The Adventures of the Chumbawumbians

We get knocked down, We get up again

The Players, The Game & the GM

GM: Simon Newman

The Game: *Dragonbane* or *Drakar och Demoner* (See Simon's Blog for full details on the campaign & rules). Feel free to leave a comment if you happen to be visiting!

Aodhan, Human Archmage - Bill



From an early age Aodhan has been fascinated with fire. His sorcerous mother brought him to a school of magicians after he accidentally burned down a barn on the family farm. At school he learned the secrets of magic, but the thirst for deeper knowledge made him restless. Now, after a few years of extensive travel, he joined a company of adventurers for an expedition to the Misty Vale.

Bastonn Bloodjaw, Wolfkin - Philippe



Bastonn came from the northern wastelands in search of work, joy, and the finer things in life. Tired of his people's tribal feuds, he dreamed of something bigger and travelled south. There he worked as a mercenary, gladiator, caravan escort, and guardsman, before banding together with a company of adventurers.

Brage, Human Mage - Tony



Brage is an old Animism Mage and the son of Ravenna the witch cultist leader of Sathmog. Everyone Brage gets close to seems to get killed due to this connection. As a result, Brage has been largely a lone wanderer focusing his energy on how to protect and heal those hurt by their connection to him.

Baldwin, a Human Knight - Max



Baldwin is a rugged middle aged man, oddly peaceful for someone who carries around big weapons. He prefers peace but doesn't mind having to deal with pain and killing to achieve such. He wears plate armour with a red cowl and is handy with a sword and medicine. He's a dragon knight for the Order of the Immaculate Flame... he's also surprisingly not bald.

Blisandina Nightstabber, a Mallard Thief - Joel



[Need description from Joel]

Frostbite Morningcloak, a Wolfkin - Jelly



[needs description from Jelly]

Lothar “Ironfist” Greycloak, a Mentalist - Matt



[needs description from Matt]

Orla Moonsilver, an Elf Hunter - Jelena



Orla grew up in the tropical forests of the south, always in search of adventure, but introspective and humbled by her family’s expectations of discipline and reflection. After a troll attacked her village and killed many of her kinsmen, she decided to find a new future for herself. Still seeking her new destiny, she concluded that journeying is her goal.

Ronnie Duckering, Berserker Mallard - Rich



Ronnie is a young mallard mercenary, extremely bad tempered but sporting an amazing hairstyle. He thinks that he is more well known than he actually is and is known to belligerently say to antagonists, “Don’t you know who I am? I’m Ronnie Duckering!” This usually prompts the reply, “Who?” which annoys our mallard even more. He is incredibly gullible and has been known to look for the “blue goldfish” when directed, in several privies, much to the amusement of others.

Tymma the Loud, a Dwarf Musician Knight - Kimberly



A far-travelled Knight-Musician, she has returned home after a decade away. Having left because she did not want to continue the family business (blacksmithing), she is unsure of her welcome from her mother and uncle, but is determined to prove herself – and earn some gold, because she has found a life of adventure and song on the high seas to be less lucrative than she had hoped. She currently detests orcs with every fibre of her being, as one broke Mabel, her bagpipes.

The Fallen & The Retired

- **Trystan**, a Bard, fallen in Riddermound & mourned by all (Jelly)
- **Krissiana**, Halfling Thief, retired and probably hanging about in the tavern as Kimberly sucks at rogues and is sure to die if she continues playing one (Kimberly)
- **Makander** of Half Bay, a Mallard Knight (Tony), fallen in the battle of Outskirt
- **Markus**, a Human Landsknecht (Max), killed at a ruined tower by a horde of skeletons on the way to the Isle of Mist
- **Tea**, a Human Knight (Jelly), killed in a duel at Fort Malus (but revenged)

Important Maps & Locations

The Misty Vale



The House of the Guardians



Outskirt



1: A New Gathering

Bastonn, Orla, Makander, Trystan, and Krissiana arrive in Outskirt and are recruited to go to Riddermound to find pieces of a statue. Trystan dies in the attempt and there is much lamentation.

2: A Job for Karvago

Bastonn, Orla and Makander are recruited by the warrior Nils Borr to recover the gem the Blue Zurak from Goblin-infested Bark's Blood Tor south of the Misty Vale for his master Karvago the wizard.

3: A Return to Outskirt & a Visit to Riddermound

Bein' the All-True Recountin' of Tymma the Loud

I was on me way back to Outskirt after bein' away a powerful long time when I ran into a well-moustached man sporting a most excellent hat. Said his name were Markus, and he was headed the same way, so we agreed to take the road together. As me mam says, a journey shared is a journey halved, but she's not ever been on a ship with dozens of unwashed sailors.



Still and all, he was decent company, though he waxed long about his favourite ales. But we made it to Outskirt and I was not yet tired of his yammering, so all was well. Headed to the pub first, as all his talk had made me thirst. It had been some time since I'd been home and there were many a new body inside, though Vagnhild, bless her unsmiling face, was still there.

One thing that me and Markus had agreed upon on the way was that we were both sore in need of gold, so we kept our ears open and our gobs shut. It weren't long before we heard what we were lookin' for. A mighty tall mallard, a well-groomed wolfkin, and a grand lookin' elf with boots near as high as me were talkin' with a female knight with mighty fine airs. Shadowleaf somethin'-or-other. She was offerin' 'em fifty gold – *fifty*! – for a piece o' some statue and she wanted to get all the pieces found. Four of 'em apparently, which'd make for a right tidy sum.

Me and Markus wasted no time in introducin' ourselves and volunteered our services right quick before anyone else could get in on such a good thing. There were another mallard hangin' about in the Three Stags, and he was a dangerous lookin' sort, all surrounded by a bunch of ne'er do wells. I noticed a barmaid passed him a note with a horned emblem on it, which made me doubt the sanity of 'em both.

Markus, sure we were about to get in with some dosh, splurged and bought himself the finest ale that Vagnhild had on offer, which was probably none too grand, but he downed it quick enough when we heard shouts from outside. "Troll in the barn! There's a troll in the barn!"



It seemed a fine time to show off our skills and how useful we'd be, so we rushed out with the others. Markus got off a shot and then the green-skinned brute was among us.

Orla, that elf lady with the fine boots, made an attack and then scooted her way around the corner of the pub. The wolfy, Bastonn, fumbled, but he did it with grit and a grin upon his furry face, bless him.

The troll was still too far away and my mace, The Comet, to be fair, looked like it'd serve him best as a toothpick, so I thought it only right to let loose with a song. 'Twas a pity that poor Mabel, me bagpipes, were out of commission or I would've been able to really let loose, but I did me level best to sing me new compatriots a song that'd put fire in their guts. It must've worked, as Makander, that mallard, killed that troll and not a hair on 'im harmed! Makander, that is, not the troll.

Markus decided to cut the beast's head off to make sure and I can't ever fault thinkin' ahead. I took a good look and realised it were a stone troll…and with the sun bein' the way it was, we had a perfect opportunity to leave a lasting mark on Outskirt. I told 'em my idea and we arranged that bloody beast like he was loungin' against the town well. Makander even sewed his head back on and we stuck the troll's finger well up his nose. Sure enough, when he's hit with the light, he's a statue!

We try to get Vagnhild to rename the tavern to The Stone Troll, but she were havin' none of it. But, she does give us a round of drink on the house, so that was nothin' to be sneezed at, even if it was swill compared to her finest.

There were enough day left that we all opted to head straight to Riddermound, which I guess they'd been to before and had some bad memories of, which shoulda given me a clue, but I were too blinded by the thought o' some gold. Anyway, on the way, Makander and Bastonn were right kind and shared out some bandages with me and Markus, which had I known how handy they'd come in later, I might not have wanted to go. But I'm gettin' ahead of meself.

That Orla was keepin' an eye out and leadin' us and to my surprise, she finds some auroch and makes friends with it! It followed her around like a dog after that, but the smell of the beast caught somethin' else's nose too and a bloody great worg attacked us. Only Bastonn noticed it comin' and he was the one who wound up killin' it too.

The duck…er, mallard, was handier than I thought he'd be as he goes off and handily skins the creature for a nice pelt.

Oh! And that reminds me – there were a wee goblin with us by the name of Grub. He'd claimed to be a halfling back at the pub, but anyone could see that were a lie. At any rate, he ate up half that worg in nothin' flat, his belly all out like he needed a midwife.

We made it to Riddermound after that and a more forbiddin' place I ain't never seen. We were goin' to have to climb down a ruddy hole in the ground to get in, but Orla'd brought along a rope for that. She even asked the auroch, Rocky, to stand guard and give us a "*moooo*" if it saw anythin' comin'.

They made that Grub go down first, though it took some convincin'. Then Orla and Markus followed, but started screamin' once a swarm of vicious bats comes swoopin' out of the dark at 'em. Bastonn hurried down but takes some serious damage from the nasty flyin' rats. I join 'em and get out The Comet, but…and it pains me greatly to say this…it musta been the dark down there, but I smashed the poor girl

on the wall and my morningstar broke. Luckily, Markus managed to take out enough of the vile things that the rest flew off. And luckier yet, that duck knew how to repair things and fixed my morningstar up nearly as good as new.

I was hatin' the place already, but I followed 'em on 'cause I was committed now. They decided to hit one o' the rooms they hadn't gone into before. It was dank and dark and smelled like my uncle's toes in summer. Lots of crushed pottery around and bits o' bones. And, even worse, a spider as big as the worg we'd run into earlier. It knocked Makander clear off his feet. I think it were around this time that the goblin fellow ran like the very hounds of hell were after 'im. Useless git.



The tunnel was small and with Markus and Makander there and the spider blockin' the way, there weren't much for it but to follow Orla around. She took off like she knew where she were goin' so I went with her. But we ran into some ghostly woman thing and Orla seemed to know her, so I had hope we could get around her without much trouble but that was not to be. As Markus and Makander battle the eight legged monstrosity, the face o' that wispy lady changed into somethin' I know I'll be seein' in me nightmares fer years and she attacked us.

Bastonn joins us in there and tries to batter down the portcullis into the room where the spider is. I manage to break it after he got it started, but then the ghost lady scared the bloomin' socks off of Bastonn. I never thought I'd see a ruddy great wolf quiver in fear.

There were shouts from the others, somethin' about Makander gettin' caught in web. There were nothin' for it. I'd have to try and use my honey tongue to talk that wicked ghost down. I manage to do it and me and Orla and Bastonn slink by her and we finally kill the spider between us, Makander takin' the beast out from where he were on the floor. I think it'd made him mad, which, note to meself, don't make the duck mad.

I weren't sure it was a good idea, but we were all feelin' the battle, so we blocked the doors as well as we could and tried to camp out. Just fifteen minutes had me feelin' better, but they wanted to try fer a long stretch. It were weird to lay down in a tent underground, but we fit in there like sausages. Markus kept watch.

I don't rightly remember the next hour or so, but I had some wicked unpleasant dreams. I'm sure they were supposed to make me afeard, but they just pissed me off somethin' wicked instead. But Markus' shoutin' woke me up not longer after – a Death Knight! Markus managed to parry his first attack and scream fer us and we came pourin' out o' the tent like oil on fire.

That dead knight roared some unearthly howl at us and *threw* Bastonn down the hall like he were a twig. I could just see a glimpse of the ghost lady floatin' there watchin' like it were a show.

So's I sing. The only thing that came to me mind were a sea shanty the boys on the boat liked, but I belted it out anyway, hopin' it'd help or at least throw some levity on a grim situation.

The ghost lady says somethin' about the knight bein' her husband, which makes them one shadowy pair who deserve each other. Then *she* picks up Bastonn and throws him again! I dunno how his bones weren't mush by this point.

Markus takes that long halberd o' his and whacks that dead husband o' hers a massive, satisfyin' blow. I manage to rally Bastonn, but me fat fingers fumble the bandage and he goes down again.

Meanwhile, the Death Knight fellow opens up some kind o' portal to hell or I dunno what on the mallard and then Markus gets scared and comes out white as a ghost and, so help me, that's what finally scared me. I'm almost surprised I didn't wet meself. Had shivers up and down me spine, and my hands were shakin' fierce. But that ghost lady did somethin' and I had an irresistible urge–I was goin' to *take her out* if it were the last thing I did.

But nothin' I had would hit her; she was like tryin' to grab onto mist. I did manage to rally Bastonn again and I let out another song. My mind were like a sieve at that point, so it were one that me mam used to sing: *By the light of the silvery moon, that come in June, we be cuddlin' soon, love* and I felt it in me bones. I hoped we *would* get to see the moon again.

I heard a thud and found out later it were the Death Knight tossin' Makander like a rag against the wall, but it lifted me heart when I heard a loud *thwack* and it were Markus takin' down that Death Knight. The lady knocked me senseless then, but not before sayin' somethin' that chilled me about "that which is dead cannot die" but I didn't stay down long. Bless that Orla, she got me back up on me feet again, though I felt like bilge water. And it were jus' in time as then it were me inspirin'

Bastonn to get back up. He was the only one that had a weapon that'd hit that blasted—excuse my orcish manners—*bitch*. Fair play that it were the weapon she'd given him, I found out later! He gave her a mighty blow with it and then she was gone, like she'd never been there.

The Death Knight was startin' to sort o' melt in a very disquietin' way, so we got on about our business. We did what we could with bandages, but we were all disheartened and scared and exhausted, not to mention a might angry. At least I were.

Orla opens up the burial chamber and inside were a podium with a right fancy sarcophagus made of stone. There were a fine paintin' of a dragon on the wall and in a better mood I might've found it inspirin' but at this point, I were jus' tired.

The coffin though, that must've been where that rotten husband had come from. It'd been opened from the inside. We manage to puzzle out a bit o' the writin' there and it said somethin' about a "loyal knight of the emperor" and a "gift" and a very concernin' bit about how "unholy wrath" would come down upon anyone that touched what was inside.

That elf didn't hesitate though. Orla reached in and grabbed the bit o' statue she could see and learned quick enough that the words had no lie in 'em. Somethin' like twenty blades came to chop her up into bits and she took a fair bit of damage across her pretty face. I got out a bandage and did the best I could, thankin' the ship's medic that had taught me.

We took a quick look around and we did feel a bit of a chill breeze but we was more bandages than anythin' else by this point, so we left it. And good riddance. It'll be a cold day in the seven hells before I wanna set foot in Riddermound again.

We made it back to the village somehow. Makander insisted he knew the way and he did.

It were days it seemed like before we felt right again, though reflecting upon our travails, we all learned a few useful things. I even paid a visit to me mam and she agreed that, should we get the gold together, she could train up someone in axes fer half the usual cost, so long as I worked the shop fer her while she did. Hopefully we can scrape some gold together 'cause I for sure need to get meself a backup weapon in case the Comet breaks again or I'll be stuck headbuttin' me enemies and I dinna want to mess me hair.

She did get a good look at Markus' halberd though and said it were a fine piece of craftsmanship and very durable.

So's, all that work and no gold yet as we hadn't sold the pieces of the statue to that lady knight. We've got two pieces o' the four – the pedestal, which I guess they'd found before and part o' the left torso that we found in Riddermound. I do hope they're worth it, but I guess only time will tell.

The Riddermound Rhyme

Go to a crypt and what do ye get—
Trouble! Trouble!
Go to a crypt and what do ye get—

Nothin' but pain!

There were a ghost and her husband dead
Guardin' a treasure, so they said
They nearly bled us dry
But no matter how hard they try–
We fight on!
We fight on!

Go to a crypt and what do ye get–
Trouble! Trouble!
Go to a crypt and what do ye get–
Nothin' but pain!

4: Bothild's Folly

A Madman in Town & A New Mission

Bein' the start of a new adventure, as told by Tymma the Loud

It had been just a week since we'd come back from Riddermound in one piece and we were all finally feelin' decent. That knight lady, Alfilia Shadowleaf, came back and we were all in the pub, somewhat tryin' to decide how many of the pieces of the statue we should be given' her (if any at all), when the door bursts open and some old git that I ain't never seen before comes staggerin' in yellin' about how it was the end times. "The End is nigh! The Dark Prince approaches!"

Markus and me try to question him a bit, but he just keeps natterin' on about a rain of frogs, so Markus peeks outside and the weather was jus' fine. Alfilia, though, she seemed a bit shaken and goes on sayin' it may all be connected.

The old geezer runs on out, still mumblin' all manner of things and Bastonn follows after him. When the wolf got back, he tells us the old man pointed out some dark horned-helmeted knight on a black horse off on some distant hilltop. Well, if that don't sound like a bad omen, I dunno what does! Some kind of Demon Lord knight. The old man might be crazy, but he weren't *crazy*, if ye know what I mean.

I took Alfilia to the side and told her about me suspicions about that serving girl Annabelle and how she'd been passing notes to that mean lookin' duck Quasimunde. Dunno if she took me warnin' serious or not.

But, at any rate, she tells us that she's got a lead on the next bit o' the statue. Apparently, there's supposed to be a bit of it down in Bothild's Folly. Now, I knew a bit about that story – what



dwarf from around these parts don't? Bothild had been a dwarven leader down deep in the mountains, but the story went that she were greedy and they dug too far and too deep some 200 year ago and woke a monster.

I had a feelin' me mam might know more, so I went to see her. Good thing too, as I got her talkin' and she let out a few helpful details. The tunnels had been flooded with water, sure as shootin' and the beast weren't just a legend. It were called the White Death and was supposed to be some kind o' nasty water serpent. I didn't much like the sound o' that and begged me ma to see if she had any spare equipment that might prove useful. It were a bit gallin' to do so, but she found a heavy crossbow and 12 bolts I could use. I wound up tradin' Markus for his light crossbow, figurin' his skills were better than mine and he might do more damage with it. Still, it were good to have a ranged weapon.

Mam also mentioned that we'd be passin' by the Blackfire Chasm and if I knew what were good fer me, I'd avoid it. As not much scares me mam, I promised.

We all bought our rations fer the trip, which cost me 4 silver. It were hard to hand it over, but I don't like to starve, so I did it. And so, the next mornin' we left from the southern gate and head out.

Three Orcs walk into Trouble...

Bein' an all-true recountin' of the time I got me Mabel back whole by Tymma the Loud

Orla, of course, found us a good spot to camp. She's a right handy elf, for certain. She took the first watch too, which was a good thing as she heard somethin' comin' and woke us all up. I were rubbin' the sleep outta my eyes when I saw 'em. Three great big ol' nasty orcs–and one of 'em looked familiar! The Mabel-killer! He recognized me too and we shot each other some looks that could kill.

Orla attacked first and one of 'em shoots back–and manages to peg her *through* the tent! The bastard! Another one tries to attack Bastonn, but this one get hisself all tangled up in the tent with his spear.

Then the bastard orc moves in and attacks *me* – the gall! – but misses. Alfilia steps in and she hits him and O, how I wished it were me givin' the blow! I wanted to hit 'im as hard as I could but I wanted to win more, so's I sing out loud and proud about how weak yon orcs are and how they'll never stand against a group of hardy adventurers like ourselves.

I think it worked, as everyone gets to work. Orla even took out that one bastard orc for me, but I'm sure it were my song that made her blow land so hard. Markus, and Makander and Alfilia work their magic on the others. When it were time fer me to have a go, there were only one of the nasties left, so I went runnin' fer 'im, but missed with me new crossbow. I need to get some practice in somehow, I reckon or it'll be embarrassin'. Markus made up fer me, though, and killed the bloody beast. I

walked over and whacked the one bastard in the head with me morningstar, though. Felt bloody good.



We found a **silver brooch worth 20 silver pieces** on one, though why the brute were carryin' somethin' so fine, I dunno. Prolly stole it. Their armor were decent too; forged on dwarven equipment, I think, but with an orcish hand. Bastonn took one, hopin' to have it refitted for 'imself and we bagged up the other two, thinkin' we could maybe sell 'em to me mam.

But the best bit – I cut that one orc bastard open and I found me missin' piece of Mabel. As soon as we get back, I'll be gettin' me pipes fixed and then they'll see!

And before anyone else could say "Boo" I cut a message into that one orc's chest: "Tymma were here!" That'll teach 'em!

Treasure: silver brooch worth 20 sp, the remains of Mabel, 3 sets of nice chainmail, and satisfaction

Gryphon's Landing

As related by Markus

Well, after we killed the orcs we continued our journey towards "Bothild's Lode" we came across a "Mountain Troll" or whatever that thing was, it was ginormous but it didn't seem all too angry so we headed on. As we continued a Griffon landed just before us and snapped for Makander! It just missed but it was a damn fright. Tymma immediately picks up in song as I strike it along with Bastonn but then Orla strikes him in the chest and kills it just as quick as that. Orla points out that we could sell this silly old bird's heart for a lot of money as its a "Major component of a Heroism potion", dunno what that is but we slice off its bits just as if we were about to prepare this thing for dinner (god I wish).

Treasure: 2 bags of gryphon claws (Makander), gryphon head (Markus), gryphon heart and feathers (Orla)

Goblins are but Orc-rats

Bein' how I learnt to hate goblins near as much as orcs, by Tymma the Loud

After we offed the gryphon and chopped 'im up into bits, we made our way towards Bothild's Folly down a ravine. The gate to it made it clear that we weren't the only game in town – light were leakin' through. There were lots of dwarven graffiti too, most of it the kind that don't bear repeatin' to yer mother, unless ye got a mam like mine. Lots of stuff about greed triumphin' and the like and some choice words about Bothild herself.

Makander leads the way and follows some wheel tracks to a portcullis that were wedged halfway open. At the end of a long corridor there were a heavy gate, with the ceilin glitterin' suspiciously like the sky. That duck figured there were crystals in the ceilin' and firelight under yon door. He could hear goblin voices from above and scrapin' sounds. Sneaky gits.

I set up singin at full volume while Bastonn and Makander rush the door. Wantin' to inspire 'em, I sing about how it's barely a door at all compared to their brute strength. Musta worked; they busted it wide open.

Beyond were a big lit chamber full o' goblins. A horde of the unwashed creatures. And there were a headless statue carryin' a double-headed axe too. It smelled like goblin and that, I can tell ye, is a smell no woman should smell.

Well, we all rush in, Alfilia too, and she nearly dies but Makander saves her with a pricey healin' potion. I do hope she be worth it, but I suppose she's the one with the purse strings.

I made my way down that long hall to get there and the goblins up above try and pour oil on me, but I ignore 'em. Good fer my hair, at least. They were all annoyin'

though, I sign out loud and strong about how weak the little goblins are, no better than orc-rats. Demoralizin' stuff.

I do get a look at the statue and it were clear it were Bothild. It had four long thin braids and some razor sharp fringe.



We were all choppin' through the goblins somethin' fierce and they were havin' a hard time hittin' us, thanks to me song. One ran off and it sounded like he were eaten up by somethin' and another ran off through some worg den off to the side, but the blasted worgs didn't even try to eat 'im. 'Course, we didn't want to be eaten by them either, so we sacrificed the gryphon meat we'd collected and fed it to 'em.

We followed some o' them gob-shites and even rushed the ones up above that had tried to pour the oil on us. We killed a load of 'em. After, I go down and pat that Bothild statue. Never hurts to cozy up to angry spirits, ye ken?

Orla were busy moppin' up goblins, along with Alfilia and Markus. Bastonn got in a whackin' good hit and clove one clean in two. Sadly, a couple of the blasted things got away, but that Grub fellow – remember him? – he were one o' the ones we took. And serve 'im right for runnin' out on us before. We killed at least 13 of 'em.

We noticed some nice shiny silver in the walls, and said a little somethin' to Bothild to forgive us. Seemed a waste to leave it there fer any goblins to come back fer. We were able to pry a good bit of it outta the walls, with Makander provin' himself right crafty at it.

After that, we took a little sit down to sort ourselves out, but there were somethin' creepy around and we all felt that chill o' fear hit us. Just in case, we stacked the load o' dead goblins in front o' the worg den. Oh! And we found a chess set too. I dunno much about playin' but I betcha we could sell it.

The stench though, I won't rightly be forgettin' that anytime soon. Goblins stink near as bad as orcs do.

A note from Markus

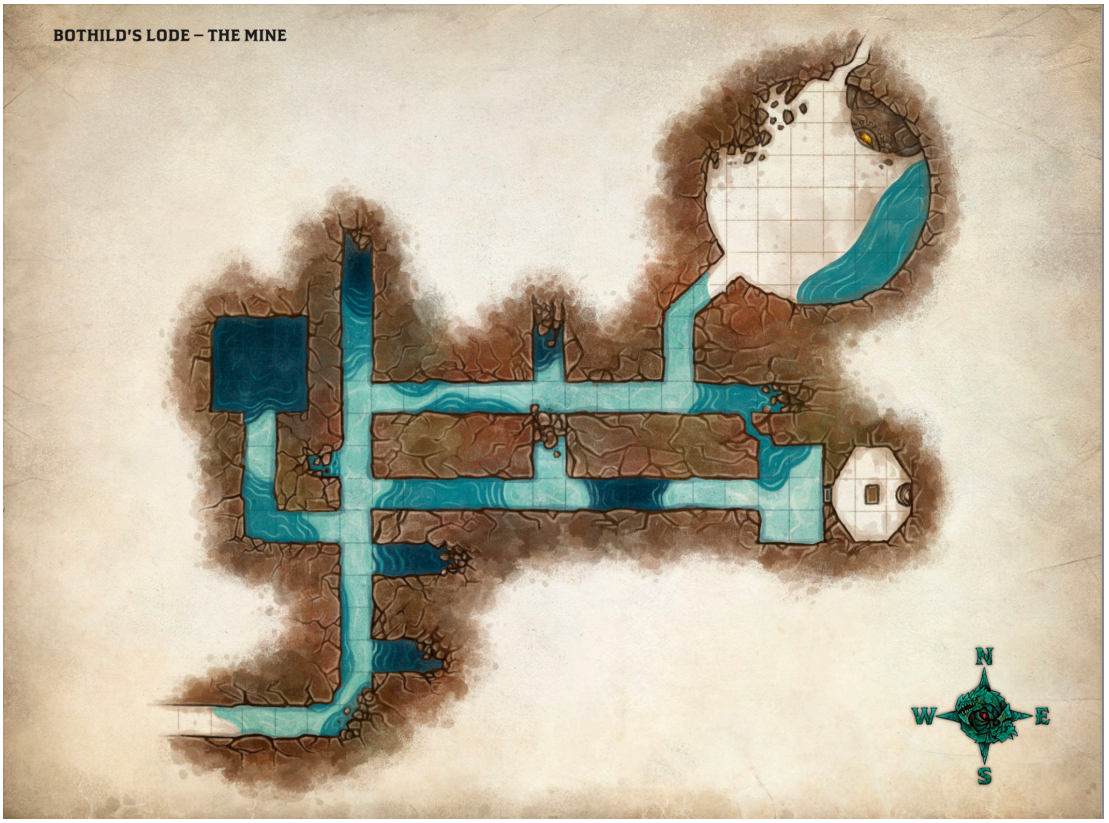
I would like to point out the fact that I sliced two of their heads off at once with one fell swing! Stupid goblins, why did they even try? I don't think I took any damage at all in the entire fight.

Treasure: 6 silver ingots pried from the wall worth 50 silver pieces each, 13 silver pieces from dead goblins and a chess set

The White Death

As related by Bastonn

As soon as the Goblins were defeated, we took an all-too-brief rest on the top floor of the corridor (always good to have the high-ground over a potential counter-attack), and we resumed our mission towards the lower floors.
We soon arrived in what seemed to be the entrance of the mine of Bothild's underground lair. While walking along the galleries, we realised that some of them



were damaged by the water that flooded almost the entirety of the complex, and some deep pits would impair our progression.

And for those who were wearing heavy armour like some of my friends, they could well be in a perilous position if we were not choosing carefully our path… Cautiously, the group moved along the flooded corridors, boots, palms and paws-deep in water and arrived at a dead end, with the darkest waters we had seen so far. This was the tell-tale sign of a deep, seemingly bottomless mineshaft. On the opposite wall, a spectral shape was looking at us. It introduced itself as the ghost of Bothild. We talked to her and it warned us about a giant water-snake and she gave us some advice on how to defeat it. As you will see later, we did indeed take the heed!

Back in patrol mode, all senses are on alert after such a scary description of the "White Death" by Bothild. And Markus, in front of the column, trips over something. "It's here!" he says, brandishing his sword and smiting something under water-level with a spectacular splash. The water turns red and the loops of a huge white snake emerge in various parts of the corridor. Damn that snake is everywhere!

The White Death's head emerges and seems to be in a frenzy from smelling its own blood: Its jaws open menacingly and that stupid reptile attacks its own tail!

Seeing a juicy opportunity, I break out from the back of the conga and run around the back of the corridor to flank the monster. I hit it with my magic sword and my first cut of the blade colours the water even more deeply than it already is.

Unfortunately, the snake didn't like my "trick" at all and I got suddenly propelled at the top of its personal threat-list: in a swift uncoiling, the monster turned around and the last thing I saw was a huge mouth coming towards me… the menacing rows of needle-sharp teeth first, the whipping forked tongue, followed by the red, humid walls of the mouth and throat. Before I could even crouch or back off, I was in the dark, unable to move. And suddenly felt sucked upwards and sliding along some sort of bowel for a brief moment before landing in a larger pocket full of sewage. The disgusting liquid took a while to show its properties as my fur was an effective barrier but soon enough, I felt my skin burning like hell. I was evidently in the stomach of that creature and I was being slowly digested. And the acid was so potent that I was truly unable to move, even less break free.

Most worrying: I was being shaken around in that body and realised that the White Death was on the move. And it was the worst case scenario: the clamours of the battle were fading fast… the creature was going for a dive… and so was I!

Now my only hope for salvation was in my friends' hands. Will there be one of my companions able to get me out of this dreadful and seemingly hopeless situation? Grrrrrrr!



Treasure: 3rd piece of the statue, a gold necklace worth 10 gold pieces, a crystal gemstone worth 10 silver pieces, a Mastercraft Longsword, and 15 gold pieces

Aftermath Upon Return to Outskirt:
Gains: We sell the two extra chainmail for **20 gp**, sell worg pelts for **12 gp**, sell chess set for **5 sp**. We sell all the gryphon items for **80 gp** to Mr. Mystic and he says he'll have a good potion ready in a week-ish.
Expenses: Bastonn pays 5 gp to get chainmail refitted for him. Tymma pays 7.5 gp to get Mabel repaired. Tymma pays 2 sp for a sweet pastry for Mr. Mystic with the unpronounceable name to butter him up. Orla, Markus and Tymma all buy a backpack for 3 gp/each. Tymma buys a sledgehammer for 3 gp.

Alfilia's Demise

Bein' the End for Alfilia, as told by Tymma the Loud

We'd not been back in Outskirt long–jus' enough to get a wee bit o' shoppin' in and fer me to reassure me mam that I were alive– and was, o' course, in the pub, when we hear a great commotion and the sounds o' weapons clashin' outside. We rush out and see that Alfilia is flat on the ground in a puddle o' blood, surrounded by an entire gang o' ruffians. Looked to be the ones that had been hangin' around that evil lookin' duck.

Even from where I were, I could see that Alfilia was beyond savin' – they'd done her in.

The evil doers saw us and tried to run, but Markus swoops in and attacks two right off the bat, killin' one outright. Orla tries to interrogate one of 'em but all the blasted git will say is "Hail the Demon Lord!" to which Orla, of course, says *NO*. Bastonn kills another of 'em. Alfilia managed to get a word or two out, tellin' us what we coulda already guessed; they were servants of the demons. I imagine she'd more words o' wisdom fer us, but that were the end of the road fer her.

I can't say as she were someone I completely trusted, but I were right sad to see her go in such a way. She were a tough knight and surely they musta taken her by surprise to be able to take her out. 'Course, there were a bloody lot of 'em.

Can't say as I remember in the heat of the moment who had the presence of mind, but we took the 10 gold she had upon her. Better us than those louts to come back and get it. She had her room key too, so we hightailed it there and gave it a search. We found 200 gold hid in the mattress, clever girl, and some correspondence between her and some o' them Immaculate Knights. One bit stood out, from some "friend in the North" that they confirmed the location o' the last piece o' the statue. Mayhap it would be that Sir Torious? I think we'd heard he were the leader o' them knights.

So's we tell Vagnhild about Alfilia's murder and debate what to do. There weren't no way to send a message at the moment. Do we make the 2 or 3 day journey to get to them and let 'em know about Alfilia? Or do we go on with what we were tasked with? The crypt were here under the old temple in Outskirt, after all, and that'd be where the pieces of the statue would need to be takin' after we got the last one.

It did seem that the dark duck had made hisself scarce so I try to impress upon Vagnhild that Annabella prolly had somethin' to do with what happened to Alfilia. She weren't totally convinced, but I guess my words did mean somethin' as she later tells me she saw that Annabella send off a bat messenger – who knew there were such a thing! – and release it with some kind o' message attached. So's I think Vagnhild is fair convinced now about that girl's intentions.
They ain't good, that's fer sure.



And, besides, I'd heard it straight from Semolina Chubbycheecks that Annabella's family had been killed by knights 'cause her family was suspected of demon worship. Who knows what that message she sent were, but I for sure would bet my last silver that it don't bode well fer us.

P.S. I dinna know who gave Semolina her name, but they were a right joker.

P.P.S. I prolly should've written a song about Alfilia, seein' as how she died, but my muse ain't got the time to think about everythin' everywhere all at once, so's I wrote one about Orla instead and how brave she were in Bothild's Folly.

The Ballad of Orla

Oh, I know of an unlikely elf
that thinks not just of herself
—Orla, Orla, Orla Moonsilver!

Deep in Bothild's Folly,
in the dark and the dank,
came a beast most foul,
with breath that stank

The White Death they called it
like a serpent come straight up from hell
It slithered, it snarled, it bit
And down went Bastonn into its gullet, without even a yell

But Orla weren't no elf,
high and mighty,
up on some shelf
—Orla, Orla, Orla Moonsilver!

Down she went after the snake,
his wicked hide glitterin' in the dark
Down into that water, deeper than a lake
Quick like a hunter, she made her mark

She cut that snake in two,
Grabbed Bastonn by the hand,
And down deep into the blue,
Sank White Death, ne'ermore to be seen on land

Oh, I know of an unlikely elf
that thinks not just of herself
—Orla, Orla, Orla Moonsilver!

Treasure: 10 gp on Alfilia's body, 200 gp hidden in her mattress and correspondence with the Knights of the Immaculate Flame
RESULT: All gain **76.2 gp** (including previous gains/sales).

New Rumours

- **THE ISLE OF MIST** "The island in Mirror Lake at the northern end of the valley is a place of death, avoided by all that live and breathe. Stories tell of ancient magic – and a crypt brimming with gold and wondrous artefacts. But

the island is wreathed in demonic fog that sucks the life out of anything that comes near."

- **TEMPLE OF THE PURPLE FLAME** "The Magna Woods is a diseased forest, and we all know where the malady is coming from – the Temple of the Purple Flame, a crumbling remnant of an evil age, where forbidden knowledge and demonic residue rest among untold treasures under the overgrown rocks."
- **BOTHILD'S LODE** "The dwarves of the Kummer Mountains are decent and honest folk. It was worse in the old days – during the reign of Bothild the Vile and Greedy – when they dug too deep in their miserable mines and unleashed nameless horrors on the world. But then again, what treasures they found! They unearthed heaps of gold, silver, shimmering emeralds, and crystals the size of a goblin's head. Apparently, it's all still down there in Bothild's Lode, in the far southwest."
- **BLACKFIRE CHASM** Legend tells of a wicked wound in the world struck by the demon lord Sathmog's spear: Blackfire Chasm. The perilous depths of the Chasm plummet leagues into the foundations of the Misty Vale, comprising rough hewn passages, echoing caverns, and ancient ruins. Some say it is a gateway to Hell.

5: Temple of the Purple Flame & the Crypt of Um-Durman

The Temple of the Purple Flame

Summary by Simon...

Orla Makander Bastonn & Markus recruit three new adventurers at the Inn - Tym, Halveld & Lothar.

12/4 Party head north, reaching the Temple of the Purple Flame mid afternoon, after Orla recruits a bear on the way. Sinister Briars wrap the Temple. One novice adventurer is immediately lost to a pit trap; intelligent skeletons in the pit ask the party to close the Portal to the demon realm. Orla kills a Giant Spider battling Sathmog cultists, the 4 survivors are friendly and lead them down to the Undercroft, but a terrible mutant Manticore slays the cultists before falling. Two twisted demonic cultists guard the Portal to Sathmog's Realm and welcome the party. Orla Makander Bastonn & Markus enter the Portal. In the alien city, Makander Bastonn & Markus find the last piece of the emperor's statuette & return, but Orla is lost for six hours before finding her way back.

13/4 Bastonn's loud whispers are overheard by the demon cultists, who attack and are destroyed. With great difficulty the party breach a rusted iron door, freeing the intelligent skeletons. The party rest up - before dawn they hear a frenzied mooing and see a cow flying over the treetops, ridden by a demon! Returning to the

surface, in the sunlit temple gardens the party find Hafarmal, an elderly Elf Wizard from the West, whose eyes have turned completely black. He is reluctant, valuing the effect of the Chaos energy on the garden plants, but when shown his reflection and his black eyes (formerly green) he is convinced to use his magics to close the demon portal, laying the animated skeletons to rest. That night the party return safely to Outskirt.

Meanwhile, Back at Outskirt

Bein' sick be for the birds, a reflection by Tymma the Loud

Sick at Home

I'm a bard of the knights, with tales to tell
Of battles fought, and treasures found as well
But now I'm stuck at home, with no quest to fulfil
Taking stock at a blacksmith's shop, against my will

***Chorus** (repeat between verses):*
Oh, the tales they'll tell, of gold and fame
But I'm here at home, playing a different game
Taking stock for my mum, with a heavy heart
While my brave gang are off, worlds apart

The clanging of the hammer, the hiss of the forge
My mind wanders to adventures, to the life I gorge
Of dragons slain, and kingdoms saved
But for now, my dreams are just enslaved

So let this song be a reminder, to those who wait
That one day you'll join the fray, and open the gate
To the adventures you seek, and the treasures you desire
And your tale will be told, with passion and fire.

Opening The Crypt of Um-Durman

Summary by Simon ...

Next morning the party head up the hill to the Temple, using the four pieces of the dragon statuette to open the Crypt of Um-Durman. After some scorching from a lightning trap they solve a puzzle and are able to claim the Sword. But on exiting the Temple they are accosted by the Mallard Quasimund, a horde of demon cultists, and Anabella the barmaid, commanding a swarm of Vampiric Bats. A terrible battle rages on the temple steps, with many falling on both sides. Makander charges into the

thick of the enemy. The bat swarm is destroyed, and many cultists fall, but both novice adventurers are slain. Anabella, revealing herself as a high priestess of Sathmog, stabs Markus with a poisoned dagger. At the last, brave Makander too is overwhelmed by numbers and falls.

Quasimund, Anabella and their six remaining cultists press in upon Bastonn and Markus, both badly wounded, while Orla shoots from above. Things look very grim...

6: The Conclusion of the Battle of Outskirt & Setting Forth for The Isle of Mist

Old friends & Unexpected Battles

Bein' a triumph and a tragedy, as told by Tymma the Loud ...

I were still recoverin' from my bout of sickness when I ran into an old friend of mine, newly arrived in Outskirt. Brage! It were a strangeness to see the old mage upon the streets o' my hometown when the last time I had laid eyes upon him were on a ship. To be fair, I were a bit surprised to see he were still kickin'. He were old as mould, as the ship's cook used to say and a life full fair o' tragedy, from the little I had been able to pluck from him. So it were somethin' he were still around.

We were catchin' up when we heard an almighty ruckus from town. Swords clangin', screams, all the sounds of battle. We took one look at each other and took off runnin' and I must say, the old man were fair faster than me! Damn these short little legs!

The scene that met us were a surprise to us both. Makander were down and covered wit' blood, his beak gapin'. Markus and Bastonn were cornered on some stairs and Markus fair looked like he were about to pass out. I caught a glimpse of Orla peeking out at the top, her bow ready. And they were surrounded – including by that dratted dark duck and Annabella. But when Brage saw her, he yelled out some other name and his face right crumpled in rage. He didn't hesitate either. As Orla and Markus were fightin' 'em off, Brage let loose with some type of lightning flash and incinerated the wicked barmaid! And some other nearby fellow were singed too. Meanwhile, as I pulled out Mabel and let loose with me bagpipes, I saw Bastonn run that Quasimund dead through the beak with his sword and a happier sight I never have seen.

Some wee fat man surrendered when Orla threatened him and lay down his weapons and hisself too, coward that he was, so Orla took aim at another of the nasty fellows and hits him. I were makin' my way up to Bastonn and Markus. I coulda held back, I suppose, but they were lookin' so strung thin that I felt I had to join 'em. Two ladies, and I say that loosely indeed, went to town and whacked at me somethin' wicked and I felt it even through me heavy plate. But maybe that incentivised Markus,

as he seemed to shrug off the pain and he takes out one of the baddies with a vicious hit.

As the two wailed on me, I kept lookin' 'em right in the eye and played me bagpipes like there were no tomorrow. And Markus, he swept down the steps and took 'em both out while Bastonn went after the last one, some fop with a crossbow, and killed 'im stone cold dead.

Makander, sadly, there weren't no help for 'im. He were too far gone. Knowin' he'd want it so, we took what we could salvage off 'im and split it up. And, o' course, we searched all the bodies too. Brage even wanted to go off lookin' in the nearby houses, but a housewife told 'im off.

There were some letters upon Annabella in some kind o' code but Brage was able to read 'em. A shock to me, but mebbe not to him, but they were from his mum. Apparently, they were supposed to take the sword offa us once we got it (and here I'd like to know why my friends saw fit to go muckin' about fer the sword in a bloody crypt without me?? Were they tryin' to keep from splittin' any loot they found?) and bring it to the Isle of Mist 'cause that's where the master were...and the sword could be used to either release 'im or kill 'im. I knows which I prefer.

Fer good measure, I plucked some tail feathers from that dark duck to turn 'em into quills later.

Vagnhild showed up then, talkin' 'bout how the guard were asleep. Bloody useless lot, she were thinkin' maybe they'd be namin' us heroes – as we are! – and Guardians of the Vale. That'd actually be right useful, since it came wit' free room and board. It were too bad Makander'd miss that.

It were with heavy hearts we went to bed that night, though when we awoke we had a sense of hope and new resolve. Fearless, even. We'd avenge Makander and make Brage's evil mum pay her dues!

Well, except fer Bastonn. There were a rain of star stones overnight and when we woke up, that furry wolfy were cowerin' under the bed as if he were afraid o' his own tail.

Treasure: From Makander: 20 gp, 11s, 9c, short sword, duck-shaped plate, surgical instruments (Brage), 15 bandages (10 to Brage, 5 to Bastonn), battle axe, small shield (Brage), Great axe, rope. From Bandits: 28 sp, 2 light crossbows, 22 bolts. From Annabella: 1 sp, letters written in code, 60 cp (tips from her room). From Quasimunde: silver bracelet worth 80 sp.
Aftermath: Sold items that couldn't be used and everyone gets 4 gp, 24 sp, and 14 cp each plus an additional 8 gp, 6 sp each. Bargained with Tymma's mum Okald to refit the duck plates into normal-sized plates for a total of 200 gp for both (one intended for Markus, one for Bastonn), it will take a week to be done.

O Makander!

In the city of Outskirt, a tale now unfolds,
Of a brave knight duck, Makander so bold.

He fought 'gainst cultists, evil to the core,
With feathers of valour, he battled evermore.

Chorus *(repeat between verses)*:
Oh, Makander, our hero so true,
In battle he fought, his spirit shining through.
With wings of courage, he faced the night,
In our hearts, his legacy burns bright.

Surrounded by foes, outnumbered and strong,
He stood firm, against the cultists' throng.
Though he fell in battle, his spirit won't cease,
Makander, the knight, his bravery won't decrease.

Now, let us remember this duck so brave,
His name echoes on, through every wave.
Makander, the knight, forever he'll be,
A symbol of courage for all to see.

A bit o' Subterfuge & a lot o' Mud

Bein' the start of our next adventure wit' a bit o' a lie by Tymma the Loud

We dithered somethin' wicked over the wording, but we sent a message via Annabella's bats off to Brage's mum sayin' we (as in they) had barely survived, but had the sword and they should meet us at the pass in three days' time. We even signed it off with the salutation that Brage had puzzled out, though it pained me to write it, callin' Sathmog our three tongued lord. *Blech*!

Meanwhile, we were actually headin' off north towards yon Isle of Mist, with Orla leadin' the way.

The first thing we came across kinda warmed my heart, truth be told, though it be wrong. Mebbe. We saw three bodies hangin' from a tree but they weren't jus' any bodies. They were dead cultists, all wearin' their black robes, the blood hardly visible on 'em. They all bore the mark of the demon upon 'em and looked to have been taken out by sword.

Don't tell me mum, but I spit upon 'em.

Orla's friendly bear led us to the place where they'd been camped and it looked to us like they'd been ambushed. Well, more power to whoever done it! They have my thanks!

We did take the robes from 'em in case we could repair and use 'em later. Orla, bless her buttons, had some needle and thread, though she said she didn't know how to use it.

Anyhow, we went on and things were lookin' okay until we wandered right into some quick mud. They had to pull me out and I were fair covered in the stuff, which made me mad as heck. It were even in me braids!

Thankfully, we set camp after that and I calmed down a bit after it dried and I could flake it off.

Orla found somethin' interestin' about then – a carved granite obelisk with the crowned symbol of Eledain on it. I inspected it, one eye closed to get a good focus, and found a hidden compartment on it. Written upon it were "Eledain, Lord of the World, Give us Light" and when we opened it, there were a wee compartment with a ring in it. It were glowing! A good sign, to be sure, and certainly handy fer dark places. Brage took it to wear and mayhap to remind him that there always be light to hold back the darkness.

Harpies!

Bein' some nasty bird women as told by Tymma the Loud

Brage were on watch and heard some female voices, so he yells to wake us all up. We stumble out o' the tent to discover a gaggle of harpies. One of 'em cackles at Brage, but the old man just stared 'em down, so they swarmed 'im. But he's a wily old fella, so he dodged...until they threw a rock at his 'ead.

Markus crawled outta the tent and attacked one of the nasty ladies and Orla followed right after 'im. Bastonn joined in on the fun and I tried too, with me morningstar but missed the blasted beastie.

They felt fair to insult us then, usin' twisted words, but I weren't havin' none o' that. One tried to fly up, figurin', I suppose, that we weren't as easy a target as they'd thought and Markus killed it, and Bastonn another and Brage let loose with one of those lightning blasts. Sadly, the last one got away.

There weren't much upon 'em, but I searched my brain and remembered ye can use their tongues. Or, at least, someone of the right skillset can, to create potions or whatnot. So Orla tried to cut 'em out. We managed to get one usable one and Bastonn popped it into a bottle o' perfume he had to preserve it.

We went back to sleep then and I gotta say, I had some strange dreams. Somethin' with tongues and feathers.

Treasure: one harpy tongue, preserved in perfume. Add an additional 20 gp of ingredients and get a potion of fear (Bastonn carrying)

The Ruined Tower

Bein' another tragedy and a shame, as told by Tymma the Loud

Orla had a bit 'o trouble after that leadin' us and we got off track for a bit but we finally found the river and head up stream. Brage found us a place to camp about 5 kilometres from the the lake. We ate our rations in silence.

We found a crumblin' tower and wouldn't ye know our luck, there were figures streamin' from it with bone white faces. Skeletons! One of 'em were really large and the other four were regular sized, but still taller than me.

Brage said later they was mumblin' something about payin' a toll but before we could hack out what they were talkin' about, they attacked. So I played 'em a dirge on me bagpipes to remind 'em o' their deaths.

Orla had some bad luck with her bow, but it luckily didn't break. Brage, bein' wily again, attacked 'em and then hid in some bushes. The skeletons were whackin' at me and Bastonn, but weren't hittin' me much through me armor.

Markus attacked the big one with his magic sword, but missed. It were a flurry of blows left and right on all sides and I pulled out me pipes again and played a rousin' tune to try and encourage everyone to stand strong. I musta encouraged Brage a bit too much; he tossed of one o' them lightning blasts again and hit a skeleton – but then me too! It hurt worse than the little nicks the boney boys had been givin' me. Then he slunk back behind a tree. Me and him be havin' words at some point.

Anyway, we kept at it, parryin' this way and that all of us. It were finally startin' to look like things were goin' our way but then the big one got a wallop on Markus and he went down. Before anyone could even move, much less Markus rally hisself, he whacked at him again and killed him outright. There weren't nothin' any of us could do but stand and watch.

We kept at it and finally took 'em all down. Bastonn found a wee gold amulet on one o' em but it weren't a consolation compared to what we'd lost. We buried Markus there with a cairn, makin' sure to put his hat on 'im and his tankard in his hand. I can only hope he's makin' a toast to us somewhere.

Coincidence be a strange thing, though. Baldwin, a solid lad I'd met on me travels, happened to be campin' nearby and he joined us then. As Bastonn had taken on the Sword of Um-Durman, Baldwin took on the FiendCarver (sp?) sword, the one that'd glow in proximity o' demons.

Treasure. Gold amulet worth 40 gp (Bastonn carrying). Markus' Things: masterwork halberd (Baldwin), Heavy Crossbow (Brage), Sword of Um-Durman (Bastonn), 4 Rations (Baldwin), 11 Bandages (Baldwin), Masterwork Longsword (Brage), Quiver (Tymma takes the bolts), Chainmail (Orla carrying), Open Helmet (Bastonn carrying), 4 s, 2 c

Raise a Pint to Markus!

Markus, a landsknecht, so fearless and bold,
How, oh how, can your body grow cold?
With a halberd so sharp, he defended what's right,
Against enemies fierce, even in the darkest of night.

Chorus (repeat between verses):
Raise a pint to Markus, a man of great might,
He loved to drink and he loved to fight.
In battles he stood, with courage so strong,
Now his memory lingers, but only in song.

With his comrades by his side, he'd charge into a fray,
No matter the number of foes, he always saw a way.
Markus, undaunted, his spirit unyielding,
In the face of adversity, his grin never ceasing.

So let's raise our glasses, in honour we'll cheer,
To Markus, the warrior, we all hold dear.
In tales and in memories, his legend will stay,
A toast to his bravery, forever and a day.

The Isle of Mist

Bein' a spooky an isle as I ever seen, as told by Tymma the Loud

We finally made it to the blasted Isle and it were fair full o' mist. Bastonn drew the sword and the mist pulled back from it, which I suppose were a good sign we were on the right track. We could just make out an island about 3 km away.

Brage found us a raft in some bull rushes, along with some oars. We took off our armor and sat it on top of the raft to even out the weight a bit...and keep ourselves from drownin' if we fell in. Bastonn and Baldwin rowed us over, bein' the strongest.

The island were dead still. There were a tower on the south end o' it, so we headed that way first, not really knowin' where to go.

There were a narrow staircase up the side o' the tower and no way into it, so we went up. At the top we found an altar with another bloody skeletal body on it, lookin' like it'd been sacrificed. It were charred and nasty, like somethin' me uncle would cook. Probably a cultist based on the remains o' what it were wearin', so I can't say as I felt too bad about it. It were wearin' an amulet though, with the mark o' Sathmog upon it.

Now that we was up, we could see there were a lake in the middle of the island, all still and clear, not a ripple on it.

The medallion on that body were glowin', so Brage took a closer look at it and lets out an excited *Eep*! It were some fancy thing that'd hold yer willpower in it or somethin', iffen you charged it up. Basically, it meant he could cast more spells if he wore it. Baldwin didn't need to hear no more, and cut it off the body, but as he grabbed it, ash and dust swirled around and some shadowy figure took form. Well, ' course it would. Feck me.

The creature says something about "all power to Sathmog, etc. etc." and we knew how to respond to that, so we repeated it back to it. Baldwin handed over the medallion and the specter called right now until Brage picked it back up again. He weren't gonna leave anythin' that valuable lyin' around.

So's we attacked it. It were a relatively short and bloodless battle; Bastonn gave it a good wallop with yon fancy sword and it crumbled to dust. We left it there, figurin' it'd blow away sooner or later and went on down the tower and over to the lake we'd seen.

On the shore were another corpse of an orc, lookin' like it'd been burned by acid. Me, I hoped it had been alive when the acid hit it. Anyway, it were a strange place, with a staircase leadin up into the mountains from the bottom of the pond with an archway. The stairs were underwater.

We found ourselves a good vantage point and pondered what to do. Orla took off her armor and went fer a swim to figure things out. She borrowed that ring 'o light so's she could see. When she got back, she reported that there were stairs under the water that went up and into a tunnel. And somethin' down there gave her the powerful creeps.

Well, it were either leave or go under, so we took the plunge. When we got in there, there were an overwhelming sense of dread. And Bastonn's sword were glowin' fierce in the darkness. The tunnels themselves were dry, but water were drippin' from the ceiling. I didn't much care for the feelin' it could all come rushin' down at us.

So's we go explorin' and find a wee underground lake with stones in the water formin' a path. There were even a tiny island in the centre. This Isle o' Mist were one island in an island in an island after another.

Baldwin tried to cross it, but them rocks were dead slippery and he fell into the water. He came sputterin' out lookin' chilled to the bone.

And, o' course, somethin' came risin' out o' the water then. A demon crab thing with a human-like body. It were disturbin' to see. It attacked Baldwin, so Orla goes chagrin' in and makes it to the little island in the centre and finds an evil lookin' pentagram.

The crab demon were right tough, bitin' and pinchin' and flingin' water around. Bastonn used that magic sword o' his again to good effect and Baldwin managed to parry some o' the creatures blows.

I figured if there were one thing a demon like that might be afeard of, it'd be somethin' bigger than it, so I played me bagpipes to make it sound like whale song, jus' like ye could hear late at night on the open sees. Eerie noises indeed.

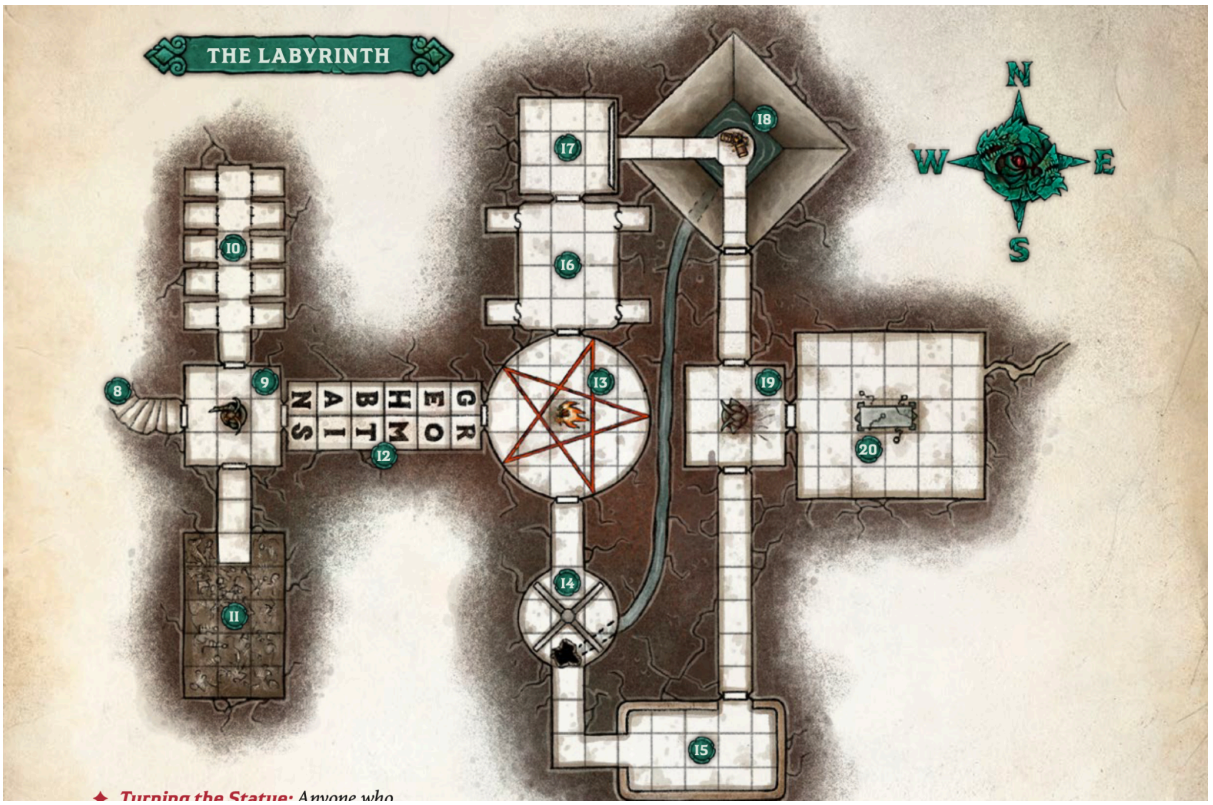
We kept at it, goin' in and out o' the freezin' cold water. We did figure out that the creature couldn't get far from the summoning pentragram thing. Evil magic, that.

But then the creature let loose with a massive chilling roar and I were petrified on the spot. I couldn't move at all. Felt like me eyeballs would pop clear outta me head. It felt like ages I were stuck there as the others fight on. Finally, Bastonn hit it with a killin' blow and the pentagram thing faded away. I were just glad to be movin' again.

Treasure: Amulet of Will (actual name?) that holds 20 WP; currently charged but will need to be charged again (Brage)

7: The Isle of Mist

Bein' the not at all embellished account of the fall of Azrahel Koth as told by Tymma the Loud and Bastonn Bloodjaw



Entering the Labyrinth

Bein' a place o' many copper doors as told by Tymma the Loud

We were damp through and through and Baldwin were practically frozen solid, teeth chatterin' as we headed up some stairs and came out into a square room. Each wall o' the place had a copper door with a symbol etched into it – that dark mark o' Sathmog. And there were a baldfaced ugly demon statue in the middle with his hand

outstretched. Brage noted that the symbol on the Eastern door were upside down, but it were hard to say if that were a good thing or a bad.

We were worried about the state o' Baldwin, so he took a rest as we all stood watch. It didn't take him long before he weren't shiverin' like a pair o' maracas anymore and we decided to move on.

Bastonn took that fancy sword and moved around the room with it. It glowed bright near the doors to the south and east. We'd come in from the west. I recalled somethin' about how a symbol bein' upside down meant you should use a reverse password on 'em.

At any rate, we decided on a rightside up door and I spoke them ugly words praisin' the evil Sathmog, feelin' like I should wash me own mouth out with soap. And Bastonn tried to open it. Lightning comes blastin' out and hits me, Bastonn, and Orla for a wallop. Fair sizzled my eyeballs, but the blasted door were open at least.

The Nasty Pit o' Despair

Bein' the restin' place o' poor Tuviel as told by Tymma the Loud

Through the door were a short tunnel that ended in a small landing over a pit. Baldwin went in to check it out and reported back it smelled foul as a charnel pit and were packed full o' skeletons and cadavers. The far wall, he said, seemed blank. Then, o' course, there somes a wee rattling sound from the pile o' corpses and a bunch o' 'em come clamberin' out, drippin' muck and goo.

I dinna know how anyone, even a demon, can go about decoratin' a place with a pit o' bodies. They ain't right in the head.

Baldwin kills one right off and I fair sing my heart out – *these bones are made for breakin' and that's just what they'll do* – and Orla joins in with her bow. Brage goes blastin' and Bastonn kills another. Bones are fair flyin' everywhere. Baldwin had taken down quite a few and Brage were a bit disheartened that he'd tried to heal Bastonn and failed at first, but we kept at it. Turns out the last one fell to the old mage and his sling.

If there be a place where they all go when they die (again) and they're commisseratin' over how they go, I bet they'll laugh at that one. "Ye, I fell to this white-bearded fella with a sling..."

Anyway, I noticed a body in the pit that didn't look like it belonged. It were wearin' some beautiful chainmail with golden details and had tight hold o' a masterwork broadsword. I even made out a ring on it's hand – said *Tuviel and Cadal Forever*, which were a sad thing to see on somethin' so dead. Baldwin and I fish it out, him sayin' he were pretty sure it were a female skelly.

Well, the darn thing comes to life but I bluff my little dwarven heart out and tell Tuviel that we'd like to reunite her and Cadal, if she were so inclined as to not bite our heads off. Perhaps it helped that she seemed to have been a knight of Eladane

when she were herself and Baldwin were there backin' me up. He were pretty sure she was the sister of a knight named Emrys and that Cadal o' hers was another one.

She were right smart fer being dead and could click her teeth once fer a yes and twice fer a no.

The Cells

Bein' where we found poor Tuviel's brother, who were mostly dead, as told by Tymma the Loud

Orla took a rest then, as she were feelin' a bit peaked. We heard the clank-clankin' o' chainmail and bones through the eastern door, so we decided to open up the other one and duck on through. Baldwin took one fer the team this time and got zapped by the lightning.

Through the door was a long tunnel with a bunch o' cell doors. Baldwin took a good listen and figured out there were two cells that likely had someone in 'em. Anyway, we duck into the tunnel and Brage closed the door behind us. There weren't no way to lock it though, which were a pain.

The whole tunnel stunk of decay and things best not thought about. There were some prayers bein' mumbled too and Brage recognised it as orc in one direction, likely a lass, and a male voice in another one speakin' common.

Baldwin opened up the eye slit o' the last one and recognises Emrys, the brother of poor Tuviel. He were in horrible shape but Brage rallied him with his words and got him to move close enough to the door that he could heal him up a bit. He looked a might better, but still like he might blow over in a stiff wind. He healed up Baldwin while he was at it too.

And jus' in time, as a squad of nasty skeletons arrived about then and pushed through the door. They had on ancient Eledane knight gear but certainly were knights no more.

They went directly after poor Bastonn, right after he let out a yip that he'd seen some keys on the belt o' one. So's Brage sends out a lightning bolt, drawin' deep on himself to do it so far underground...but hits not just a skeleton but Bastonn too and knocked him clean out. I know how that feels.

Tuviel joined in the battle with us, which I were glad of. I rallied Bastonn but then one o' the blasted bags o' bones hits me and I fell directly to the floor. But it were a good thing I'd encouraged Bastonn, as he stood up, fangs bared, and killed the one that had knocked me down. Then Baldwin gave me a bit o' healin' and I felt about a third meself. Brage broke out his surgical instruments and even sewed up Bastonn. Now it not only smelled like a surgery gone bad, it looked like one too.

Anyway, I picked up the keys and opened the cell door with Emrys in it and the one with the orc too, figurin' an enemy of our enemy is hopefully a friend, even if I don't like an orc any more than a steamin' pile o' you know what in a normal situation. Seems she's one o' that Maladûk's orcs and needs to get back to report in,

but would stick with us fer now. Yeah, yeah, o' course ye will, else ye'd be back in a cell before ye knew it.

We were all feelin' a bit off, so we ducked ourselves into two o' the cells and took a short rest for a bit of healin'. I even calmed down a mite so I weren't angry anymore. Luckily, nothin' else happened and we resigned ourselves to movin' on after breakin' the news to Emrys about his sister. Oh, and we learned that poor Cadal hadn't made it either; he were a ghost lost somewhere in the tunnels.

It were a sad story all around and made me want a bit o' time to pen a song, but it weren't a good place for that.

We gave the orc lady a longsword to use and Emrys a light crossbow, though it didn't look much like he could use it without keelin' over, but it seemed better than makin' him walk the halls without any means o' defendin' himself.

The Tunnel o' Sathmog

Bein' a place where it becomes clear Sathmog is right full o' himself, as told by Tymma the Loud

The east tunnel door was still open from when the squad o' bones come through, so Baldwin takes a peek. He sees letters burned or etched into the tunnel floor and it don't take him long to puzzle it out. If ye stepped right, ye spelled out "Sathmog" and I gotta say, it be clear Sathmog has an ego on 'im the size o' a dragon's horde.

Anyway, Baldwin steps on the letters and goes across to yet another copper door. Havin' had a clue from the orc, Tuviel turns the statue to point that way and we do all the honours and the door opens without shootin' us through with lightnin'. That were a relief. My braids were pokin' out all over with loose hairs.

The Riddlin' Demon

Inside the next room was a pentagram on the floor with a flamin' demon in the centre. He introduces himself as Khaa and demands we answer some riddles or, ye know, be killed.

Demons have a lotta free time on their hands if ye ask me.

Well, it were close on the first one, but we managed to get an acceptable answer out and then Orla and Brage fair shouted out the next answers before he were practically done sayin' the riddles.

Amazingly, he were true to his word and let us pass by him without any fuss. He were pleasant enough for a demon, I suppose, though I wouldn't be invitin' 'im fer dinner. Though he could prolly roast somethin' in two minutes flat if he wanted to.

The Rotatin' Room

Bein' the one we dinna wanna touch with a ten foot long barge pole

Tuviel opens the door to the south fer us and it revealed this bizarre rotatin' chamber with a weird metallic wheel or somethin and walls o' stone. Ye could hear the rushin' o' water from down below.

We all looked at each other and wanted none o' that, none o' that at all. We asked Tuviel to open up the other door.

The White Marble Room

Bein' the one with a tripwire, as told by Tymma the Loud

Well, the next room *looked* safe enough on first glance and didn't have anythin' like the dream of a madman goin' on in it like the last place. It were white marble and pretty big. There were another copper door on the other side.

Brage were about to just step right on in when I grabbed him back and told him to take a look first. Ain't nothin' been what it's supposed to be in this cursed place. So's he takes a look and sees a trip wire in the light cast by Orla's ring.

We all took a step over it, which I just managed to do with me little legs. We get Tuviel to open the next door and she clicks on over. I do hope she don't mind, but I been hit by lightnin' one too many a time.

The Mirror Room

Bein' the one with the mirror, as told by Tymma the Loud

This room had a massive mirror on the eastern wall, but was otherwise empty. Clearly we did ***not*** want to be dancin' up to that mirror without takin' some precautions.

Brage cast *detect magic* and determined that, o' course, it had some kinda life drain magic upon it. It tried to suck him in, even from the door, but he resisted. I sing him a song to perk him up and he hits it with a *dispel magic* spell and makes it safe. He looked right pleased with himself, fair enough.

I go take a look, holdin' me sledgehammer just in case, and spot a hidden door in the mirror. Bastonn volunteered to go first.

Treasure! And a Big Rock

"I'm not catching that ball!" as told by Bastonn

Tymma outlined a rectangle on the mirror with the tip of her hammer to emphasise the hidden door to me. Arf! Now I see it!

I pushed the perfectly polished surface and the door opened with a light click. On the other side, a cool breeze was coming and the noise of dripping water could be heard from somewhere deep or cavernous. I sniffed the breeze and it smelled like damp and stagnant water. I am not sure I like this... I clenched my teeth to shoo the memories of the white death swallowing me and taking me in its lair underwater.

With a source of light from my friends I can now see the room as it is: I stand on one end of a narrow bridge over a pit so deep I can't see the bottom but guess it's flooded. The bridge makes a turn to the right and leads to the next door in the dungeon. In the middle of the bridge, obviously placed as if a bait, a couple of small treasure chests and some shiny bibelots...

After a quick discussion with Baldwin on who is the strongest, Orla got roped (pun intended) into getting through the narrow bridge while I cling onto the other end of the rope. I owe a big debt to Orla for risking her life to save mine with the snake, so I wouldn't let anybody else be the one to insure her safety.

As she steps on the first yard of the bridge, a worrying "click" can be heard from the left hand-side: hurling with a big WHOOOSH sound, a massive boulder swings from the darkness and towards us. If it was not for Orla's lightning reflexes and agility, she and I would have been swept and crushed like two walnuts in a moose stampede: She sprung on her legs and jumped far enough to not only get away from the boulder, but also to leave some space for me to land safely after her. So much for me trying to get even with her in the life saving business!

I pounce right behind her and the boulder brushes twice the fur on my back, once on the way out and another one on the way back. After that, the boulder swings back to where it came and the same click is heard. The boulder has stopped. A glacial silence takes the whole party by the throat when we all realise how bad this situation could have turned into and how naive we were to think this treasure was not a distraction for a deadly trap.



Orla and I throw the treasure through the secret door so that our companions can catch them and examine them securely.

After a long debate and attempts to disable the boulder mechanism among all of us, Brage realises that one can crawl under the clearance left by the boulder and so the rest of the party safely pass on the bridge and to the next room.

Treasure: 3 potions of healing, 3 potions of will power, 40 gold, a chalice of golden gems (40 gp), silver brooch (25 sp), 80 cp, Masterwork Dagger of Venom with 12 doses of paralysing venom (Orla), Book: *Beasts of the Cave* which can be used to train Beast Lore (Orla), and a sapphire worth 15 gp. ***Split***: 19 gp, 5 sp, 16 cp each

Another Bloomin' Demon Statue

As told by Bastonn

The Library

Bein' the safest spot in the whole place and that ain't sayin' much, as told by Tymma the Loud

There were some archaic writin' on the door that said "Library" and, wonder o' wonders, when Tuviel opened the door, it actually were a library! There were loads o' bookshelves packed full o' books and scrolls and the whole thing felt kinda serene. And dusty.

We did notice somethin' odd about one shelf and there were also an open archway that we followed around and saw it linked up to the weird rotatin' chamber we'd seen.

We took a wee little rest and I were feelin' much better and more like meself. Then, o' course, Azrahel Koth appears and starts monologuin' and makin' threats and boastin' about himself.

He cast malediction upon Baldwin, but our brave knight just shrugged it off like it were nothin' and Bastonn and the orc attack him. Still don't like orcs, but it did make me heart sing to see her have a whack at 'im.

Then the nasty undead fiend cast some kind o' deathly cold upon us and we felt our will jus' drainin' right outta our bodies, along with our health. It were like bein' encased in ice. I broke free and pulled out Mabel and let her do her thing. Tuviel broke out too and whacked at 'im, but sadly missed, but then he clawed at her and did nothin' so's I can't complain.

Black flames filled the chamber then and I were fair glad o' me armor as it didn't manage to do much to me. Brage broke free o' the ice then and cast lightning at Azrahel Koth and Orla shot him. She hit, but he jus' pulled the arrow out.

But when Baldwin hit 'im with that magic sword, it were a different story and I swear I saw the creature flinch before he teleported away.

Brage guzzled a healin' potion and I took one from Orla to boost me willpower up so's I could keep the right attitude to sing.

Then we decided to go ahead and check out that suspicious lookin' shelf. Behind it we found a secret library with some grimoires that fair made Brage the happiest I seen him yet. He and Baldin loaded themselves down with all the books we found and Emrys even made himself useful by findin' one on healin'...which, if ye think about it, were a might sad given his condition.

Then we all hear that horrid voice of Azrahel Koth again, callin' us foolish and sayin' he'd healed hisself up good as new and tryin' to scare us again. It worked on that orc – she tore clean outta there and straight into that strange rotatin' place and the last we knew of her were a shriek and a splash. Now I wish we hadn't given her that nice sword, but I suppose she did *try*.

We made our way back to the room with the other demon statue in it, figurin' it were time. It had one emerald eye and one ruby eye and I confess I did think about pluckin' 'em out, but that'd surely set somethin' evil in motion. With some help from the folks we'd rescued, we decide it's best to press 'em both in at once and Tuviel does the deed fer us.

The last door opened to the Mausoleum.

Treasure: Tome of Beast Lore (25 gp), Tome of Languages, Tome of Myths & Legends, Tome of Healing, 4 Grimoires: one for each school of magic + a general one (Brage)

The Mausoleum

As told by Bastonn

Leaving the Isle of Mist

Bein' a miracle, as told by Tymma the Loud

On the way outta that cursed place we ran into Cadal and gave him the bad news about Tuviel and Emrys. He were a nice sort and seemed glad at least that they'd gone on to their final restin' peace and weren't trapped no more in the labyrinth. He told us he were killed by that crab demon and was also happy to hear that the creature was gone.

He gave me a magical ring and right pretty it was too–it lets me see in the dark and woulda protected me from the mist, so it woulda been handy to have earlier, but seein' in the dark be nothin' the sneeze at. Many the time woulda been that I could used that when I were young and tryin' to sneak outta the house!

We left him and I hope he moved on himself.

We also ran into a troll with a toothache named Okvid. Brage was kind enough to remove the bad tooth with his surgical tools and the troll gave us some rotten food. I guess it be the thought that counts there. I dunno about everyone else, but I tossed the foul stuff as soon as we got past the troll.

When we made it outside again, we saw that the mist was gone! We didn't have hardly time to rejoice before a frickin' frackin' dragon were starin' down at us. I were fair about to mess me armor, but the giant creature gave us thanks. It flew off then and I caught me breath...but then we heard it's last whisper in our minds:

> "The time of the great cleansing is nigh. Eledain awaits his sword. He awaits his faithful servants. He will summon you when the time is right."

Perhaps it were meant to be reassurin' but it felt more like a warnin'. By Kazad's beard, this be a cursed place.

Treasure: Magic Ring of Seeing (Tymma), rotten food

Return to Outskirt

We made it back to Outskirt and peeked in the pub – saw a gaggle of nuns in there and Brage recognised his mum sat there with 'em, bold as you please. So we fecked off to me mum's house and hunkered down.

New Rumours 1/7/23

- ***The Sword Mistress & Bandit Ursik One-Ear*** Something is up in the swamps east of Outskirt.
- ***Tower of Sighs***. "There's a disgusting bog about a day's march east of here. It's crawling with bloodsucking leeches and insects, and is a hideout for bandits. But there are vast riches out there in the sludge, buried in the ruins of an ancient watchtower. People around here call it the Tower of Sighs."
- ***Road's End Inn***. "There is something strange about Road's End Inn by the edge of the Haunted Marshes. Several guests there have disappeared without a trace, among them a small child, and most recently the shepherdess Antelia. Her family is worried sick."
- ***Missing Shepherdess***. Vagnhild is keen for you to see if you can find the missing Shepherdess Antelia.

8: When Nuns Attack & The Inn that Time Lost

A Knock at the Door

Never get the door if a knock comes while yer eatin' as it might spoil yer lunch, as told by Tymma the Loud

We were settlin' in fine at our new digs and havin' lunch. Brage were even with us, instead of campin' out. Then there comes a knock at the door and Bastonn smells some perfume. It were a bunch o' nuns, lookin' to be the same as the ones we saw hangin' with Brage's evil mum before. They were lookin' for 'im and pushy as anything and before we knew it, they were inside and tryin' to kill us. Well, Brage and us as incidental damage.

One were tougher than the the other four and it weren't till Brage called down lightin' upon her that things looked up. He scorched her but good and Orla's arrow caught her out. Baldwin took out the last one.



We were cleanin' up the mess, bloody bleedin' nuns, when Captain Hardy knocked on the door. Bastonn sent him on his way politely, sayin' everythin' was fine. We weren't sure what the good Captain would make o' a bunch o' dead nuns lyin' about the place.

We took ‘em out back and buried ‘em in the trees back o’ the house, though we searched ‘em first. They were all to a one tattooed with the mark o’ Sathmog. We rested overnight, anxious to leave that mess behind us and investigate the disappearance o’ that shepherdess that Vagnhild had been buggin’ us about.

Treasure: Masterwork Greatsword (stored in Baldwin’s weapons rack), 6 cp, Golden Amulet of Sathmog worth 35g, long spear, 3 broadswords, 1 longsword, 4 novice nun outfits, 1 superior nun outfit

The Road’s End Inn

A place that time forgot, as told by Tymma the Loud

Had a wee chat with Vagnhild the next mornin’ before we set off, askin’ her to give me a head’s up if any new nuns showed up (and lied to her a wee bit about the last lot never havin’ stopped by). And I asked Captain Hardy to keep an eye on the house fer us, as we were goin’ investigatin’.

Our journey out to the Inn was uneventful, which were welcome. It looked a wee place, just my size, probably halfling built. As we came to it, a fog rolled up and we could hear the sound of merrymakin’ inside, like a right good party was goin’ on. It were a strange contrast to the fog, and it may’ve jus’ been me, but felt like the revelry were a bit muffled.

We head on inside and see a halfling lady behind the counter. But that weren’t all. Brage immediately notices a girl who looks exactly like the one we’re searchin’ for! And I spot a dwarf in the corner that gives a right start when he sees me. So’s I go to check him out and it turns out it’s Stig. Stig Stonehilt and he goes on about how he “*knew*” me ma back in the day, wink, wink, nudge, nudge. Never thought I’d meet me da this way, but we’ve the same eyes, so I imagine it’s true. He buys a round for everyone to celebrate, so I break out my pipes and strike up a tune. Says he’s in town as he’s on the way to investigate a dwarven fort on the other side of the marsh – supposed to be full o’ treasure. So looks like I might take after me da some after all. I always wondered.



Meanwhile, the others were talkin' to the shepherdess and she seemed a might addled. Said she'd been traveling in the great wood and everythin' were fine and la, la, la. Somethin' seemed off about her story or mebbe it were jus' her.

Brage cast a detect magic spell to see and it fair knocked us out, as a right terrible sensation took us over and the walls o' the place seemed to swirl and swell.

Next thing we knew, we wakes up in some kind o' dormitory with wee little beds. I were the only one with me feet not hangin' off the edge. Moonlight were comin' in the windows and it were powerful cold. A tapestry with some old crone upon it seemed to be starin' at us. And there were me da, asleep in a chair near us.



Now, I never knew nought about me da before and I dinna trust anythin' about anythin' at this point. I rolled on outta bed and grabbed Orla's poisoned dagger on me way and stuck it right up under his chin and prodded him awake—with me fist, not the dagger, as I wanted to hear from him first what were goin' on.

He starts in babblin' about "Oh, it worked, it worked, watch out fer the old hag" and goin' on about a curse and how he's stuck. I decided to trust him, fer now. I gave Orla her dagger back and we chucked on all our gear. I covered old Stig with a blanket before we left the

room, as it seemed he could barely move. He whispered one last warnin' about bone shamblers and I dinna like the sound o' that at all.

A silence settled about and we were all suddenly wicked famished. We ate a ration each to stave it off, and I stuffed one in me da's mouth too, hopin' he could chew it.

The next room held a toolbox and a bunch o' chests that had been forced open. A burgundy curtain hung in front of a tunnel. Orla took a look that way and saw a right huge dead spider and what looked to be one o' those bone fellows hangin' above it. We let the curtain drop back down.

I took me sledgehammer to the toolbox and got it open. A spike o' some sort spit out at me, but me armor took it. Then the floor shook and a foul stench poured forth. It only bothered me a moment, but Brage looked like he were about to vomit. But, inside the toolbox were an ornate dagger with a worn hilt. Brage inspected it and determined it weren't legendary or the like, but it were some kind o' bane weapon, likely tied to an individual. Hopefully not me.

Orla took it and when she did, she had a vision of a screamin' old woman, the one from the tapestry, all chained up and bein' screamed at by a couple o' rich farmer-lookin' people. Same as the ones we'd seen earlier in the pub sittin' in the corner not makin' merry with the rest. It scared her fer a second, but she shook it off.

We head on and come to a room with a mosaic in the floor and three statues: one cryin', one prayin', and one pointin' at the floor. Baldwin tries to take a look to see if he can spot anythin', but triggers a trap and gets dumped into a pit. He did find a glowin' ring down there, though, so it weren't all bad. Everyone leapt over the pit as if it weren't nothin', so I try to and I don't think anyone were as amazed as me when I made it over!

The next room after that were a strange one. There were a pond in it with croakin' frogs! It reminded me of a song, but a bit discordant. So I play somethin' just to see and the bloomin' frogs croak along with me.

A bone shambler came upon us then and we battle it. Brage, though, he noticed a chest in the pool and he jumps in to get it, trustin' us to take care o' the pile of bones. And we did; Baldwin took care of it with his halberd.

Inside the box were a mastercrafted longsword and 2 gold, so worth the dip in the pond, I suppose.

We find another room and this one fair spooked me the most. There were a cradle in it and toys scattered about. On the wall were a paintin' of that same man and woman and a small boy, but they were dressed like they were from a long, long time ago. And Baldwin spots a porcelain baby doll in the cradle.

Dolls ain't right. I've always said that. Dinna understand 'em.

Brage picks it up and tries to detect magic on it. Under the doll was a bone flute. The whole place felt magical and wonky, though, so his spell dinna tell 'im much, though he did figure out that the flute would play if it came near an undead creature.

Baldwin tried to remove the portrait from the wall, but it wouldn't come off. Everythin' about this place were weird.

The next bit was a room with 8 paintings on the wall and a glass ceiling with moonlight streamin' in. And, o' course, the flute starts playin'.

Orla notices that one o' the paintings shows that same family bakin' bread in some outdoor oven. But, other than the flute and the weirdness around us, it seemed a peaceful place. We took a quick rest to recover.

We head to the northern door and it were pitch black in there. Orla took her magic ring o' light and stuck her hand in. The hag were chained to the wall, undead as anythin'. And Brage mutters a curse I dinna think he'd know as the porcelain baby in his backpack starts movin'.

The old crone starts screamin' "Release me! It weren't me what killed the boy!" Orla moved back and a chunk o' masonry comes flyin' right out at me. It dinna hurt, but it kinda stunned me and I'm sure I were standin' there slackjawed.

Then we find ourselves all on a high cliff lookin' down and even knowin' it couldna be real, it were still disconcertin'. Bastonn fell to the floor and took some damage too, so that were real enough. And more stones and rubble come out and hit Baldwin.

Brage took the cursed doll outta his bag and it wailed like a proper babe. The crone's yellin' along with it, sayin' she needs it to prove her innocence. So Brage takes it in there and gives it to her, and she grabs it to her.

Orla weren't convinced though and she runs in and stabs the old hag with the dagger we'd found. Then it were back and forth – more gravel, more dark precipices, until we were all up and down like ragdolls.

Then she let out an off-key lamentation like as I never heard before, all proclaimin' her innocence. Bastonn hit at the chain holdin' her and almost managed to cleave it in two.

I played a tune based off of her lamentation, but tried to shift it to be somethin' more melodious and pure and not so heart stoppin'. And mebbe it helped, I dunno, but instead o' attackin' us, she managed to break the chain instead where Bastonn had weakened it. She ran past us, clutchin' that babe to her chest. Everythin' went black, but I had that ring that Cadal had given me, and I could see that everythin' were a swirl o' colours like a kaleidoscope.

When we could see again, we were in the room she'd been in, but now there were nought but a solid wall where the door were that we'd come in. In the distance, we heard the crone yellin' about "showin' them!"

We stumble out through the one remainin' door and come out into a graveyard, which did give me pause. The flute starts to play again. There were three graves dug up and outta a nearby one, stuck a sharpened femur. There were a shovel and a large pile o' dirt as well.

In one o' 'em was a tied up dwarf and at first I thought it were me da, but he were far too young, though he had the same eyes. In the second, were that shepherdess, lookin' jus' as confused as before, and in the third a two-headed hound were scrabbling out, followed by two more.

Baldwin tried to tame the hound, but it just glared about, so there were nothin' for it. Brage's lightin' toasted one o' em before it could even climb out and wounded

another. We managed to kill ‘em without too much trouble, but I felt a might bad, as the old crone had said somethin’ about how they had killed her dogs. But had they had two heads back when they were alive? I guess we’ll never know.

We helped Krog (that were the dwarf) and Anelia outta the graves. Turns out that, not only do I have a da, I’ve got me a half-brother too. And likely more, from the feelin’ I’m gettin’. He were here with Stig to do some prospectin’ when they got sucked into this weird place.

We head out and soon find ourselves back at the Inn and it’s daylight again. I dinna know whether I’m comin’ or goin’. We peek in the window and me da’s in there, and that couple, and all the rest. I knock on the window at me da and he’s all happy, but I ain’t goin’ in there. But he comes right out! Says the curse be broken. Said the old crone came to the couple and told ‘em she weren’t the one that killed their son. They come out too, say they thought it were her, though it were Helemi who actually killed her. They “just” tortured her. Which goes to show ye should never take someone at face value. Iffen they’d listened to her instead o’ thinkin’ she were evil jus’ ‘cause how she looked, they mighta found their boy wanderin’ in the woods or somethin’. Instead, they were trapped here for years and years and years. It were a wonder they dinna collapse into dust as we were stood talkin’.



Anyway, da were right happy we’d broke the curse and he gave us a horn and a venomous dagger with sleepin’ poison in it.

We dragged him and Anelia and Krog back to Outskirt with us. I were curious what me mum would say—not much. I think she might even’ve been a bit proud o’ her wanderin’ days.

Oh, and I introduced Captain Hardy and Anelia ‘cause I thought they might get on like a house afire. That girl needs some lookin’ after and the Captain needs somethin’ to keep ‘im busy. Me mum says Captain Hardy’s rumoured to be the real father of Jory, Master Ulvar’s lad. That’s an interestin’ tale if true, as Ulvar’s wife was a half-orc who left long ago. Might explain some things about ‘em all.

Treasure: mastercrafted longsword, 2 gp, horn (Tymma), bone flute (Brage), Venom Dagger (Orla), Glowing Ring (Baldwin). Sold extra stuff – 1 cp, 4s, 19 gold each.

Orla Seeks a Magic Bow

(Verse 1)
In a land of legends, where heroes thrive,
There's a tale of courage that keeps hope alive,
Orla, the elf with a heart so bold,

She seeks a bow of magic, her story to unfold.

(Chorus)
Oh, Orla, brave and true,
With bow in hand, she'll see it through,
Facing danger, she won't yield,
Her destiny awaits, on the battlefield.

(Verse 2)
She faced White Death, a fearsome foe,
A wicked worm, with a heart of woe,
With nary a doubt, she fought the beast,
A hero's spirit never ceased.

(Verse 3)
To Outskirt town, evil did descend,
Sathmog's cultists, their dark ways to amend,
Orla stood tall, her allies by her side,
Together they battled, the darkness defied.

(Bridge)
Through forests deep and mountains high,
Orla's legend spreads across the sky,
With every triumph, her spirit grows,
A hero's journey, only she knows.

(Outro)
With a magic bow, her deeds will grow,
Orla seeks its power, wherever it may show,
Through lands afar, her quest unfolds,
Legends of the bow, in whispers and in scrolls.

In tales and songs, her name will ring,
Orla, the elf, the hero we sing,
She'll keep on fighting, her mission clear,
A legend forever, we'll always hold dear.

Orla! Orla! Orla!

New Rumors 29/7/23

1. “There’s a disgusting bog about a day’s march east of here. It’s crawling with bloodsucking leeches and insects, and is a hideout for bandits. But there are

vast riches out there in the sludge, buried in the ruins of an ancient watchtower. People around here call it the Tower of Sighs."

2. "Ogres - disgusting brutes, twice as wide as a man! They've been stealing livestock from the farms west of Outskirt, carrying 'em off back to Deepfall Breach. They'll be stealin' folk too soon enough, mark my words!"

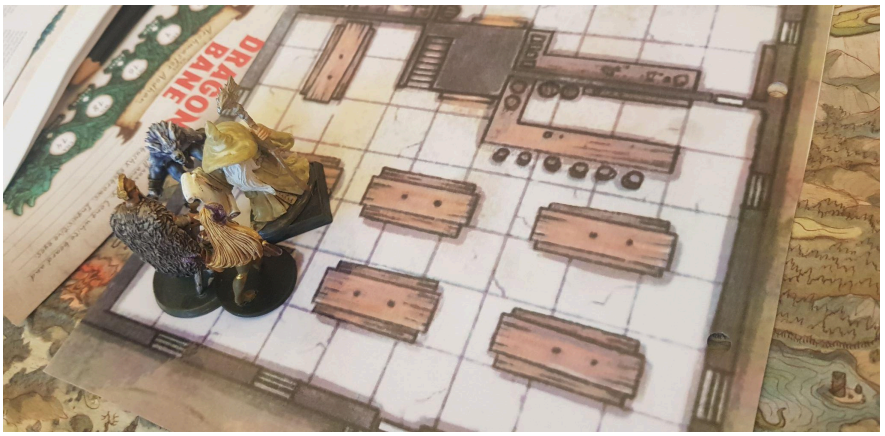
9: To the haunted marshes

Heroes of that adventure are:
Teller Grimjaw the fighter (Craig), Aodhan the sorcerer (Bill), your serviteur Bastonn the Wolfkin and last but not least, Orla the Elf.

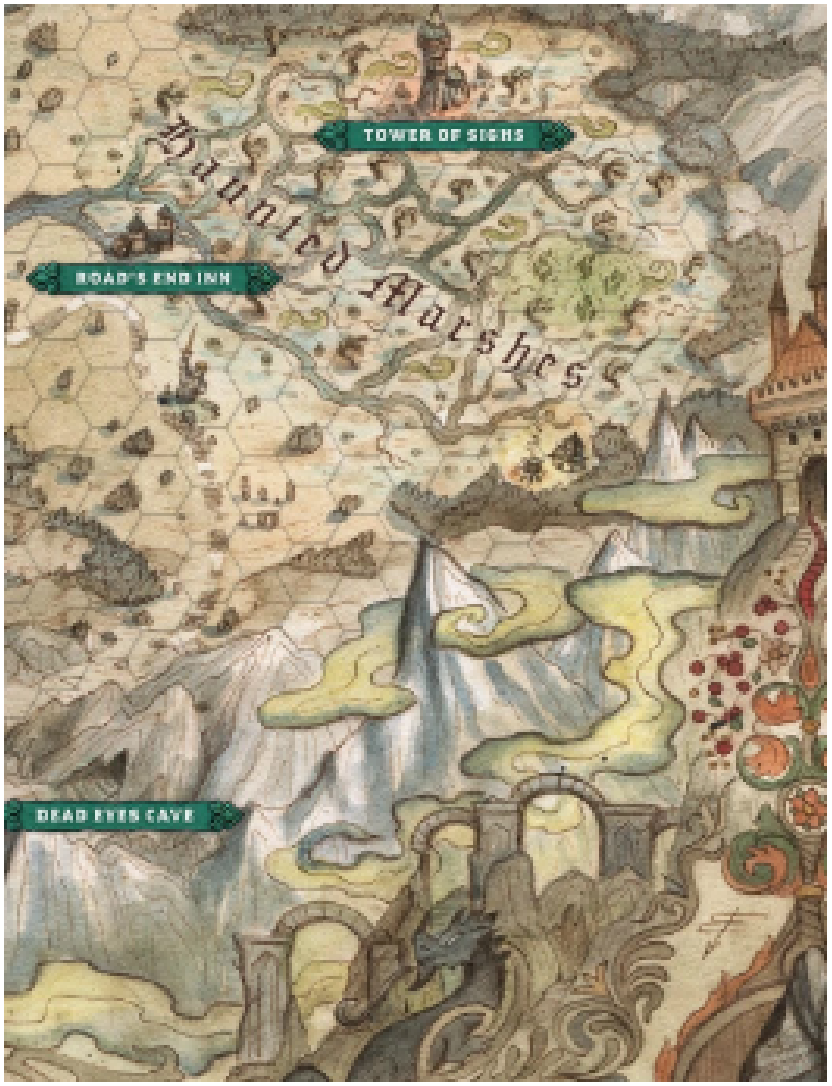




(as told by Bastonn) We heard a rumour of evil exactions happening in the haunted marshes. Teller “Grimjaw” the fighter and Aodhan the sorcerer met us at the village and we decided to go there to investigate.



We followed the road to the east and then approached the swamp by the north side to get to the tower of sighs.



On the way, we encountered a lone wolf but instead of fighting it, Orla decided to successfully befriend it.



A few miles later, we overheard two bandits trying to reach the tower and arguing about the keg being too heavy and being unable to reach the tower before night. After a somewhat long debate, we decided to kill them before they could reach their camp.
Orla shoots one with an arrow, swiftly followed by myself pouncing on both of them, making a double slash and killing them both in one fell swoop! Ah! The silence reigns again in the forest.
I turn to my companions and smugly ask: “Any questions?” 🤣
The bandit camp nearby has 7 bandits led by one redheaded 40-ish female warrior. We decided to take a rest before proceeding to spy on the camp and attacking when they are asleep. Unfortunately Orla fails to surprise the female chieftain but hits her nevertheless. She is still alive after two shots but really weak.



I then run at Orla 's rescue and pulverise the chief. Aodhan casts a fireball in the camp and kills one and wounds more.
Grimjaw cunningly throws a nearby viper that he found in the bushes and kills another bandit.
The remaining ones counter-attack: one takes a swipe at me but misses, quickly followed by another missing bandit.
Orla grabs her special dagger on a bandit and he suddenly stops moving.
I have two baddies in front of me and decide to do another double slash and make a critical hit! They are both dead! The double slash strikes again!
Two bandits remain and Orla reduces the live-count using a boulder nearby. He breaks his neck at the same time Orla stumbles. The last survivor escapes.
Nobody on our side is wounded! Nice work. We share the loot.

Arriving at the tower of sighs.

We arrive in the tower of sighs and we indeed hear a long constant sighing all around us.
In the lower room, a giant is asleep.



Aodhan casts a pillar spell and the giant slams into the ceiling.
Glamglam gets persuaded to be on our side and remove the boulder that closes the down-staircase. He goes out to drink the barrel of beer that we said he could have as a payment.
Down the stairs we enter a room with an orc war banner. The banner, if carried by us, would demoralise the orcs we would come across and give us an advantage in battle.
Legends also said there's a fountain of truth in this tower. And there was a big battle in there and ghosts are haunting this place now.
Many wraith leave the room but one female stays and talks in a strange language that only Grimjaw understands: she talks about the fountain of truth where one can swear an oath and it will be kept. More like the fountain of commitments if you ask me... I'll steer clear of that place, thank you very much!
Glamglam leaves in the mountains in the south east and says that there's a magical bow in a cave at the end of a path south of this swamp.
We decided to go there and get the bow.
On our way, we see some goblins' tracks and follow them to bring some nasty gobbos out of this world. We arrive at a small farm house with a dozen goblins trying to smoke out their occupants with some firewood in front of the door.



Aodhan and Grimjaw come around on a little plateau to cast a pillar to climb up and followed by a Gust of Wind: all the goblins are swept 6 metres away from him and prone (but one).




Grimjaw leaps off the ledge and crushes the remaining goblin to death.
I kill another one and then the goblins attack.
I try to parry one and fail. By the end of the round, five goblins gang up on me and damage me a fair bit. Orla kills the one in my back with an arrow. Thanks Orla!
Grimjaw kills all his two and joins me.



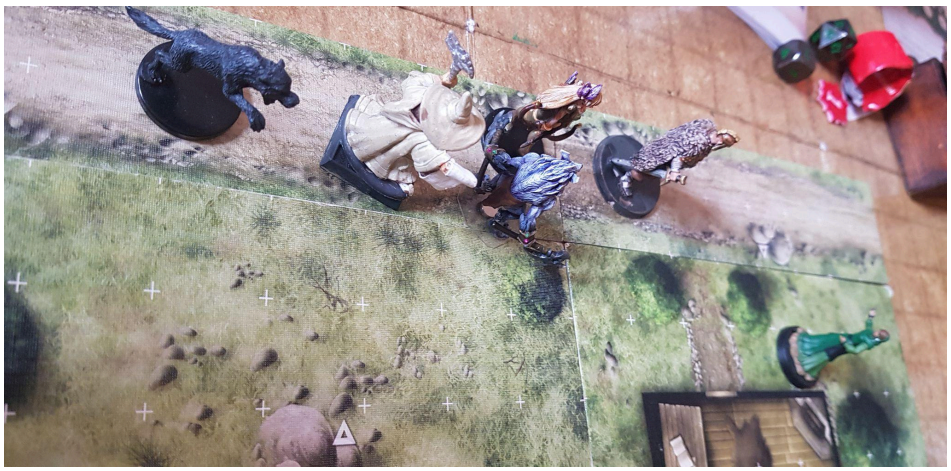
One goblin pierced me with a halberd. I prefer to take the hit but it goes deep through my plate.
The goblin archer shoots at Aodhan and deals minor damage. In return, Aodhan casts 2 fireballs and takes as many goblins.
Orla kills 2 with a Twin Shot and I finish the last one.
We met the lady in the house and put out the fire.
Her name is Elmina and she warns us about the tower but we've been there.
As a thank you, she gives us a healing potion.
Make a note that we have a great animist healer as an ally one day we should need it.

Loot from the bandit camp.
25gp ruby. Sold and shared in town
Golden ring 16gp worth. sold and shared in town
A grimoire of general magic with 4 spells. Aodhan study it and gets some magic tricks.
Loot from the tower:
Banner of the orcs : boon to carriers if carried by an orc. Bane to opponents orcs if carried by a non orc due to loss of morale.
Parrying dagger magic
Heavy crossbow normal. Sold 150gp in town and shared.
Loot from the goblins
1 ring worth 14gp sold in town and shared.

We heal and check our stats

Second part of the adventure: to the Dead-Eyes Cave

On our way to the mountains towards the cave of the magic bow, we encounter Blind Hildi and she warns us that a basilisk is guarding the cave and can kill us if we look at it. Hildi gives us a copper mirror to protect us. We learn that the basilisk is scared of chickens and she sells us some of hers.



His niece Gunhillda has left for the cave and we need to catch up with her or she's in trouble.
When we arrive at the cave, the corpse of a Sathmog cultist with his eyes removed is lying there. Grimjaw looks into his mirror and at the light of Orla's ring, he sees a creature walking on the ceiling of the cavern. The basilisk tries to gaze at us but we avert our eyes.
Orla squeezes her chicken and the creature flees from the clucking towards one of the corridors of the cavern.
On the other corridor, we hear some steps and call for Gunhillda but instead a group of 4 cultists threaten us: 'the treasure is ours! ' they say.



Orla succeeds on another Twin Shot and wounds the first two cultists; Grimjaw then charges the first one and cuts him before abolishing the next in line: Both dead!
Then Grimjaw hides in a bend of the corridor. The cost tries to cut him but Grimjaw performed the most perfect shield block I've ever seen (triple 1 on 3d20) and the cultist

cuts his own head!



Seeing this, the last cultist surrendered and told us everything we needed to know. She decides to join the amazing Grimjaw instead of following Sathmog, as she only joined the demonic cult after some Eladain knights burned her farm for not paying taxes..
We continue deeper in the cave and one of the rooms is covered with snakes. The wizard casted a pillar spell on the pit and we could pass without worries.
Next room in the cave is dark and a backpack is left in the corner. Grimjaw moves towards it and gets caught in a bear trap. We then hear a lady approaching. It's Grunhillde who apologises for the bear trap once she realises we are not cultists. She is blindfolded to protect herself from the basilisk. But we have chickens! :-)



We leave the wolf and the cultist behind with a chicken to prevent the basilisk from following us. And we progress further.
But we miscalculated: the basilisk is awaiting us at the end of the gut of the cave. A shining bow is visible behind it.

The basilisk spreads a deadly poison and the cultist, the wolf, and Gunhillda are affected but survive.
The basilisk has an armour as thick as a dragon!



We do a bit of damage before it kills the wolf. Oh noooo!
Everybody with a chicken is safe it seems. The basilisk is definitely and surprisingly afraid of them.
Aodhan conjures a pillar under the basilisk but the monster jumps off it.
I attack but critically fail. So I attempt to disengage and discover I do not trigger an opportunity attack. I get far away from the poisonous cloud. Ready to attack again at the earliest opportunity.
Now we make attacks and keep disengaging.
The cultist takes a wounded Gunhillda away from the cave. Seeing that everybody had chickens on them, the basilisk flees the cave. Never to be seen again... or will it? (ominous music)

Loot from the basilisk cave:
70gp shared already on the spot
100sp shared on the spot
A magic bow for Orla.
A master crafted broadsword for Grimjaw.

10: A Kidnapped Boy

New Friends

Nothin' tests a buddin' friendship like bein' attacked together, as told by Tymma the Loud

I'd been workin' on meself for a bit and managed to up some o' me skills, but was feelin' a mite itchy for an adventure. Brage'd gone off and had one and his stories were fair to makin' me jealous. Sadly, Orla and Bastonn had taken it upon themselves to up

and travel somewhere far afield and Baldwin were busy with some Immaculate Flame business, I suppose. But me and Brage met up with a couple of new folk – one of which had come to find Brage, thinkin' he'd be able to teach 'im some new magics...but he were the wrong kind o' mage. I don't ken what all that was about, but whatever.

Our new friends were Lothar "Ironfist" Greycloak, a human mentalist. I dunno what that means, but he says he can punch hard. I never knew a mage could punch before, but Brage's so old he looks like he'd break his fist if he tried that, and this fellow is a wee bit younger. The other reminded me of Bastonn – a Wolfkin called Frostbite Morningcloak. They said as we could call them Frosty and they had some lovely white fur.

And it were jus' in time we met 'em both as Rabindranath the Mystic gave us some chillin' news: a young boy'd disappeared from a local farm and it were likely some oracle were gonna use 'im for a sacrifice or tribute or some such rot. Why an oracle would do such a thing, I couldn't guess.

On the Road Again

So's we set off after I bought a new tent big enough to fit us all. First thing we did was run into some unwashed bandits, but when they demanded a "toll" from us, I demanded one right back! This'd be where bein' semi-famous comes in handy. They recognised me and maybe Brage too and kinda slunk off wit' their tails between their legs, though they did mention they'd seen some band o' thieves (like knows like, I guess) carryin' off a young boy.

Brage leads us on the way and we wind up near them cursed barrow mounds. Ironfist does some magics and sees that the central mound is swirlin' about with dark magics. No joke, that. Frosty was curious about goin' in, but I told the new fellows about what were down there (vampire bats, nastiness, and that grumpy dead fella) and we decided to jus' camp for the night. I were hopin' the dead would stay where they were – after all, it were a long climb up outta that nasty place – but no such luck.

I were on guard when yon dead knight comes upon us and immediately goes flingin' me about with his hand o' death. I sent Brage's hound in to wake 'em in the tent and I dinna even bother gettin' up, jus' lay there on me back and played fer all I were worth on Mabel. If the dog couldn't wake 'em, I was sure me pipes could.

He kept wailin' on me, but my armor were doin' it's job. The rest came out and Ironfist were true to his name, pummellin' that death knight wit' his magic hands. And Frosty were gettin' some good whacks in, even though they didn't have a weapon that were magical.

I were right glad I were fearless as that dead so-and-so kept tryin' to frighten the livin' daylights outta us. Thought we might even be goners when the death knight wallops Ironfist a good one and fells him with a powerful strike. Frosty were standin' tall, not fallin' fer his tricks though and Brage healed Lothar back up right quick. Between us all, we wound up makin' relatively quick work o' him and he disappeared,

probably hidin' out in his creepy tomb again. I needs to be askin' Mr. Mystic how one gets rid o' somethin' like that permanent.

The next day, we continued on. Went past a troll lair, but left it well alone as we had a boy to find and hopefully save. We noted it down fer later though, as the only good troll's a dead one generally.

Some hours later, followin' the trail, we found the entrance to a dark cave. Why's it always a cave? That's what I wanna know.

A Web of Deceit

Just inside the cave we see an altar with some bits and bobs on it – nothin' bloody, thankfully, but Frosty takes a bit 'o meat and eats it pretty as you please. So I replaced it wit' a bit o' rations just in case.

There were bloody trails all over the place, like somethin' had been draggin' bodies in. Bloody caves.

We go on and we find a dead orc warrior, a bit nibbled on. It were one o' Maladûk's men...men? Orcs? Greenies? Frosty searched the body and found a pouch o' 70 copper and hands it over to me to hold, like I'm somebody trustworthy.

Anyway, we keep on and come to a spot with some wee skinny tunnels I weren't about to touch with a 10 foot barge pole, but Lothar drops anythin' non-essential and heads down one side to check it out as we scout on ahead a bit. Brage, worried about the mage, sends his dog Mogg in after 'im, which turned out to be a cruelty. The dog gets overrun and eaten by some fist-sized eight-leggers and Lother jus' makes it out. We say a quiet prayer down the tunnel towards poor Mogg, may he rest in peace, but there were no way to get his bones back.

We find our way to a cave all draped about with spider webs. I yells at Lothar, who was holdin' a torch, to burn the webs and he does, just as a stomach-churnin' amount o' cat-sized spiders comes pourin' out. The webs go up and half o' 'em are burned up. The smell were godawful.

Brage lights 'em up and kills a bunch more, but they didn't like bein' toasted and came fer 'im. So he sends out another bolt and gets 'em, though he toasts Lothar too.

Frosty roots around and finds a fine gold bracelet. Probably from another victim.



We keep headin' north and find another nasty cave full 'o human-sized cocoons hangin' from the ceiling. One calls fer help as Lothar's light hits it, sayin' to "save me before they come back!" but they were already there...two giant spiders dropped down on us like bloated many-legged bit 'o nasty.

I start playin' me pipes – some good spider stompin' stuff – and though they managed to scare the fur offa Frosty, we took 'em out. We got the one cocoon-man down, but the rest were dead. Did find

some coin on 'em though. The lucky one told us, after some diggin', that he were part of the gang o' thieves that had taken the boy. I were of a mind to be usin' him as bait, but Lothar scared some backbone into 'im and let the bugger go. Think he made it out too, which were surprising since we heard him fall in the water. Prolly a better swimmer than me. At least he did warn us that a truly giant spider lay in front of us. As if the lot we'd already cut through weren't massive enough.

So's we go in and it turns out that the gargantuan spider ain't no normal spider of unusual size…she's the ancient oracle. And she's got the wee boy all webbed up next to her ready to eat 'im as tribute. Now I know what kinda oracle would do such a thing. A spidery one with eye goo prolly older than me.

We make a bargain wit' her – she'll let the boy go IF we get rid o' some orcs for her. There be "fewer" than the number o' her legs of orcs, which weren't entirely reassurin'.

We take the deal though as we weren't sure what the repercussions o' killin' the oracle would be and, truth be told, we weren't entirely set against killin' orcs either. I'm still not over fond 'o 'em, though the last ones we ran into were more of a help than a hindrance and those wotsit Sathmog cultists have taken their spot on my Wish List o' Death.

Anyway, we gets to this bridge made o' spider webs over a chasm. And when I say chasm, I mean a big yonkin' hole that ye don't wanna fall into as yer never comin' back out, at least not in one piece.

It were hairy and sticky and gross, but we all finally made it across. It were a thing that don' bear repeatin'. I'd rather take the long way 'round.

We come to this weird sunken keep type thing and hear the orcs ahead o' us. We tried to be quiet, but only one of us managed it. Not surprisin', consider me and Frosty were wearin' full armour.

This be where the new mage fellow turns out to have a surprisingly convincin' bit o' the blarney about 'im. I'd told 'im Maladûk's name and he bluffs his way in there, sayin' she'd sent 'im. Perhaps it helped his skin were still grey-ish from some stoneskin spell and that the leader o' the orcs was a lady orc named Agra. She had enough muscles to crack a walnut in her biceps and hair I ain't seen since a windstorm, but she were still a lass at heart, I suppose.

He managed to charm the pants right offa her, literally, though at the end I ain't sure if he had much say in it. Me and Brage kinda hung back, but Frosty talked the other orcs into sharin' their ale. By mornin' Ironfist had managed to get them orcs to pack up and move north to the Troll Spire and he had sparkly stars in his eyes. Even gave Agra a key and told her it were the key to his heart. I will never ken human men, but to each their own.

Happily, they knew a way around that didn't require goin' back over that horrid bridge. It even took us through a room wit' some weapons and armor, though only Brage and Lothar found anything (and one o' the things Lothar found were a rusty nail). Agra were even so in love that she warned us about an Eel Beast to the south. Which definitely sounded like somethin' I'd want to avoid, given me armor and the

fact they're likely to be swimmin' in a bunch o' water and I don't like eels, not even to eat.

So Agra and Lothar part ways and make promises to meet again. We gets back to the spider oracle and she does free the boy as she agreed to do. Poor thing were all goggle-eyed.

What We Learned (New Hooks)

That spider Saak'shal tells us a few things...fer instance, there be demon cultists to the North, and a village to the East has a temporal anomaly (which be a hard thing to say, much less write), but when I asked, it weren't the same an-om-oly that had trapped me da in that tavern. Oh, and she told me that me da was currently off adventurin' and fightin' kobolds and me brother had been wounded. Sounds about right, from the little I know of 'em.

She tells us that the village were Blackridge and it were the home before o' Kato the Curious and I knew right off that were a bad thing, as ye know what killed the cat. He betrayed Emperor Eledain (to be fair, now that I'm learnin' me history, WHO DIDN'T?!) and the whole town were torched in dragon fire and apparently be doomed to be repeatin' that day over and over. Seems a might excessive, but that's how curses go, I suppose. She did say to seek out the Mallard Academic Canutus Boetii if we do investigate that.

The Troll Spire's apparently got some kinda alchemist in it that has everlastin' life or something and likely loads o' treasure. I dinna be likin' the sound o' alchemist though. Magic be makin' me itchy.

And...Fort Malus, it were built by House Stoneoak and it's got some kinda tree that grows apples o' gold or mebbe it once did, but either way, there's bound to be some litterin' the ground like deadfalls. It be off to the far northwest somewhere. That sounds like a worthwhile trip, though there's probably somethin' nasty guardin' the apples, knowin' my luck.

Oh! And when I asked about the troll cave we'd passed by, she said he weren't in there at the moment, but he were the self-same troll bein' hunted by Tylos of the Immaculate Flame. I wonder if Baldwin knows him? Don't all them flame-y knights know each other?

All said and done, we got the boy back home and to his family. Brage and Lothar went off to go do some mage-y things and I settled in to write me next song: *The Wizard's Wiles and Orcish Smiles*.

Loot Found:

- Coins: 70 copper, 70 silver coins
  Tymma, Lothar, Brage, Frosty each get **1 gp 9 sp 3 cp**
- gold bracelet (90 gp; think Frosty kept it?)
- Open Helmet (Brage finds)
- Broadsword (Lother finds) and a rusty nail

The Wizard’s Wiles and Orcish Smiles

(Verse 1)
Oh, gather 'round and hear the tale of Ironfist, so bold,
In a sunken Keep with orcs aplenty, or so the legend'll be told.
With a heart of fire and hands of might,
He walked into the orcish site.
Lothar Greycloak, a mage so grand,
With a twinkle in his eye and a trick up his hand.

(Refrain)
For it's sing, swing, with a magical fling,
Where the spells and hearts entwine.
Oh, Ironfist, he had his tryst,
In a tale as old as time.

(Verse 2)
Five orcs stood guard, led by Agra fierce,
Her hair wild as the highland breeze, a heart none could pierce.
But Lothar, with a bluff and a grin,
Spoke of Maladûk, their kin,
Convinced them north was the way to go,
All while the ale like a river did flow.

(Refrain)
Oh, it's chant, rant, in a lovers' dance,
Where the battle's not what it seems.
For Ironfist, with a clever twist,
Wove through Agra's dreams.

(Verse 3)
In the Keep's dark shadow, a rendezvous was set,
Where iron met steel, a bet no one would forget.
Agra, so strong, and Lothar, so sly,
Under the moonlit sky,
Their battle was one of a different kind,
A clash of passion, body, and mind.

(Verse 4)
So ended the tale, not with sword or with spear,
At least not one with an edge.

The orcs marched north, with hearts light as a feather,
Agra and Lothar, two souls bound together.
So raise your cup high, to this tale of delight,
Where the only battle fought was in the sheets of white.

11: Troll Spire

The Guardians Grow

We be turnin' into a proper adventurin' company, as told by Tymma the Loud

We added a couple more to our ranks, though I guess the Archmage had been adventurin' before with Orla and Bastonn, but he were new to me. But I'm gettin' ahead o' meself. So's, Aodhan the Archmage came to join us and he were jus' as arthritic as old Brage, but spewin' a different kind o' magic–fire instead o' lightnin'.

And a mallard joined us, remindin' me a bit o' Makander, but with much more impressive hair...er, feathers. Ronnie Duckering were his name and he has a bit o' the beserk around 'im.

Aodhan seemed already kitted up, but we dug around in the house and found a masterwork greatsword for ol' Ronnie and an open helm. I spent me own gold to buy him some trainin' with me mam, but they don't get on so keen. And another 50 fer a health potion fer Baldwin, since he's one to rush in. He had spent his time doin' some trainin' but without a huge amount o' success. I feel 'im. Me book readin' ain't all that much either.

The Journey To Troll Spire

...Or that time Brage got us lost and lost again, as told by Tymma the Loud

Our new friend Ironfist were pinin' somethin' awful fer the orc "lady" and Frosty stayed behind to comfort 'im. So's it were just me, Baldwin, Brage, Aodhan and our new friend Ronnie that set off for Troll Spire. I weren't entirely sure I wanted to meet an alchemist, but there ye go. No one listens to ol' Tymma, do they?

We hadn't gone too far when we met up wit' a farmer lady named Oda and her grown son Medvin. Seemed nice enough, at least the lady. The son dinna have much to say. I bought a nice turnip fer 2 copper. They did say they'd seen some troll sign. We went our separate ways, but who knows, mebbe we'll meet up with 'em again.

It were unseasonably warm and sunny, but I hadn't a complaint about that. We make it to the Iron Forest and it were like the light were just sucked away. But we were able to set up the tent without a problem fer once. Baldwin and I split the big tent between us and Ronnie carried Brage's small one – he didn't bring the donkey.

Ronnie were on second watch and proved his usefulness right away, hearin' some chantin' in the middle o' the night. We investigate and discover five o' them nasty cultists chantin' to Sathmog and about to sacrifice some poor girl who were so drugged up that ye could tell from ages away. We get near enough to see one draw a ceremonial knife, so's I pull out Mabel and commence to wailin' on her. Some cultist killin' music, though not like Brage needed any encouragement. He had fire in his eyes.

In fact, he lightning'd the one holdin' the knife in one go, then Aodhan throws out some fire birds, and I'm sure all them cultists were near to pissin' their pants...if they were wearin' any. I know it were hot, but they were barely dressed. One dies from the fire and then the mallard kills another one.

One o' them cultists chucks some fire at me, but me armor just got a mite toasty. I kept on me playin'. Baldwin were inspired and cuts down another one and Brage zaps the last witch that were left.

We heal up the girl and she vomits up some foulness they'd stuffed her with. Turns out her name were Shandra Telessair and she'd been a servant o' some travelin' Knights o' the Immaculate. Isadelia, who be seekin' Fort Malus along with the knight Niklion and four other hirelings. So she were right glad to see Baldwin.

We rested a bit more after goin' back to camp. Baldwin took a watch and two archer elves plum up and fired on 'im. He let outta yell to wake us up, but by the time we were all roused, he'd killed 'em both. One o' 'em had a tiny moon pendant, markin' her as a follower o' Cluvia. They're supposed to be neutral, but I guess they didn't like Baldwin's dragon knight-ness.

After finally restin' up, we set off again but Brage got right turned around. He led us right into a swamp of quick mud. 'Course, he and Aodhan somehow manage to avoid gettin' sucked in, but the rest of us are sinkin' fast.

Aodhan starts conjurin' pillars to help Baldwin and Shandra and Brage throw a rope to Ronnie. I wound up usin' my sledgehammer and tyin' it to me silk rope and chuckin' it over to a log and usin' it like a grapplin' hook to haul meself out (my dragon roll!). Once I were out, I played a nice tune on Mabel and the we all finally got outta the muck. Took longer than I liked to get the mud outta my hair.

We were way off course by this time and I were missin' Orla somethin' wicked. We finally get to where's we can see the Troll Spire shinin' off in the distance and Brage sorts hisself out and gets us there.

'Course, that's when Aodhan spots a troll lurkin' in ambush jus; waitin' fer some plump, tasty adventurers. I pull out me trusty Mabel and commence to playin' and manage to keep goin' even when the blasted thing picks me AND Baldwin up and smashes us together. I betcha the clang o' our armour could be heard fer miles!

But I jus' laid there on me back and kept playin' and after everyone laid into that troll, Baldwin lops his head clean off. It bounced off and landed in a nice spot o' sun, making a troll-head shaped rock. I can only hope some other troll will come by and trip on it some day.

When we finally got close to the tower, it were comin' on dark.

Loot Found:

- large turnip (Tymma, spent 2 cp)
- 31 sp (on cultists) SEE END OF SESSION FOR DIVISION
- Light Crossbow + 10 Bolts (Ronnie)
- Ceremonial Knife (Brage)
- Mage Staff (Brage)
- Moon Pendant, tiny item (Tymma)

The Hag's Spire

Don't stop and smell the roses, as told by Tymma the Loud

The spire were a crumblin' mess and covered wit' black and crimson roses. Brage could tell there were somethin' magic about 'em. The tower had a big red oak door, but all the windows were up higher.

Ronnie tried the door, but it were locked. It seemed a good time to finally bring out me trusty sledgehammer that I'd not got a chance to use once since buyin' it. Baldwin took it outta my hands and commenced to layin' about the door and Ronnie joined him with his axe. They busted right in.

I figured somethin' would be on t'other side o' the door and I were right – though I didn't expect it be a great horned toad named Ambrosius. He talked a big game and could spit like me uncle, but Baldwin killed him with a massive blow. He were a tasty lookin' thing, now that he were dead, so we took his meaty legs. He had some poison glands too, but we had nothin' to put 'em in, so we left 'em there fer now.

Inside, the tower were a nasty wreck. I set Shandra to guardin' the door, but we noticed she were gettin' sleepy from the roses, so's we had her come inside a bit more before she fell asleep on us. I does some inspectin' and find the toad's nest. And, oh ho! He'd built it sittin' on top o' a trap door.

Baldwin spots an ornate dragon on the door, so's o' course he's gotta open it and see what's what. He finally gets it open and a rush o' stale air comes waftin' out. He goes rushin' down the spiral stairs and Ronnie follows 'im.

They find a door made o' star metal and as soon as Baldwin tries it, he gets hit with a fireball. Toasty! He realises it's some famous sealed door of the dragon empire.

Brage pushes his way down and clears his throat and casts a high level dispel upon the door and Lo! It popped open, revealin' a vault. There were a pedestal in the centre, but the room were divided into four parts – dragon and demon, which were a bit strange, all in all. Three alcoves were on the outside.

There were a treasure casket of some type on the pedestal, so Baldwin goes right for it, trying to step once on the dragon side, once on the demon, keepin' it balanced. But...*click*! There's a noise from one o' the alcoves and some undead guardian comes stompin' out.

It were a bit o' a tense battle, but I played me wee heart out. Aodhan managed to trap two more skellies behind some well-placed pillars o' stone. Brage were

whackin' the thing left and right with his sling and pullin' out some healin' too, which were a good thing for Aodhan. Ronnie and Baldwin were jus' layin' about 'em with their weapons. Baldwin got the last blow on 'im and then jus' goes on to the pedestal he'd been interrupted gettin' to and opens it up.

There were some coin, furs, and a couple o' massive sapphires inside. Aodhan's eyes right lit up. But that were short lived 'cause as soon as Baldwin picked it all up, the door shut and trapped us in—except for Brage, who'd snuck back up the stairs. There were, however, two octagonal shaped holes on the star metal door...resigned, we put the sapphires in and the door opened again.

But Aodhan didn't wanna give up. He conjured up another one o' his pillars and blocked the door, then plucked those sapphires back outta the door. It may have been me imagination, but I think I heard those trapped undead guardians scrabblin' extra hard on those pillars after that.

Back up on the ground floor, Shandra said she thought she heard somethin' outside, so I took a look. I spot a harpy, but she spotted me too. Sometimes I forget I ain't the sneaky type.

Meanwhile, Ronnie rushes on up to the next level. By the time I got up there, he'd already stepped on a rake and whapped himself in the beak. It was a ruin with stuff everywhere. I noticed a tripwire type thing coming from some plates and jugs on a table leadin' up to a sack o' something up on the ceilin'.

Ronnie kept checkin' rooms and got doused wit' some itchin' powder from a bucket balanced over a door. Made 'im angry and he kicked that bucket across the room. He even opened the door to the privy and it were an APALLIN' stench. Troll poop fer sure. Though, to be fair, I ain't never heard o' a troll before who didn't jus' shit where they ate. Ronnie slammed that door shut and wrote "Treasure Room" on it in charcoal.



On the next level we found what looked like a lab...or a kitchen, if you were into eatin' wicked lookin' stuff. There were cracks and holes all over and ye could see the roses peekin' in. I took a good look around and spotted this old troll lady hidin'. She wore a red kerchief and were tiny, compared to other trolls I'd seen...and killed. She acted all scared but offered to sell us some potions and whatnots. She mentioned the crypt and were quite surprised when Aodhan showed proof that we'd already been there and got safely out – with the sapphires. Her eyes fair lit up like his had when he'd seen 'em.

She offered a potion fer each one, then 2 potions each. Baldwin had figured out they were "Eyes of the Dragon" and possibly used for divination purposes, but their value were just about 50 gold each. So it weren't too bad a deal to trade 'em for potions that were worth more...

She were fair babblin' now, as there were some talk, mostly from Brage, who were mutterin' about jus' killin' her and having both the sapphires AND the potions AND the tower. So she offered us kinda another bargain – if we could get rid o' the harpies who lived on the roof, we could take the bottom two floors for our base and she'd give us a decent price on potions, plus offer some trainin' to boot in Animism and Mentalism.

Brage still weren't sure, but we talked him 'round. Ronnie goes straight up that chimney fer the harpy ladies. The top o' the tower had a pool wit' their nasty feathers floatin' in it and the smell o' the roses were fair overwhelmin'. Not that I'd know exactly, as I stayed right where I were. They could hear me bagpipes from where I were and I didn't much fancy gettin' stuck up a chimney.

Which is exactly what Brage did to hisself. Aodhan used one o' his pillars to pop the old mage outta the chimney like a cork and then shot hisself up there the same way. I do wish I coulda seen the expression on the harpies' faces when a couple o' creaky old mages come poppin' up that way.

I could hear 'em up there – them harpies said they were Thistle, Prickle and Thorn and were gonna have themselves a nice snack. But Ronnie killed on right off and then Baldwin got to work. One cackled, but I weren't fearless fer nothin'. I played my bagpipes and heard the crackle as Brage zapped one dead with lightnin'. The two left flew up, and Baldwin chucked a torch at one, but Aodhan threw a fire bird and roasted her. The bird ladies were gonners.

They tossed the bodies for loot and, o' course, found a key to the crypt on one but a few other things too. They come on back down and report to Harga. Baldwin bargained to see iffen he could get Harga to give an extra potion and were successful. And Aodhan exchanged the sapphires, which I hope we don't regret later.

We start cleanin' out the tower and I convince Shandra to stay on and help us fer now and we get some clothin' on the poor girl.

Harga's Potions

Harga can make the following potions for you at the listed prices (includes the previous Bargaining deduction):

- Healing (2d6) 40gp
- Elevate 80gp
- Willpower (2d6) 80gp
- Herbal Concoction (Boon vs Disease) 40gp
- Poison (Potency 12) 40gp

Loot Found:

- 2 large octagonal sapphires worth 50 gp/each (traded to Harga for potions)
- carved box, +10 gp (selling)
- +6 sp
- +10 sp
- Furs (who needs??)

- +6 harpy feathers (Ronnie trades to Harga?)
- necklace, 20 sp (selling)
- +6 gp
- +100 sp
- 2 potions of elevate
- 1 resist disease potion
- 1 paralytic potion
- 1 sleeping potion
- 1 lethal potion
- 1 healing potion

Money Split (including box and necklace): **6gp 5sp 4cp each** *(Aodhan, Baldwin, Brage, Ronnie, Tymma)*

The Troll Spire Tango

In the heart o' the Iron Forest, where nasties conspire,
Smothered in roses, stands the ancient Troll Spire.
Tymma the Loud, with her pipes in the fray,
Led her Guardians bold to the tower one day.

(Chorus)
Oh, sing of the Spire, where the roses entwine,
Where the echoes of battle and magic combine.
Tymma the Loud, with her bagpipes aflame,
Plays a song of the brave, and etches their name.

Ambrosius the toad, with his fat legs and pride,
Fell to their might, soon to 'stew' by their side.
But it weren't time for a feast so soon,
First to explore and try not to find doom.

A crypt they found, with mosaics so grand,
Dragons and demons under their feet.
Treasure beckoned Baldwin, our Immaculate Knight,
But he sprung a trap, bringing an undead guardian in sight.

More were comin', that much were true
But Aodhan blocked 'em with stone pillars two
The guardian died and the treasure were ours,
Includin' the sapphires that sparkled like stars

Through the tower of traps, we climbed with all haste,

Ronnie the mallard, got a rake in his face.
We reached the top, a little worse for the wear,
But Harga, the troll, had a bargain to prepare.

"Kill the harpies," she begged, "up on the roof they reside,
Then have half o' the tower, yours to preside."
Tymma's pipes roared, and up the chimney they went,
And down fell Thistle, Prickle and Thorn, totally spent.

In the heart o' the woods, where the shadows conspire,
The Guardians now reign in the ancient Troll Spire.
Tymma the Loud, with Mabel held high,
Plays the song of the Spire, under the sky.

12: Fort Malus

Growin' and Shrinkin'

It be a dangerous business to be a Guardian, as told by Tymma the Loud

We'd been busyin' ourselves with sortin' out the tower and gettin' it livable (still no idea about what to do wit' the nasty privy, but I s'pose that's what ye get when ye bunk in wit' a troll) when Orla and Bastonn came rockin' up! Not far behind 'em were two new faces: Trea Dragonheart, a fine figure o' a human knight, and Blisandina Nightstabber, a quacking mad rogue mallard. They was lookin' fer work. Me, fer one, was glad to see Orla...I dinna fancy gettin' dropped into mud again, no offence to Brage and his bushcraft skills. A few o' us bought some potions from Harga.

The ground were all fair covered with snow when we all set off and a powerful big party it were: me, Brage, Blis, Baldwin, Aodhan, Bastonn, Ronnie, Tea, and Orla. I wonder if the rest o' us ought to rename to somethin' startin' with a "B"? Then we could be the Blisterin' Bawdacious Band or somethin'. Anyway, we were off to find Fort Malus and hopefully Shandra's Dragon Knight mistress. Oh, yeah, she came wit' us too, though she'd come to regret it. But Imma gettin' ahead o' meself.

We headed north and Orla and Brage were leadin' us wit' no trouble at all. We run into a fine dressed knight – Sir Tylos and he recognised Baldwin, and Baldwin him. Some fancy muckety-muck in the Dragon Knights. All's I can say about 'im is he certainly had a fat head and thought a lot o' hisself. But, he wanted us to handle some goblins fer him and accompany 'im to Fort Malus and we was already headed that way. Shandra seemed to respect him, anyway.

She shouldn'ta though. Old bugger led us right into a goblin ambush. He and his fine horse (and Ronnie too) fell right into a pit, killin' the mighty beast (I'm speakin' o' course, o' the horse). There were gobbos everywhere, shootin' at us wit'

arrows and then jabbin' us wit' spears. And poor Shandra got pegged by two o' 'em right off the bat and died a gurglin' death before we could do a thing about it.

At first it were lookin' mighty grim, as there were a lot o' the buggers. But I pulled out me trusty Mabel and commenced to playin' some goblin killin' music. Baldwin were soakin' up a ton o' damage and I'm sure he was thankful fer his armor. Orla got surrounded, but Brage healed her up, mebbe not as good as new, but good enough.

Aodhan lit 'em up and it smelled like a goblin barbecue. Blis had fair disappeared into a tree and came catapultin' outta it like a feathery bomb and killed one and Orla took to killin' 'em wit' extreme prejudice. Bastonn took out the last one.

We cleaned up a bit and built a snowy cairn fer poor Shandra. Tylos dinna seem much upset about it all, exceptin' his horse. Orla and I was practical tho and gathered up some horse meat.

By late afternoon, we arrived at the Fort. It were windy and gettin' late. Lanterns were lit along the top and Sir Tylos were just stridin' up like he hadn't a care. Orla spotted someone hiding in a tree and Ronnie grabbed the bloke out. Looked like a frightened villager and gave some story about how he and a friend were stayin' in the fort and then got attacked by brigands...but then he sees Tylos and turns out the bandits were the dragon knights. Tylos claims he's a cultist that got away. I dinna know what to think, but we inspected the fellow and found the mark o' Sathmog on him, so that decided it.

Ronnie frog marched 'im ahead o' us into the Fort, givin' him a good whack every few feet. Brage must be rubbin' off on 'im.

There were two guardin' the gatehouse, but they let us in when they saw Tylos. They dinna much seem to respect 'im though, which made me wonder.

Inside we saw the fabled apple tree, but it were lookin' mighty sad. There were some fruit on it, but they certainly weren't gold. The keep weren't in such good shape either.

Brage and Ronnie bring the cultist fella into a cell and Brage up and cuts his throat with that ceremonial Sathmog dagger he'd picked up. Guess his patience was at an end. Fair enough, the only good Sathmog Cultist is a dead one. While they was in there, they heard two women arguin' about somethin' in the next shed over. Ronnie grabbed the backpack left behind by the other cultist.

About that time, the door to the main keep opens. It were in ruins too, but the most intact bit still and somewhat impressive. There were a dragon knight and some hirelings in there, and the knight were named Niklion. When we told 'im about Shandra, they dinna seem to care much, which I dinna like much.

Anywho, the dragon knights go off and have a talk, givin' us a chance to look around a bit.

I took a close look at the tree – after all, we was here for golden apples, weren't we? It were a pretty sad lookin' sight, though there were some new buds on it so it weren't totally dead. There were some writin' to be had too: *The golden tree will be forever in the care and possession of House Stoneoak; such is the agreement with the tree's keeper and soul, Rotlaug, bound to this place in perpetuity.*

I weren't totally sure what to make o' that, but kept it in the back o' me head.

Bastonn were keepin' an eye on the dragon knights and they seemed almighty frustrated to him and were intent on doin' some diggin' inside o' the large keep.

Brage played his flute o' the dead, but nothin' came poppin' out or obvious to 'im (I'm not sure how it works, honestly).

Orla took a good look at the bonfire burnin' in the middle o' the courtyard and found a skull – so it looked like they did indeed burn a cultist. Well, not that ye can tell a cultist by their bones, so who knows.

Tea tried to chat up the guards on the tower, but they was a surly sort and didn't even respond to a fine silver piece. Blis inspected another shed, but it were just dark and nasty. Aodhan inspected the walls, thinkin' he might be able to use his magics to seal some o' the holes if necessary.

Ronnie found a crack in the one shed they'd heard voices in and spied a tied up elven lady all shackled up. A red headed knight lady was buggin' her, but the lady's refusin' to cooperate. Brage, done wit' his flute, joins 'im and they eavesdrop as much as they can. They pick up on a few things before the red-headed knight comes out, sayin' she's Isadelia and wonderin' who in blazes we all were. She were rude, but excited to hear Tylos were back, so she goes rushin' off into the keep.



So's Brage and Ronnie go in to talk to the elven lady and she's tellin' 'em that the Dragon Knights kidnapped her from her village 'cause they wanted her help with somethin', but they aren't gettin' too far wit' her. To be fair, one's an grumpy old man and the other's a mad lookin' duck. So they called Orla in. She may be just as bloodthirsty, but she *looks* like a lovely elven lady, so's there's that.

Anyway, the elf lady Iliel says the knights are tryin' to figure out how to turn the apples into gold and there's a rhyme they canna figure out, somethin' about a drop to the East?

It were fair freezin' by this time, so were all huddled around the fire. Baldwin goes into the Keep to see what's what and ask fer some o' the promised payment fer the killin' of goblins and what not. They are kinda dismissive and offer up two golden apples...which ain't right considerin' they didn't even *have* any golden apples.

That right pissed off Tea, who was at the end o' her patience, and she and Isadelia exchange some words. They wind up duellin', so I pull out my pipes to play some inspirin' music for Tea. Weren't sure if it were allowed in a duel, but they dinna say boo, so's I kept playin.

While Tea were keepin' 'em all busy, Orla and Blis examined inside the keep. Down in the cellar they find a massive iron door with an inscription on it and little indentations fer things to be stuck in:

The drop is east of the heart, but not in the center
The heart is not by the leaf, but just east of the sun
The sun is neither in the far west nor the far east
The moon is next to the drop alone
The leaf is west of the heart

Before I ferget, we did manage to suss it out–it goes leaf, sun, heart, drop, moon. We ain't stupid. Slow, sometimes, but we're not stupid. But Imma gettin' ahead o' mesself again.

Tea manages to shove Isadelia into the fire and it were lookin' good fer our girl, when the dragon knight gets the jump on her and cuts her down. That were too much, but as we gather around, she gets in another shot and Tea were done and past savin'. It were on like a Banshee's Wail then. Bastonn was first in, whackin' Isadelia with Um-Durman and cuttin' her down.

That were when the other dragon knights noticed what he were carryin' and they were dead set on gettin' it. So everyone were in the fight then, includin' the hirelings.

Aodhan and Brage were callin' down fire and lightnin' and I played til me cheeks were purple. Baldwin and Bastonn were breakin' shields and weapons left and right (luckily, not their own). Ronnie warned 'em they wouldn't like 'im when he were angry and rushed 'em but good, leavin' that Tylos without a weapon. Aodhan killed Tylos in the end with fire and Orla took out Niklion.

Ronnie grabbed the pouches Isadelia were carryin' and finds the keys, includin' the one to free the elf lady. The last hirelin lady throws down her crossbow and surrenders. Said she were just in it fer the money and has no beef wit' us. So's we tell her she can replace the giant toad back at the Troll Spire. Imma gonna keep an eye on her though.

Anyway, long story short, we put the crystals into the door in the proper order and the door springs open with a flash and this weird creature, Rotlaug, comes springin' out yellin' "Rotlaug is Free! Time to make things grow!"



We let ‘im do his thing and soon the whole place were overgrown and the tree had bloomed up somethin’ mad. We were able to get 22 apples offa it. Sadly, they were just yummy, not gold. That Rotlaug melded hisself with the tree and the ruins o’ the Fort were truly ruined now, though I gotta admit it were pretty all overgrown as it were. We even found some treasure eruptin’ outta the cellar. Mebbe we’ll come by fer more apples in the future. Ronnie and Orla ate o’ ‘em and said they was right tasty. We each took 2.

We escorted that elf lady to her village and got 1 gold each fer our trouble. Then we went back to the Troll Spire and Jiruna came back wit’ us fer guardin’ purposes.

Loot Found:

- 47 silver pieces
- Short bow + quiver of arrows (Blis)
- Horse meat (waste not, want not)
- Backpack from dead cultist (contents of pack?)
- 4 GP, 20 SP, crystals that go in the door
- 8 SP (from poor Tea)
- 7 GP (from Niklion)

- 6 GP, 25 SP (from Tylos)
- 19 SP (from dead hirelings)
- 120 CP
- Masterwork Scimitar (Up for grabs!)
- 13 GP
- 4 CP
- 1 GP each for escort
- 22 apples (delicious, good for a day's rations, 2 each person)

Money Split (including the escort fee of 1 GP each): **4 GP, 7 SP, 9 CP each** *(Aodhan, Baldwin, Bastonn, Blis, Brage, Orla, Ronnie, Tea/Frostbite, Tymma) — "Ronnie were sayin' he were right poor, so Tymma and Bastonn said to take their share."*

The Ballad o' the Goblin Ambush

Goblins sprang their trap 'neath the icy glow.
With a clash and a cry under the pale sun,
They little know, but they're gonna meet their end--- they be done!
For the guardians are here!

Aodhan the mage, with a fiery rage, set 'em ablaze,
He left them smokin', in the frosty air
And the smell...was a bit like chicken

Goblins be VILE, no charm in their muck,
They skulk and they scuttle, in filth they're stuck.
Cunning and craven, in shadows they duck,
But when faced with our MIGHT, they find no luck,
For goblins, they truly do SUCK!

Blis, the sly mallard, from shadows he springs,
A leap from a tree, silent as owl wings.
With a thief's grace, a backstab set to craft,
One goblin falls, victim of his deft draft,
In the snow's hush, only victory sings.

Goblins came sneakin', but oh what a blunder,
They met our Guardian might,
And it made 'em quake like thunder.
Me bagpipes did roar, across rocks and rills,
Goblins trippin' over their own darned hills
I'd say they'll think twice before attackin' again,
...but they all be dead...they won't be thinkin' never more

13. Fort Kyros, Take 1

It were a deep and dark place, as told by Tymma the Loud

Dear Mum,

Not sure when this letter will reach ye. Jus' wanted to give a wee update in case ye were wonderin' if yer onliest daughter were still alive and kickin'. We crossed that Minotaur-guarded ford firstly. I'd convinced 'im to let me and Baldwin pass wit' a song, though I did mistake him fer a troll (to be fair, he were fair greenish, but mebbe I'm needin' glasses) but the rest were feelin' bloodthirsty and killed the bugger. So, I guess tell the villagers that the ford be safe fer crossin' now.

Then we went into another Fort, Kyros this time, and explored its depths. Or, at least, a fair bit o' it. I won't be borin' ye with a play by play, let's just say it be a dark, dank place full o' mold, creepy crawlies, evil undead things and graverobbers. I did find me a fair lute, though I'm doin' me level best to make sure Mabel dinna feel discarded. It were a sad place to be sure, full o' death and the smell o' it. Makes me miss the scent o' the forge; that's a clean smell, with the fire burnin' away anythin' nasty.

Anyways, hugs to ye and Uncle.

–Tymma

The Ballad o' Fort Kyros

Orla leads the way, bold into the fray,
Wolfkin ahead (and anythin' else), best heed what we say.
Or better they start prayin' to gods they hold dear,
For Orla's charge is the last thing they'll hear.

A duck with a crossbow, who'd a thunk,
That's our Ronnie Duckering, he's no punk.
With feathered finesse and aim so true,
He waddles into battle and makes our enemies blue!

Slam! went a door and down came the acid
and now the hasty duck's got scorched feet
Baldwin and Brage had to ditch their shoes
And now they're wanderin' the dungeon deep in their bare feet
In the depths of ancient gloom, we found an unexpected sight,
A wizard mummified, at his desk, immersed in a tome.
Thought he were dead,
But he looked up, angry, caught off guard.
And the battle were on, lucky we had our bard (tha's me).

That there Lich came fer Brage,
fire in his eyes
He throttled him with a wicked claw
And we thought our mage was dead
But Bastonn rushed in with Um-Durman
And cut 'im in twain

In the shadow of Fort Kyros, our heroes stand tall,
Together they fought, together they'd brawl.
From fiery battles to acid's cruel kiss,
it weren't a battle to miss.

With every foe vanquished, and every trap sprung,
Our courage and valour, in every heart sung.
So here's to the band, that fears no night,
In unity's might, they bring dawn's light.

Loot Found:

- 14 copper, 40 gp (5gp 7sp 3cp to each in party)
- masterwork longsword (Ronnie took and sold)
- The *Lute of Shae Kyros* (Tymma)
- Holy Symbol of Goddess of Plenty, could double as a club (Brage), 50 gp
- Dwarven Warhammer (Ronnie)
- Lich's Spell Book (Aodhan takes, sells for 850, 60 gp to each in party)
- 80 gp (11 gp to each in party, extra 3 gp Ronnie takes)
- Suit of Studded Leather Armor (unclaimed)
- Poisonous Mushrooms, 110 gp (18.3 gp to each)

14. To Come