

The Last Star Cairn

Session 2 02-09-02 Cairn 4

Next Session Tuesday 09-09-02

At Brian's place.

Breakfast at Fishton

Bright and early Andrea wakes and in her usual sensitive manner begins her day by asking Astra whether she wishes she was still dead, a subject the elf doesn't want to discuss unlike the more talkative Astra of old. Heme arranges some supplies of dried fish as an eager Joe scans the horizon for something to fight. With their packs loaded with supplies and plentiful water and wine the party set out from the partially completed "Fishton re-housing and proto-urban development project".

As they ride Astra points out they haven't actually beaten any of the evil denizens of the Star Cairns, only driven them off – how about getting it right this time? Alvin agrees strongly to this, obviously somewhat disappointed in their partial victories over evil in the Abor-Alz, in particular that damned Necromancer.

Storm Keep

After a short day's easy ride they arrive at Storm Keep with Joe in particular keeping a close watch on the partially clouded sky. They stay the night, where Astra takes careful note of the shape of the specially trained Griffins used by the Mountaineer Militia as patrol mounts. Lieutenant Dagmar is currently out on patrol however they chat pleasantly enough with the soldiers and hear that 30-40 orcs from the higher Abor-Alz were driven off one week ago. There are also at least two other Adventuring groups in the area at the moment. One was a taciturn group of seemingly higher-level adventurers while the others were a more sociable low-level party.

Wyverns!

They depart from Storm Keep keeping a careful lookout. This turns out to be a very good idea as two dots are spotted dropping from the cloud base and approaching at high speed. They quickly resolve into the forms of 30ft long dragon-like creatures with swiping venomous tails, Wyverns! Since they spotted the approach the party have a few seconds to prepare as Alvin casts a Prayer spell and the others unlimber various missile weapons. As the beasts swoop to attack, Heme's mighty bow sings with two arrows striking the nearest monster. Astra's Magic Missiles also tear into the creature as Zeppo casts Aid on Heme and Joe manages to hit the other one with an arrow. Heme is struck by the lashing Wyvern tail leaving an ugly wound however the big warrior fights off the effects of the deadly poison and reaches for another pair of arrows. As the Wyverns turn another hail of missiles are launched by the party with both Astra and Alvin casting Magic Missile spells as Andrea and Joe hit their respective targets. Suddenly Zeppo is surprised attacked, raked by the claws of a third Wyvern that had flown in low from another direction, fortunately for him he manages to dodge the poisonous tail sting.

One of the vicious creatures crashes dead to the ground as Alvin casts Mirror image creating a group of identical Alvins. The battle continues with Andrea and Joe both missing as Heme strikes again with his bow. The Alvins let fly with their staff slings doing surprisingly high damage with a small sling bullet as heavy arrow fire from Joe, Andrea and Heme send another Wyvern crashing to the ground. The third monster wheels away and gains height before flying off into the distance.

Alvin returns to his usual singular self and casts CLW on Heme's gaping wound while Andrea rounds up the panicked riding horses.

Freyll Keep

The party arrive at Freyll Keep on a pleasant, partially clouded day. As the others chat with the guards Astra casts Alter Self and tries out her Astral Deva form, practicing various swoops and dives as the ever-cautious garrison train a couple of heavy ballistae on this extraordinary sight. They stay the night as guests of Sergeant Melville and his troops before setting out bright and early to search for the cairn.

The Cairn

Using Zeppo and Andrea's Direction Sense they keep on course and by lunchtime they discover a familiar-looking depression in the land. Astra approaches cautiously and surveys the interior observing the expected cairn structure in the centre. She notices that the stone plug is about 30 yards away embedded in the topsoil. Returning she reports this and Alvin wonders whether something big might have thrown it. Andrea and Hemegretham scout the perimeter finding nothing so Andrea sees if she can spot any tracks, unfortunately she is just not herself today and can't find any sort of a sign of passage.

Astra decides to take a closer look and casts Invisibility on herself. She takes the opportunity to spitefully poke Andrea in the ribs before heading stealthily into the crater and the cairn itself. At the entrance she notices that the staircase has 20 ft of clearance, obviously big things can get in and out of here. Rather less welcome is the obvious stench of death and decay that issues from the passage. She creeps down, listening continually and noticing that there is apparently magical light below. Slowly she makes her way down to the bottom of the stairs, finding a large pentagonal room with two exits (that she can see) and piles of smelly furs scattered around the room. There is a downward staircase ahead of her and above her head floats a glowing image of a large and a small rune, each with a small dot below it. The stench of death and decay is stronger here and listening she hears the buzzing of flies and then suddenly a 'clank'. Listening intently, she hears a metallic sound approaching rapidly from the northwest. Suddenly a 12 ft tall metallic man appears from the northwest entrance and strides towards her. She flees, racing back to the party to report, after digging Andrea in the ribs again.

The Plan

From Astra's description they assume the thing is a magically powered Golem of some sort. It didn't have a "backpack" so they decide it probably isn't one of the mechanical constructs they have seen before. Andrea remembers that they will need magical weapons to hit it and Alvin muses on the Slow spell, one of the only spells that can affect Golems as far as he can remember. Andrea wonders about digging a pit. Alvin suggests that he could use a Stoneshape spell to create one. Andrea volunteers to be the bait to lure the thing out of the cairn and they discuss the plan in greater detail as Alvin points out that he won't be able to cast the Stoneshape spell until tomorrow. Joe is quite rightly concerned about the horses being out in the open with Wyverns around and suggests searching for shelter. Astra decides to scout around for something and casts Alter Self to take on the Astral Deva shape. She finds a rocky overhang about one hour's slow ride away and returns to report.

They find one large and one small cave with some bones in the larger one. Andrea uses her Tracking skill to find that a group of large bipeds were here about two weeks ago. Joe asks Zeppo about providing water for the horses and finding a large depression at the back of the cave the Priest agrees to cast Create Water in the morning. They spend a peaceful night and next morning Zeppo casts the spell creating a large pool of sparkling, fresh water.

The Golem

Back at the cairn they set about implementing their plan. Alvin casts a Stoneshape spell near the exit with a very thin crust of stone at the top. Placing a marker at the corner he then goes to the star plug and using another Stoneshape creates holes on the stone where ropes can be attached. Andrea, Zeppo, Joe, Heme and the invisible Astra heave the great stone cap over to the cairn as Alvin and Joe use their Rope expertise to tie lengths of rope to three corners. Alvin casts Levitate and using the ropes Astra, Joe and Heme guide the floating stone door above the concealed pit. As Alvin concentrates the stone slowly rises while a grim-faced Andrea descends into the cairn.

She makes her way into the first room noticing the furs and the vile stench. Listening carefully she doesn't hear anything so she creeps into the northeastern corridor. She investigates two pentagonal rooms and finds a privy before noticing a clanking noise approaching. Suddenly she realises the flaw in her plan. She could be trapped down here with the Golem blocking her only exit. Quickly she runs into the black circle room where she sees the metal man. It also sees her and raising its arms approaches her rapidly, its metals hands grasping eagerly. Quickly, while just about dodging around it, Andrea legs it as fast as she can with the Golem in hot pursuit reaching out with its metal fingers for flesh and bone to crush. Up top the others see Andrea burst from the entrance and leap the pit area as the towering bronze figure emerges and stepping on the thin stone crust crashes down through it. Immediately Alvin cancels his Levitation and the stone cover crashes down onto the Golem, sealing it within the pit. There is a moment of silence then suddenly a crash and as the ground shakes around them there is another crash and the Golem's mighty fist bursts through the rock cover smashing it to pieces. Alvin and Zeppo both cast Spiritual Hammer as the thing climbs awkwardly from the pit. Heme, Andrea and Joe charge into battle, Joe and Heme striking for enormous damage as the thing lashes out smashing Zeppo with its huge fist. The party fight back encouraged by the visible damage they are doing to their frightening opponent. Before it can strike again the party plough in with the frontline fighters in particular dealing out a deadly cascade of fearsome blows as the thing sways and sags, then crashes to the ground.

Off to the side and still invisible Astra realises that during her reconnaissance the Golem had not seen her since it didn't reach out to grab her. She smiles happily at this comforting thought.

Reason for XP	Andrea	Astra	Alvin	Hemegretham	Zeppo	Joe
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Opponents	1600	800	1200	1600	1400	1600
Spells		50	70		30	
Proficiencies	30	50	10		10	10
Ideas	50	50	100	30	30	40
Problem Solving						
Role Play	50	40	40	30	30	30
Treasure						
Finishing						
Fun Factor	50	30	20	20	20	20
Bonuses				20		
Penalties						

Total (This session)	1780	1020	1440	1700	1520	1700
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Grand Total	37951	12112/12112	9580/9580	33801	See note	17430
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DM Notes:-

- Good plan – Lots of ideas especially from Alvin. The only problem was the gusty wind and falling leaf effect on any flat object dropped from a height. (Tested by Alex and Brian in the G&D with a beer mat). This time the dice were with you.
- Zeppo's XP – Still waiting for the total so far from Alex.