into the cramped position and the others are still spreading out over the room so it is overlooked for now. Leo suggests the usual search procedures which he intends to include the statue alcove but the others see it as a direction to search the walls which they do, finding nothing beyond the obvious door to the east. Luna listens, hearing only silence.

Fenella examines the statue's pedestal hoping to find an inscription but it is unadorned.

Leo opens the door revealing a chamber with a sarcophagus ahead of them. He enters the room triggering a spiked pit trap into which he drops, suffering the fall and spike damage as he curses himself for not tapping the floor this time. They let down a rope and Leo clammers out painfully, assisted by Gerald.

Luna and Leo search the room but don't find anything concealed so they turn their attention to the sarcophagus. Gerald and Leo heft the top off revealing some remains, bones and rags and some loose piles of coin amounting to 80 gp and 150 cp. Gerald is disappointed not to find a magical shortsword. They do notice that it's all a bit slipshod, the remains are scattered around and the coins appear to have been tipped in carelessly.

They collect the coins and leave, clearly preparing to depart the barrow, before Fenella points out that they haven't searched behind the statue, so she slips into the alcove and immediately discovers a secret door. It dawns on Gerald that they had almost been fooled by the simple trick of a false tomb, designed to lead tomb robbers to believe they have successfully looted the place whilst concealing the true treasures behind a secret entrance... and they almost fell for it.

Into The Light

After Luna listens, again not hearing anything, Leo and Gerald swap places with Fenella and Luna, and trigger the mechanism, revealing a 60 ft long lighted room with a door in the northern wall. At the far end of the chamber there stands a statue tableau of the same Elven Ranger, badly wounded and fighting what appears to be his last battle against three attacking Lizardmen. Held high in his hand is the source of the light, an actual Elven shortsword radiating bright daylight into the room. Gerald's jaw drops and he quivers in thrilled agitation as the words "Magical Elven Shortsword" pass through his fevered imagination. He finds himself struggling not to just stride over and take it right away as Leo's more measured gaze takes in the scene before them.

Leo leads the advance cautiously with a twitchy Gerald in attendance as the others enter the room. On closer examination this tableau seems to represent the heroic last stand of the Ranger against impossible odds, yet still he fights, indomitable, his noble heart battling until the end. His eyes locked on the shining blade, Gerald can only imagine himself in the same position, this must be the sword destined for him, to battle against overwhelming odds and bring light into the darkness and destroy the evil that lurks and slithers therein.

With everyone in position and Luna's checks for secret entrances negative, Leo nods at Gerald, "go on then" and the Paladin takes the sword, causing the three Lizardmen statues to animate and attack!

"Brilliant!" grins Leo, bringing up his shield and selecting the nearest Lizardman Statue for his personal attention. Stepping in and smiting mightily he cleaves off chunks of stone as his impassive attacker is rocked back by the force of his blow.

Gerald, having sheathed the Barrows Broadsword in order to take the shining Shortsword uses the weapon at hand, encouraged by its perfect balance and joyous light, he strikes, spraying shards of stone from the statue. Impressed by the amount of damage delivered by this shortsword, seemingly what he would expect from a longsword and an enchanted one at that, he grins broadly as he prepares to fend off the inevitable attack.

Phineas shoots with his crossbow and hits, causing damage with a non-magical weapon as the sturdy Fighter smiles in satisfaction. Bella swings the newly ordained Mace of St Ygg and connects to her statue with a mighty blow that blasts stone shrapnel across the room as Morgaine flings her Dagger of Throwing, chipping a few bits off.

Leo's attacking Lizard Statue smashes him twice, once with a stone claw and once with a stone axe rocking the Knight back with its brutally powerful blows. Gerald also takes a hit and notes the fearsome strength behind the statue's attack. Meanwhile Bella takes two serious strikes from her assailant and staggers back, quite seriously battered.

In quite a bad state Bella wisely backs off out of range of the mighty stone claws as Morgaine charges in to cover the Priest's retreat, unfortunately missing her attack but blocking the way and keeping Bella safe.

Gerald, probably misjudging due to the change of weapon, misses his attack and dodges around trying to evade the heavy stone axe and claws. Leo slams another mighty blow into the statue which is now clearly on its last legs but not quite finished off.

Thanks to his dodging Gerald is only hit a glancing blow, getting off quite lightly this time as Fenella shoots a sling shot sending some stone splinters flying. Leo also manages to dodge and avoid the worst of his attack sustaining only a lighter injury but Gerald is attacked by Bella's previous assailant and hammered twice for serious wounds, he remains up and fighting but only just.

Bella runs over to Gerald and immediately casts CLW on the stricken Paladin.

Unencumbered by armour Fenella races across the room to Gerald just as Leo mutters something about needing a cure. She casts CSW on Gerald for a considerable improvement in his health.

Gerald attacks with the shining sword and hits, dropping his statue which collapses into a heap of rubble in front of him. Leo strikes a huge blow annihilating the statue in front of him in an explosion of stones, dust and gravel as Morgaine runs in joining the melee and striking the remaining Statue a strong blow. The last statue yet again attacks Gerald and once more deals him serious damage.

Luna realises that the last statue is facing away from her and couldn't have seen her approaching so it must be unaware of her presence. Moving stealthily into backstab position she strikes, slamming the statue to the ground and finishing it off in a single blow.

Dripping blood and grinning broadly, Leo beats his sword on his shield and growls, "that's the sort of morning I like!"

Since Bella is well aware that Gerald has Laying on of Hands available, she nudges him to use it so he reluctantly summons the power for himself, curing for the usual impressive effect as Bella, nodding in satisfaction, CLW's herself while Fenella wanders over to Leo and casts her second CSW for another impressive result on Leo.

Gerald looks more closely at his wonderful new sword, reading the Elvish word Elenari delicately filigreed into the blade alongside the beautiful vine like patterns that adorn the weapon. Consulting Luna, who is of course fluent in Elvish he learns that it is a name of power, meaning Light of the Stars or Star-Fire.

Gerald experimentally tries saying the name Elenari and the bright light fades away. When he speaks the name again the sword illuminates with Continual Light, providing a 30 ft radius of daylight. A delighted Gerald realises he can control the light at will.

The sword feels magnificent in his grip and most importantly, compatible with his noble aims through a shared alignment to Good even if the specifics of Law and Chaos are not exactly adhered to. Phineas is also delighted to receive his Barrows Broadsword back from Gerald, so he once again has a magical melee weapon.

Leo recalls that Shadwell has a Cup of Drinking that is of benefit when healing. Shadwell utters the command word "drinkingtime" and the cup magically fills with healing wine, the best of the possibilities. Leo is given the cup and pestered into drinking it instead of banging on about expedition project planning and gains an excellent maximum cure from the healing wine.

The Tomb of a Hero

They inspect the door to the north and after some fussing over whether to return to Helix but deciding not to leave any potentially valuable treasure to any roving band of bandits or tomb robbers that may pass, they open the door after Luna listens and declares it silent.

They see a 20 x 20 ft room with a stone slab covered by a faded green burial shroud over an emaciated long-dead corpse. Next to the head on each side are neatly folded two items and below the head is some folded material. Leo gives the floor a good sword tapping to check for pit traps but he doesn't find anything so he enters.

Around the walls are decorative frescoes, all showing the heroic exploits of the Elven Ranger seen fighting hordes of Lizardmen and other enemies, clearly a great hero, leading troops of Rangers into battle. Gerald smiles in delight at the discovery of the sword's provenance and honours the body of the original bearer, bowing his head over the corpse and promising to continue the service of Good as the new wielder of the mighty shortsword, Elenari. Perhaps it is his imagination but he feels a sense of peace and satisfaction flow over him as his hand settles comfortably on the hilt of his beautiful new sword.

Leo examines the items by the head, finding a pair of incredibly supple and soft doeskin boots and a folded cloak, both of which he gently removes, treating the remains honourably as befits a great hero. Both items are in perfect condition. Leo says he will take them but Luna, the elf in the room, perks up snapping out of her reverie and goes over to look at the boots and cloak. She tries on the boots and discovers she can move completely silently! Then sweeping the cloak over her shoulders, she disappears from view. With mounting delight, she realises she now has a set of Boots and Cloak of Elvenkind both of which are phenomenally useful to a stealth-oriented adventurer. Luna also pays tribute in her own whispered Elven words to honour the fallen hero.

The group realise that although the items can also be of use to a non-elf, when used by an elf (or half-elf) the abilities are usable to their full extent so Luna, as an Elven Thief is clearly the best to take full advantage of the properties of these items.

As Fenella glares at her completely unremarkable spear, she mutters, I'm so delighted for you both!

They leave the Barrow and head to the Westland swamp, turning north to head for home. They are untroubled by any encounters and arrive safely back at Helix at 15:00 after a very profitable day's work.

"Didn't I tell you we should search elsewhere," says Luna's voice from somewhere around them as Fenella scowls at anyone foolhardy enough to meet her gaze.

Thursday the 15th day of Haenubrius, 15:00, Helix, The Brazen Strumpet