

Four Vardum Templar! We are on the left side of the hall. Three Templar are surrounding us half-moon style, with another behind them. Two on the outside have great swords; one in middle has a battle axe; outside one has nothing in hands, but a short sword sheathed. All have old timey armor--identical suits of dark red, almost black red, plate armor. And they all have the crest of the Vardum emblazoned upon their forehead. (Which is a modified Maltese Cross).

Darnit takes a defensive stance. He asks the rest of the group behind him, "Did we get the door open?" Carlos says, "Define your terms. Open unlocked or open ajar? Because unlocked, yes, but ajar, no." "Okay well. I abjure you to ajar the door."

The three inner Vardum advance. Darnit takes half a step forward to parry one greatsword, and with his hammer meet the battle axe and parry that aside. This causes the third to pause--hesitate for a moment--before coming after Carlos with a feint. Carlos doesn't fall for it, jumping back to dodge the blade. The one in the back draws his weapon, and it's a flute. He starts playing an eerie tune, and the suits of armor glow a little brighter.

Hrothulf drops Hiare, pulls his greatsword, lights socks on fire, and strikes a very good defensive pose. Hiare takes a Sonic the Hedgehog roll going to the ground, into a superhero landing.

Carlos says, "Vardum! Honor our lives!" He plans to climb Hrothulf to grab the lock off the door (it's about 130" off the ground) and close the lock if the Vardum are aggressive, but he hopes to talk.

Izar casts his shadowy tentacles centered on the battle axe Templar in the middle. They go in a 20 ft square. Two Templar are now tangled in these tentacle-y knots (One of the great sword Templars and Bard are free.)

Darnit casts magic missile. Two at bard. And one at the free great sword Templar. They don't seem particularly bothered. Darnit inches closer toward the door.

The bard starts playing a new song. The tune crawls inside Izar's head, and for a second, he feels infiltrated. But he puts up his mental barriers and successfully casts them out.

Battleaxe swings at the tentacles and frees himself. Tangled great sword tries the same, but it is unclear whether he's successful.

Carlos narrowly dodges a great sword coming right past his face.

Hrothulf gives a little cajun crepe flambee to great sword who may still be entangled. He gets through the tentacles, finds an opening, but the blade goes right through him, like it didn't even make contact. But the templar wheezes and there is a burst of fire as the lit blade goes through. Hrothulf returns to his sexy defensive stance.

Carlos puts one foot on Hrothulf's thigh, another on the wall, deftly maneuvers up to the lock, slips it off the door, and comes down, flipping the lock as though to close and looks to see whether there is any reaction amongst the Vardum. He can't see their faces and sees no noticeable so he closes the lock. He now wields a lock! (With no other changes to circumstance)

Izar is very impressed by Carlos' acrobatics. A mist of shadow envelops Izar as he casts a cloud of shadow to put their bard to sleep. Nothing happens. Izar gets the sense that it really just couldn't work. He says, "Everybody move!" going toward the door so he can open it. "Also, they're constructs! Kaaaaahhhnnstructs!"

Darnit moves toward the door and takes a defensive stance. If the door gets open and everyone's getting through, he'll also run for the door.

The tentacles fade.

Izar loses all control of muscles and skeleton, and he becomes like a person who's just... held there.

Battleaxe cuts through Darnit's stance, the sharpened blade point glowing (all the weapons seem to have this halo of light pink). One greatsword also hits devastatingly.

Hrothulf gets smacked by a greatsword.

Izar reminds us that Dorinda said the Vardum sometimes take over the bodies of other creatures. Maybe something like that is happening here.

Hrothulf's socks' flames are dwindling. Hrothulf swings back at the greatsword that hit him. Flame bursts, hitting greatsword holders. Sock fizzles, but greatsword burns and drops to one knee, tip of greatsword resting on the ground.

Carlos goes to Hrothulf, takes out his spent sunrod, and asks Hrothulf to light it. He then observes the Vardum carefully, looking for openings they may leave or weaknesses they may have. He says, "Hrothulf, I think you've got it. 'Vardum shall be undone by ... Fire by true flame.'"

Izar breaks free from the hold. He swings open the door. On the inside, he finds another room that looks a lot like the crab room, but instead of stone walls, vandalism, corpses, and crabs, he finds: all mirrors. The same tank that held the octopus is visible on this side, but the tank and the floor are the only parts of the room that aren't mirrored. Everything else is an undefined mirror. And there is another giant chandelier, but this one unvandalized, untampered-with, but also unlit. There is some of the water from the tank that has been splashed onto the ground.

Darnit scuttles back slowly toward the door, then he runs through the door. He notices that on a far wall, one of the mirrors looks like it has been slid open a tiny bit. On the walls, there are also candelabras set into shadowboxes in the walls, but none are lit.

Darnit gestures toward the mirror where the wall looks slid, saying to Izar, "What do you think's going on there? We should check it out."

Izar says, "Yeah. First I think we should get the Vardum in here."

Darnit: "I don't know how much good I'll be in a fight right now. I'm pretty beat up."

Darnit positions himself away from the door, but still within throwing range of his axe and hammer.

The bard's flute plays yet another song.

Greatsword who Hrothulf nearly felled stands up with a sense of renewed strength.

Carlos has cover behind Hrothulf. Hrothulf gets hit by another sword.

Battleaxe steps in, coming with a big chop. Hrothulf parries, but the battleaxe Templar comes around with the battleaxe and knocks Hrothulf off his feet.

Hrothulf disengages (as a standard action), then somersaults his way through the door and lands on his feet.

Carlos flees into the room, closing the door behind him. The first thing he notices is his own terrified face looking back at him as the back of the door is mirrored. He looks for a way to lock the door, but Izar says he thinks we want to let them in, so Carlos insteads moves deep into the room.

Over the headset, Atchi, really choppy, "Ah ... Eh ... Okay? ... At ... Where are you?"

Izar asks whether we have anything that would hold water. Hrothulf offers some suggestions. "I think we have pure water here. We might not be able to get it off without fending off the octopus. Also this sounds crazy but it just might work. I think the mirrors might reveal something about their true beings, separating their appearance and revealing something about how they work. I don't know, does that sound crazy?"

Carlos: "I think it's worth a shot. And hopefully the octopus is still out on the other side."

Darnit points again to the slid part of the mirror. It looks like that part of the mirror slides behind the next panel. He asks Hrothulf to help him move this.

Through all of this, there is an eerie silence outside the door.

Hrothulf hands Izar a bowl of bacon truffle mac and cheese. Izar gives the food to Hiare, so as to have a bowl for water.

Carlos goes over to investigate the slid part of the mirror with Darnit. It appears as though it is some sort of closet. Carlos slides it open (it slides with ease). It's a single shelf with three shells. One quintessential conch shell. Another that's an onyx color -- twisted thin nautilus looking thing, coming to a point and needle-y looking. And a smooth leopard printed -- almost looks like the mac shells, but with this spotting all over it.

Hrothulf walks around and lights as many candles as he can. Except that he also takes five candles from different places and stuffs them into a pouch.

Darnit is ready to go if the Vardum comes through.

We hear another melody. This one the most complicated (though all have been simple, and they lack a consistent theme or anything). It's a cacophonous melody.

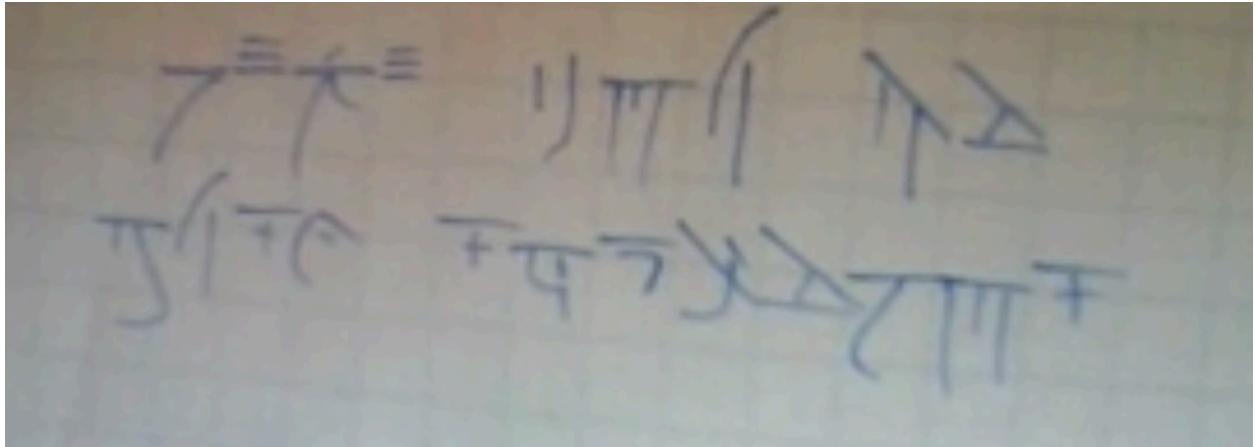
Izar wants to try to play the shells. And then to use one to scoop. He runs over to the closet, bowl in hand, and grabs the conch shell. He blows into the shell, and a beautiful melody plays out of this conch, and in Izar's mind he feels as though the conch is asking him, "For whom?" Izar tries to play for Thiton (wanting to be the conch-ubine of Thiton), but the conch wants him to target someone, like it's casting some sort of spell. Izar says For Darnit. Darnit feels as though a spritz of refreshing sea air blows upon his face as his wounds begin to heal themselves.

The cacophonous melody is starting to sound a little nicer from outside.

Carlos is looking at the leopard print shell. It's got something like a circular opening, but more lemon shaped, not a perfect circle. It's really smooth, but there is a slight indentation of a spiral. And it's hard to make out in this light while Hrothulf is still lighting candles, but it appears that the spots are more than just spots. After more is lit, Carlos can see that the various spots are different sea creatures. The spots themselves are some kind of gem, but there's a smooth veneer over top. You can see very distinctly, "Oh this one's a shark, this one's a sea turtle." And there are probably about 21-22 spots. The spiral that goes around seems to intersect all of them.

The music stops outside. Izar hears this kind of creepy chant in Draconic: "jaka yth re shio
ixquenti

now are we all gods” which is kind of the Vardum slogan. In Draconic diction is done in the front of the mouth, with the teeth and the tongue.



There are now 44 candle lights lit, which with the mirrors lights the room well.

Izar takes the onyx shell and blows on that as well. This one seems strange to Izar a little bit because unlike the other shells it doesn't look like anything could live in this. It also feels solid. It's not really a shell, it more seems. It has needle points all over it. A twisted barb with spikes in it. Izar blows the conch again and directs it at Hrothulf this time. Then at Carlos.

The door now swings open with a single big knight on the other side. This hulking knight now seems to be what we have to contend with!

[We can get together if we want to level up. When we do, we can roll for hit points which will increase our max but we won't gain current hit points, and the same for spell slots, etc. We will next play maybe on March 5, but more likely March 12.]