

# The Star Cairns

Session 27 27-6-00 Tidy Up

Next Session Tuesday 11-6-00 At Brian's place.

## **Mephit RIP (Rest in Perdition)**

It's early morning in the third Star Cairn and as the party try to put their brutal elimination of the Mephits behind them they discuss the next move. A faction headed by Raven, boy is he bored, would like to return to Hardby as soon as possible, however there is yet much faffing about to be done. Astra would like Andrea to track the metal man, the one that's walking around, not the one lying down. That would be just too easy. Andrea is prepared to try this but is first committed to Joe's plan to bring the prone metal man to the surface. Ropes are rigged to horse teams using Joe's rope handling proficiency and with Andrea attending the horses they take the strain and slowly the 12ft tall figure is dragged to the surface. Alvin and Raven look on bemused as Joe directs operations. Evidently he thinks it might function better if standing so he gets Andrea to lead the horses around the other side of the cairn so that the giant can be lifted to stand propped against the cairn face forward. Heme says, "Either we get it to come with us or immobilise it", obviously he doesn't fancy the idea of it following them around. Raven who by now is completely and utterly bored slopes off "exploring" as Andrea commands her team to pull and the figure is raised to a standing position. Everyone takes a break for iron rations and they discuss the value of the construct perhaps to take their minds off the bland taste of their meagre meal. Heme points out that minus an operating manual 12ft of metal man is not much use.

## **The Away Team**

Alvin, Andrea, Astra and Joe decide to head off in pursuit of the mobile metal man that they have sighted from time to time. They ride off due north in the direction that it was last seen. Zeppo goes below and estimates the amount of precious metal bars that they have found. He shortly returns to the surface and seeing nobody else other than Reba settles down to guard duty.

Meanwhile up on the ridge a few miles to the north our friends dismount and look around as Andrea easily picks up a trail. The tracks are large and very deep as if made by something very heavy and more alarmingly they head straight down the other side of the ridge. Knowing enough about mountain survival to know not to just walk off a ridge the group get Andrea to search around and within a few minutes she has discovered a goat track that leads in the same general direction. Carefully following the goat track they intersect the original track, which abruptly changes direction and heads back over the ridge to the Southeast. Picking up the pace they follow the track for some time noticing that it always goes in a dead straight line. Astra wonders whether they could find the fifth Star Cairn by following it, when suddenly it changes direction heading due West. It takes only a few moments for the team to realise that the thing is heading right for the Star Cairn, where Zeppo, Reba, Raven and Heme are innocently going about their business. Eek!!!

## **Back at the Ranch**

Zeppo is keeping a sharp watch and just as well since he notices a tall Iron Man striding toward the cairn from the East. Quickly dropping into cover he is able to observe the thing pass the southern part of the valley as it purposefully marches forward in a straight line. Fortunately for Zeppo it doesn't see him even though its terrifyingly blank face turns this way and that as if seeking something. After about 30 minutes he finally loses sight of it to the West. About an hour and a half later the others arrive and are delighted to find the Cleric in one piece. He describes the metal man pointing out that although it was about the same size this one had no pack on its back and was somewhat different in design to the one they have hauled up from the cairn. As they descend into the cairn they find Raven and Heme dozing below. Zeppo casts CLW on Joe and Alvin casts a CLW on Zeppo as they settle down for the night.

## **The Next Day**

Astra is worried. "All those supplies that I saw in the store room. Where have they gone?" she wonders. Joe reckons, "Down the hole." as Heme, Andrea and Joe head off to the dark hole in the ground for a closer look. Astra pauses at the Rug room, examining the table runes and casting a couple of spells. She learns that the table will allow a significantly greater chance of enchanting an item. Useful but sooooo boring...

At the top of the hole Joe ties together two ropes and Heme secures one end to himself as Joe rappels into the gaping maw. Heading down the 40 degree passage Joe is doing fine and is just taking the time to examine the walls when Andrea decides that he needs her help now. Right now! Striking a heroic pose she grabs the rope and swings herself into the dark hole but unfortunately misjudges her grip and falls. Joe is just able to dodge out of the way as the clumsy Ranger plummets past him bouncing off the rough rock walls. Eventually friction wins out over mass and she manages to stop herself careering down into the abyss. As the dust settles a stubborn half-elf voice calls up, "It was just a tactic!" As the laughter dies down Andrea warns Joe to keep quiet. "What?!!!" he shouts back, causing most of the party to fall about laughing. As Joe scrambles out of the hole Astra asks whether he found anything and he describes seeing something shiny further down. Muttering something about clumsy amateurs Astra descends the rope into the inky blackness. Further down she finds the shiny thing, the broken metal part of an oil lamp. "He's bugged off with a couple of trusty minions." concludes Andrea nodding sagely. Joe remembers what he was doing before a member of the flying Ranger suicide squad fell on him and directs Astra to examine the walls. As she does so she notices that the stone has been worked with picks and tools, as if this shaft was mined. Joe ties on another rope extending the drop to 150ft as Astra descends even further. Running out of rope Astra takes the bold step of casting Alter Self and transforms into a Gargoyle, a creature she remembers well from an earlier adventure. Unfolding her leathery wings she begins to glide down, deeper and deeper into the hollow stygian blackness. She descends for a count of four minutes through the featureless shaft until almost at the expected halfway limit of her spell she spies two side passages, much larger than the shaft. Nervously she turns and begins to beat her way back up to the light finally emerging and transforming back.

Andrea thinks they should take the gold back to Fishton but the others all think this is a stupid idea. Surely we should take it to Hardby they all say, not some silly fishing village without an Inn let alone a merchant of precious metals.

## **Walkies**

Back on top of the cairn they decide to either make this metal man work or somehow disable it. They wonder whether it may only work for Suel type persons, so using Alter Self Raven transforms himself into a good likeness of the Bandit Leader Miyori. Climbing into the giant figure he is able to make it move! As the spell nears its timeout he gets the figure to sit on the ground, quickly exiting. Heme has a go but obviously doesn't look right so Astra repeats an Alter Self as Miyori and is also able to get the construct to move. As she attempts to get the thing to sit it stands and as she tries to steer it to the northern rim of the valley it falls, rolls over and punches itself! Inside the dark metal pack Astra offers up a brief prayer and tries to turn the thing over. Thankfully this time it does as instructed and a bruised and battered Elf crawls forlornly out of the exit.

They decide to leave and make the necessary preparations, loading the precious metals and the spools of silken thread onto the chariot. It is then that they discover some of the gold is missing! For some reason (perhaps all of that creeping about by himself) Raven is the chief suspect and as everyone turns their pockets out he stubbornly resists. Things look like they might turn ugly however he eventually reveals the contents of his saddlebags, which contain nothing other than his own kit! Looking nervously around they decide to depart however they take the time to use the horse team to turn the metal man onto his back, covering the entrance and doing their best to camouflage it.

The party are unmolested on their return journey arriving at Hardby cold, tired and grimy. Andrea invites Joe to join the party and the newest member of F-Troop happily accepts. Reba is offered the chance to terminate her contract, which she does, leaving without a word. Joe is able to pick up some gear, which he had stowed at the New Inn, and they put themselves up in the Adventurer's suite ready to spend some of their ill-gotten gains.

Here endeth the 3<sup>rd</sup> Star Cairn.

<b>Reason for XP</b>	<b>Andrea</b>	<b>Astra</b>	<b>Alvin</b>	<b>Hemegretham</b>	<b>Zeppo</b>	<b>Joe</b>	<b>Raven</b>
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Opponents							
Spells		40	20		20		30
Proficiencies	30	20			20	40	
Ideas	10	40	30		20	30	10
Problem Solving							
Role Play	40	20	30	40	30	20	40
Treasure							
Finishing	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Fun Factor	70	60	40	50	50	60	40
Bonuses							
Penalties							

<b>Total (This session)</b>	<b>1150</b>	<b>1180</b>	<b>1120</b>	<b>1090</b>	<b>1140</b>	<b>1150</b>	<b>1120</b>
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<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5445</b>	<b>7115</b>	<b>4890</b>	<b>3460</b>	<b>4560</b>	<b>1680</b>	<b>4430</b>
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#### **DM's Notes:-**

1. When Zeppo was absent from session 26 I accidentally role-played him so memorably that he earned a goodly sum of XP. Unfortunately attendance of the corporeal vessel is required for experience advancement so I am deducting the XP for that session and sharing the combat XP among the rest of you.
2. Not every spell and minor use of proficiency has been written up however the XP has been awarded for all of them, dramatically interesting or not.