

The Star Cairns

Session 20 9-5-00 Hit and Run

Next Session Tuesday 16-5-00 At Brian's place.

After the disastrous events of the afternoon we find our friends in deep trouble. Hunkered down behind the ridge Reba and Andrea keep a nervous watch on the cairn as Zeppo works frantically to keep Columbus, Heme and Alvin alive. Zeppo asks Thellen to put up a tarpaulin bivouac so he can screen his patients from the worst of the weather. As a useful side effect the tarpaulin also disguises their location somewhat. Andrea carefully retrieves Hemegretham's robe of useful things and rips open the door pocket. A nice hardwood door appears and crashes to the ground and Andrea drags it off down the hill and starts to lay into it with anything that will smash it up. Despite her prodigious strength it will take her about an hour to reduce the sturdy door to something that could be used to make a campfire. Cloaked up and moving cautiously Astra creeps down to the cairn and using Andrea's pitons and some cut up lengths of rope rigs a number of tripwire type traps as near to the cairn entrance as she dares. Off in the distance, the sound of someone smashing up a door reverberates across the valley. Returning to the main group they prepare for a rapid emergency exit in the event of a major disaster. If things look really bleak Zeppo is to take the Spear of the Doomheart and get it as far away as possible. As instructed he places the slick metal rod into his saddlebag. Astra makes another couple of sorties to set tripwires (DM note 1) and returns as night falls.

Hauling a lot of broken door in a tarpaulin Andrea skirts the rim of the depression leaving pieces of tarpaulin and wood at four locations around the rim. Astra hides under a tarpaulin with the intention of getting the necessary six hours sleep in order to re-learn some spells. To help her doze off in this tense situation Zeppo provides her with a herbal sleep remedy. As the light fails those with infravision spot a shape exiting the cairn. Zeppo immediately casts Aid and another blob is seen to emerge from the cairn. There is a lot of muffled cursing and harsh language that probably indicates they have discovered Astra's traps however they are not held up for long. Eventually there are 4 groups that take up station around the cairn. One group is close enough so that those with infravision are able to see a group of 9 dwarf-like figures, quite clearly attentively on guard. Soon another blob emerges from the cairn and floats over to one of the guarding groups. After a few minutes it returns to the cairn and with a guttural shout the groups start to patrol the cairn area gradually spiralling out toward the rim. A breathless Andrea returns having seen the whole thing from the far side of the cairn and reports at least another large group and one group of 4. She volunteers to try to lead the search parties off. Mounting Binky she rides around to the north side of the cairn and doing her best lone ranger impression rears her horse on the skyline. An immediate hail of crossbow bolts flies her way luckily missing her and Binky as she rides off around the rim. (DM note 2). One of the groups splits in two and another group take station on the rim to the Northwest as a worried Zeppo wakes Astra, but Andrea is already out of sight. Dismounting she crouches down by one of the makeshift fires and pours oil over it. She also rubs cold mud into her face hoping to reduce her heat signature. Andrea fires two arrows at the nearest group while Reba, creeping around from the other direction also lets fly. Some of this distraction works since they are pursued over the rim to the east. A Random volley of crossbow fire arcs in their general direction and Reba is hit by an extremely lucky shot. Unfortunately for her the poison takes hold and she takes additional damage. Meanwhile Astra, using her cloak has positioned herself on the "roof" of the cairn. She drops a marble into the entrance and waits but nothing happens. Cries and oaths break out from the search parties as Andrea and Reba's hit and run tactics cause yet more confusion although at some expense since Andrea is hit and poisoned by a crossbow bolt. Astra, bored with playing marbles is in a position to observe an extraordinary heated exchange between two of the creatures in which one of them viciously stabs the other several times causing it to collapse, presumably dead. Having had a close up look at these creatures attitude to each other Astra wonders what they'd do to the party if ever they were unfortunate enough to be captured. Perhaps with this in mind she tries to climb down the side of the cairn but dislodges a stone causing a group to appear around the corner looking for the source of the noise. One of them becomes the lucky recipient of two thrown daggers, which although they hurt him don't seem to stop him. They search fruitlessly as Astra creeps silently away to the fallen creature. As she starts to drag the body away, the guards on top of the cairn are startled to see a dead body trying to re-animate! The predictable volley of crossbow bolts follows, one of which hits Astra, ouch! She ceases her necromantic scheme and creeps off to lick her wounds. Meanwhile the party get their first victory as back at the hit and run squad Andrea manages to nail one of the creatures with an arrow. It collapses dead.

Back at the cairn there are a brief series of shouted orders and the search parties head back to the cairn, disappearing inside but leaving 6 guards on top of the cairn. Back at camp Zeppo CLW's Reba and they hatch a plan to get to a safer position. Zeppo thinks that he could conceivably move Heme and Alvin although at some risk however there is no way that he can do anything about Columbus. Thellen will use his mountain survival skills to "bury" Columbus in turf and tarpaulin while the others are moved about 300 meters due west. This they then do - successfully! A cloaked up Astra lurks in close proximity to the cairn as Reba keeps watch from the rim and as dawn breaks the guards retreat inside the entrance again leaving only the tops of a few heads visible. Miracle worker Zeppo manages to get both Heme and Alvin to consciousness and slightly improves Columbus' dire condition. In far from ideal circumstances but he'll just have to take his chances.

Bruised, battered, cold and filthy but still alive they discuss what they have learned of their small opponents during the night:-

- They seem to move at about half the speed of a human or elf.
- Their infravision doesn't seem to be as good as yours.
- They appear to have a chaotic nature yet seem to be operating in some sort of order.

Zeppo wraps himself in a tarpaulin and thanking Trithereon for his amazing abilities falls into a fitful slumber, aided by a handful of herbs.

It is early morning. A light rain falls. You are all wet, cold and tired.

| Reason for XP | Andrea | Astra | Alvin | Hemegretham | Zeppo | Columbus | Raven |
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|-----------------|-----|----|----|--|----|--|--|
| Opponents | 675 | 80 | | | 50 | | |
| Spells | | | | | 20 | | |
| Proficiencies | | 70 | | | 70 | | |
| Ideas | 50 | 50 | | | 30 | | |
| Problem Solving | | | | | | | |
| Role Play | 50 | 40 | | | 30 | | |
| Treasure | | | | | | | |
| Finishing | | | | | | | |
| Fun Factor | 10 | 30 | | | | | |
| Bonuses | | | 30 | | | | |
| Penalties | | | | | | | |

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| Total (This session) | 785 | 270 | 30 | | 200 | | |
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| Grand Total | 955 | 540 | 160 | 270 | 450 | 110 | 90 |
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DM's Notes:-

1. So how many ropes do you all have left?
2. A lot of riding and running at full pelt in very dark conditions. (Greyhawk has two moons and neither of them were visible behind the heavy cloud). You were quite lucky – this time.
3. The combat XP for killing the bad guy (975) goes to Andrea minus 100 shared between Astra and Zeppo, the only conscious Player Characters vaguely in the combat zone that could have been said to have contributed to the creature's demise. 200 XP is also deducted for Reba's supporting role in the action. Dave gets a bonus of 30 XP for making the best of Reba.