

The Incandescent Grottoes

Session 3 13-7-23 Exploring the broom cupboards

Next Session 20-7-23

Catching their breath after the encounter with the Ebony Slime creature and noticing that they are quite weary and also wounded, the explorers decide to call it a day and head for the surface where the light is beginning to fade to dusk so they strike out for the logging camp, arriving as night falls. They are made welcome and the attending cleric is able to provide a CLW (1d6+1) for each of them, plus a square meal and a good night's sleep (1d3) sees our friends fresh and ready for action at first light. Vlad tops up his health with 2 of the holy wafers and they pay the friendly forest workers 2 gp per head for their board and food before departing on their return journey.

While at the logging camp they hear the following rumours...

- Mischievous fairies haunt the grottoes.
- The caves may appear beautiful to the eye but stink of Troglodyte.

The Next Day

Approaching the grotto area they bump into an armed band of 8 Kobolds who seem to be looking for a moss dealer with murder in their minds, apparently due to being sold "bad moss". The kobolds advise the party to kill any bad moss man that they might meet and since neither side was antagonistic, the two groups part peacefully and go their separate ways.

Descending back into the grotto they find things as they left them, two disinterested skeletons and an empty room. Pausing to decide on the next move both Vlad and Angus detect a slight draught so decide to search the room more thoroughly, this time undistracted by the aloof pair of jellied skellies. Their examination reveals a secret door in the north wall of the room. Angus wonders whether it's a good idea to deal with this now or... the hell with it, they fiddle around and impressively, between three outstanding secret door checks, manage to open the door. They discover a small 15 x 15 box room of the same dark stone containing a green blob of jelly topped off with a glowing human skull. The ghastly apparition rises, quickly coalescing into a humanoid shape which advances towards them menacingly. Reme reacts first and gives it a good slice with his sword as both Angus and Vlad are lucky not to hit each other as they clumsily fumble. Fenella quickly casts Faerie Fire, surrounding the creature with a flickering green aura that makes it easier to target (+2 attack rolls). The monster claws at Fenella wounding her just after her spell completes... never mind, there are three doughty fighting men who will soon finish it off she thinks, as Reme and Vlad both miss and Angus barely tickles the thing with the point of his sword. Fenella is clobbered yet again by the horrible creature and giving up on her protectors she stabs the glowing jelly with her spear for a good hit as Reme winds up a big swing to deal a triumphant killing blow!

Fenella munches on some of the holy wafers as Angus notices a small hole (about finger sized) in the northern wall around chest height, "a peep hole for a short person?", wonders Vlad. They poke an arrow shaft into it but nothing happens so they decide to note this one and move on. Back in the skeletons room they decide to try the middle of the eastern doors which on closer examination features a brass rendering of a livid staring eye. The door opens easily and they enter a small box room covered in dark tiles depicting the same staring eye motif. There are cast iron shelves around the walls and a pile of black material on the floor in the corner. Angus attempts to lift up the fabric with his battle-sharpened shortsword, slicing into it and splitting the delicately embroidered silk robe. Examining the remains of the robe Fenella is able to read the magically embroidered script, "Dominion of the Faceless Lord". Searching the room, Angus discovers a small lever set into one of the shelves which he points out to the others. When all are prepared he throws the lever causing a brilliantly bright strobing light to issue from the eye tiles all around the room. Those of chaotic alignment, Reme and Vlad are only briefly inconvenienced by the glare but their companions, Lawful Neutral Angus and Neutral Fenella are overcome with a beserker rage and immediately attack the two chaotics. Vlad and Reme just parry, not wanting to damage their friends but Angus and Fenella have no such compunction and set about with a murderous attack that fortunately only damages empty air. Again Reme and Vlad parry as Vlad starts to wonder

whether he is actually in any danger since it is “swing and miss” Angus fighting him... fortunately he doesn't find out since both Fenella and Angus snap out of it and lower their weapons... even briefly apologising! Leaving the small room they return to the scene of their fight with the Ebony Slime. The creature seems to have dissolved so they look around, noticing a door in the parallel southern corridor. Like the other doors in this section of the caves the door is made of a sturdy, heavy dark wood, bound by solid cast-iron bands. This one however is distinguished by a 1 foot across inset brass fist icon with the inscription...

"Submit to the Faceless One's will. What remains after utter acquiescence?"

The door is shut tight and Fenella is able to discern that it is probably magically sealed since it doesn't budge even a tiny bit when Vlad slams into it. As Vlad rubs his arm they continue back to the eastern door where they fought the slime.

This is another typical heavy wooden door, except inset with a brass rendering of a dissolving skull. It opens easily revealing a short corridor with a green tiled floor set in a zigzag design. Along the walls hang black silk robes of the same design as the robe from the strobe room. They each take a robe and stow them in their packs, perhaps for a disguise at some point. Ahead of them is a T-junction with a door opposite in the eastern wall, marked with a familiar dissolving skull motif. Standing before the door they notice a shimmering blue glow from the northern corridor and the sound of a crackling sparking noise as if some lightning might be trapped there. Carefully opening the door they see an L-shaped room with a shimmering blue portcullis and a set of 4 cast iron levers in the northern wall. Pausing, they weigh up their options.