

Excerpts From The Personal Journal of Speaks With Wind

Flower Moon - 29th day

Store Room In A Temple To Drachnar

We succeeded in our mission, although it was a near thing. We fought a fierce battle, destroyed the necromancer and recovered a green meteor rock. We have also discovered a temple to Drachnar, a goblin god of the Death World. The temple contains a strange trap-like mechanism which we were not able to disable. We are resting and recuperating here for a couple of days before trying again.

I have already sent in my log in the enchanted duplication book.

The day began well enough. First, we were received some aid from the agency. Perfesser Ralston is some sort of learned sage who has written a guide for the Thaumaturgic Security Agency on the correct methods of identifying and capturing witches. I am not sure what a "perfesser" is, but I think it is something like a scout or spy who passes misinformation to the enemy. It is clear, from his possession of a Fox Spirit Ally to the various magic he wields, that Ralston is himself a witch. Tesh obviously considers him a friend. The agency also sent us Morden, a human warrior encased completely in metal, with a towering shield that is nearly as long as a man is high. Third and last was Sizzlezap, one of the Earth People and a Lore Singer.

They also brought with them some material aid: 8 vials of Blessed Water, 8 flasks of liquid fire and four enchanted liquids. The potions included two that would provide courage to the drinker, one that said "Drink Me" on it and would have cause the user to grow and finally one that would reduce the drinker to half his normal size. I took a vial of Blessed Water and a flask of Liquid Fire as did Big Hill. Dawn Flower did not take anything but the rest of the group divided the items amongst themselves.

Lieutenant Braddock found a halfling scout named Rene Fonck. Rene rode Scratch as he flew over the valley, high enough to avoid any possible arrow fire. When Rene returned, he told of us of a bell tower at the center of the valley, that had a skull flag waiving from it. The tower was guarded by a couple of bugbears and several dozen hobgoblins. I had the idea that the army should

“invade” from one direction, hopefully drawing off the troops so that our party could sneak up on it from another direction.

It worked, at least in part.

Dawn Flower, Big Hill, Tesh, Ralston, Grognar, Sizzlezap, Caylx, Morden and myself crept up to the tower when we determined that it was time for the army make its attack. Caylx scouted ahead and noted that the hobgoblins were gone but the two bugbears remained. A rope trailed down from the bell in the tower. It was clear from the positioning of the bugbears that they were to there to raise the alarm if intruders approached. We needed to remove them from the field before they could raise said alarm.

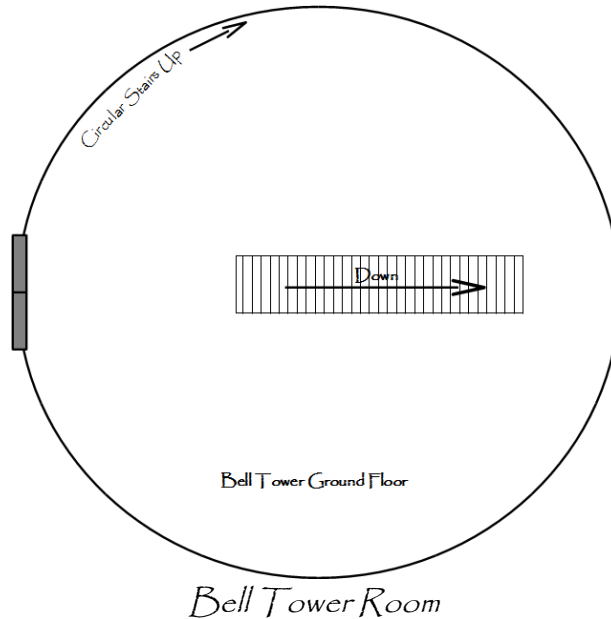
We discussed a plan of action briefly and then implemented it. Caylx and Ralston cast an enchantment of slumber upon the bugbears. One of them was immediately felled, but the other resisted the spell as well as a dazing cantrip cast by Sizzlezap. Fortunately, Scratch flew in and pinned the bugbear before it could pull the bell-rope. Scratch held the bugbear down while the rest of us rushed in to finish it off. I threw a small amount of static at the pinned bugbear, but it was Tesh that delivered the killing blow. Caylx slit the throat of the sleeping one.

After checking the tower double-doors most thoroughly for traps, we entered the tower. It was a single room, with a rickety staircase winding up to the bell and flag at the top. To the east, a stairway headed down into the darkness. Caylx carefully made his way up the stairs. He said that he could see the hobgoblins off in the distance, apparently engaging in battle. He cut the rope to the bell and then took down the flag. Directly after doing so, the hobgoblin horde fell into disarray and broke off the battle.

The flag was unusual. It depicted a skull in the center, surrounded by twelve stars. I had never heard of it, but both Caylx and Dawn Flower recognized it as the symbol of Drachnar, a goblin god of the Death World. The twelve stars were supposed to be twelve unholy spirits that served and protected Drachnar.

Before proceeding, Grognar pulled the bodies of the two bugbears inside and covered up the signs of our battle. He then shut the doors so as to conceal our presence herein.

I have drawn a crude map of the tower below:



We went down the stairway which end in a set of double-doors to the east. We opened the doors into a large stone room with stone pillars on the north and south walls. There were also pillars near the center of the room.

Between the sets of pillars were piles of bones and debris, with a cleared path leading straight through to the east. Upon said path, we came face-to-face with two more bugbears wearing spiked plate mail. From the severe wounds upon their bodies and the hideous stench, it was obvious that they had been empowered by the energies of the Death World as zombies.

Even with my dark vision, I could not see the eastern end of the room, so Grognar cast an enchantment of light upon a dart and tossed it into the center of the room.

The zombies were not alone. A body in a white robe lay in a pentagram in the middle of the room. Next to it lay a hobgoblin in a chain shirt. The far eastern section of the room was covered by a tapestry. In the front of the tapestry midway between the north and south walls was a black altar. I immediately came to the conclusion that this was a temple to Drachnar.

Several of us moved to engage the zombies. Caylx and I went wide around them towards the center of the room. When we did so, the hobgoblin stood and cast a spell, causing many of the bones piles to animate and reform as ghastly skeletons.

Dawn Flower invoked the intercession of her ancestors, asking them to bring forth the power of the Life World upon our undead foes. Caylx threw a flask of Liquid Fire at a skeleton, but missed and splashed several as well as Big Hill. Fortunately, Big Hill had succumbed to the Frenzy and never noticed.

As I approached the hobgoblin, he drew a scythe and cut a wire hanging from the ceiling. The body next to him was jerked to its feet. It was a human, bound and gagged, now hanging from a wire noose about its neck. As the sacrifice began to strangle, the hobgoblin invoked Drachnar, desecrating the room and filling it with energies of the Death World. It was at this time I noticed a glowing green rock, similar to the one I had seen in the Blood Swamp, hanging on a necklace around the hobgoblin's neck.

As swiftly as I could, I cut down the victim and then turned to engage the hobgoblin. Unfortunately, he cast yet another spell animating the dead bones and we faced another group of skeletons, more deadly than the first.

The entire battle was a blur. Caylx managed to pour a vial of Blessed Water upon the altar, breaking the desecration of the room. Dawn Flower using the last of her granted powers to finish off the first group of skeletons. We were aided in our battle by a beetle the size of a small house cat, which appeared out of nowhere. Sizzlezap used a magic song to strengthen our blows and sharpen our aim. Grognar called forth a Sphere of Fire which drove back the hobgoblin. Ralston placed a witchery of ill-luck upon the necromancer who was killed by an attack of opportunity as he fled from the sphere. I summoned several lightning flashes to destroy skeletons near Big Hill and myself.

While we won, the battle was close. Big Hill, even under the influence of the Frenzy, was nearly felled by the skeletons. I myself was sore wounded, although my wounds were not life threatening. The sacrificial victim was nearly slain by the skeletons and would have died had Dawn Flower not used her ability to turn back death.

Caylx used a spell to move the meteor stone from around the dead hobgoblin's neck and place it in the gold-lined box he had been given. I gave him the lead box that normally contains my enchanted journal and he placed his box inside of that. Despite that, I can detect magical emanations from the

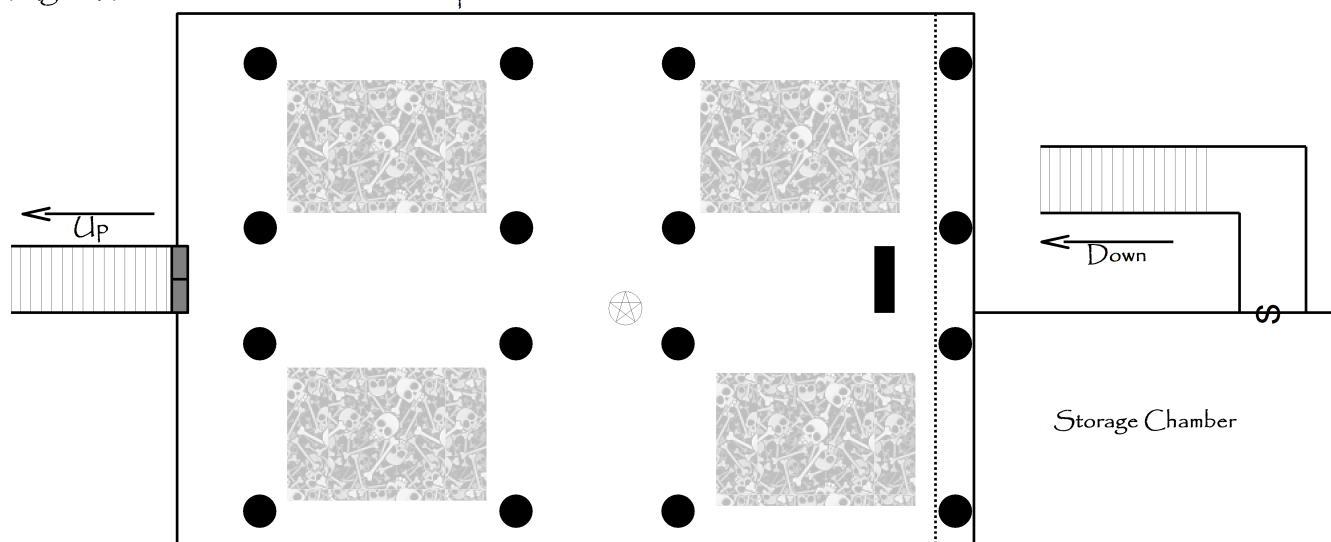
stone.

I presume the hobgoblin to be Gorim. Although Gorim was supposed to be a goblin, I am guessing that the effects of wearing the meteor stone caused him to grow in size. Still, goblin or hobgoblin, he had a couple of additional interesting items on him in addition to the stone: a masterwork chain shirt that had been empowered with a defensive enchantment of the first magnitude, a masterwork scythe which likewise had been enchanted with the most basic of combat magic, and a masterwork arbalest.

Caylx found a door in the southern section of the wall, behind the tapestry. It led into a storeroom. There was nothing of value there, just containers of stale water and spoiled food.

We did a thorough search of the storeroom and found a secret door in the north wall. It opened into a north passage that turned into stairs leading down to the west.

Again, I have sketched a brief map of this:



Temple of Drachnar ~ 1st Underground Level

Based upon the amount of dust past the secret door, I think it unlikely that the necromancer knew of this area.

We went down the stairs into a circular chamber with a moveable stone dais in the center. Upon moving the dais, we saw a hole in the floor, opening out into the ceiling of a vast chamber. The

chamber was circular, with another stone dais in the center. An image of a skull was embedded in this dais, with a lever in the center of the skull. Spaced equally around the dais were twelve metal balls the size of a human head. They were held in place by metal clamps. Next to each metal groove in the floor leading to and under a gate at the edge of the room.

This room looked very much like the flag of Drachnar which we recovered earlier.

We debated on what precisely to do, as this clearly was some sort of puzzle trap. It was decided that Caylx would use a spell to pull the lever while I would observe the room. Tesh and Groggar would be ready to move the circular dais back into position if anything untoward happened.

When Caylx pulled the lever, the balls were released from the clamps and rolled down the grooves. The gates went up, allowing the balls entrance into the passages beyond. Shortly afterward, a greenish floating head came out of each passage. They had wings like those of a bat, glowing yellowish eyes and fangs dripping with venom. These were vargouilles, creatures of unnatural evil from the Outer Worlds.



The heads let out an unearthly wail and I felt my limbs stiffen, as I was paralyzed with by a supernatural terror. I learned later that Caylx was likewise afflicted. Seeing what had happened to us, Tesh and Groggar immediately pushed the dais back into place. Caylx and I recovered after a few dozen heartbeats, although it seemed like hours to me.

After a few minutes the muffled wails we could hear from underneath the dais faded away. We moved the dais slightly, to peer into the chamber. It appeared the trap had reset itself. Each ball was back where it had been and the lever was in the original position.

We have decided to rest and recuperate here, to attempt to unriddle the nature of this puzzle before returning to town.

Rose Moon - 2nd day

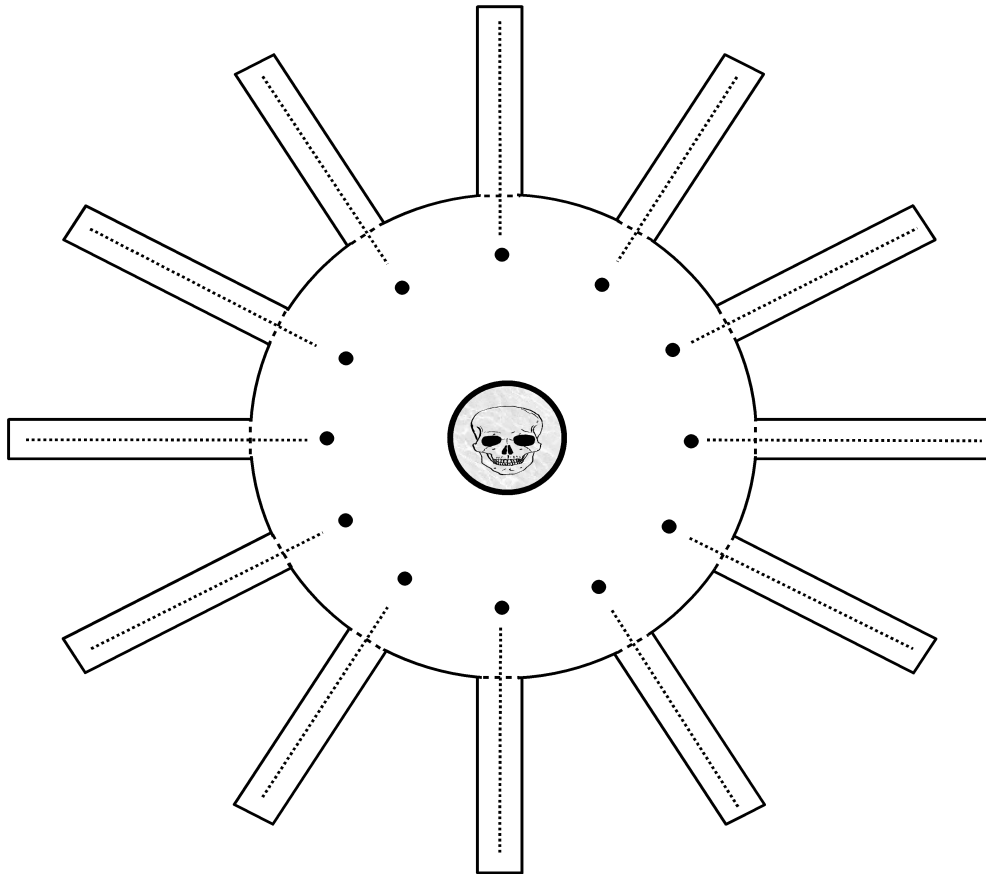
Store Room In A Temple To Drachnar

We have been in this accursed placed for two days. Fortunately our supplies are undiminished as

Dawn Flower was able to use her powers to restore sufficient quantities of the food and drink in the storeroom to useable condition.

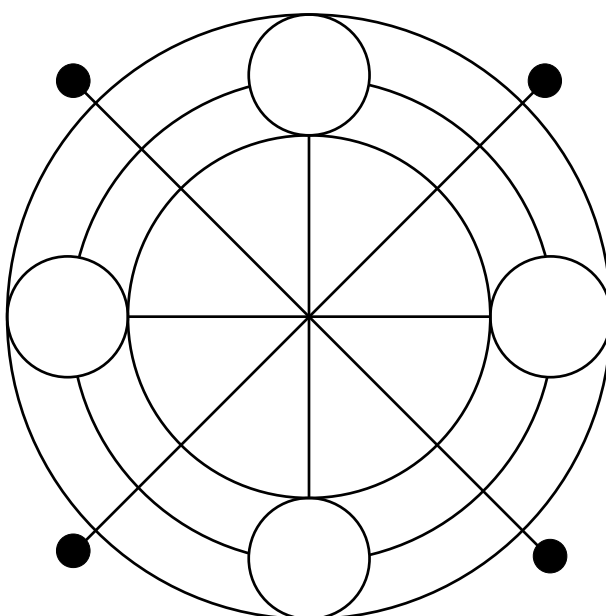
We believe we have discovered the nature of the puzzle chamber but we have have not yet solved it. Caylx lowered himself into the chamber to investigate it without pulling the lever. He found out that each passageway ended in a wall with a strange wheel embedded in it. Using the potion of diminution that we were given, he snuck through the gate of one passageway for a close investigation of a wheel.

I have made a crude drawing of the chamber and a wheel below:



Temple of Drachnar - 2nd Underground Level

The wheels are designed to be rotated. There is a brief phrase or word in Sempran at four places around the wheel. Caylx used mage hand to make rubbings of each of the phrases on each wheel.



Wheel at end of passageway

We believe that the wheels need to be rotated so that the word or phrase that doesn't fit with the others is at the bottom. That, we think, will then trap the silver balls, preventing the release of the vargouiles and allowing safe exploration of each passage.

The wheels themselves were too heavy for Caylx to move with his mage hand. However, he revealed that he knew a greater version of the spell. It should suffice to turn a wheel, but he can only prepare a few of them each day, so we estimate that it will might take several days to complete the solution to this trap.

Rose Moon ~ 6th day

Barn in Castle Valley Village

After four days of effort, we were successful and did not have to battle the vargouiles. We correctly deduced the nature of about half of the clues. The rest we managed to overcome simply through a process of trial and error. After we disabled the trap, we found that the northern passage led to a small room containing a chest. Inside it were a fair number of ensorceled items. In addition, there were two thousand gold coins – not Sempran Aureii, as these were stamped with an image of a skull. Still, they are of comparable weight to the Sempran coins.

The items found in the chest:

- A potion of healing that can repair minor wounds
- A potion of diminution similar to the one Caylx used
- A potion of growth that causes the drinker to double in size
- A potion giving unerring accuracy to ones next blow, provided it is struck within three heartbeats of being drunk.
- A scroll containing a spells that gives the target the strength of a maddened bull
- A scroll that temporarily gives a person unnatural vitality
- A scroll that heals the damage from lesser afflictions such as that caused by poison
- A scroll that restores motion to the limbs of a paralyzed person

In addition to the above items, which are good for but a single use, we found the following items bearing permanent enchantments:

- A ring that causes the wearer to always fall as lightly as a feather. I chuckled when I realized this; that skill was the first thing Hssht taught me
- A belt that girds the sinews of the wearing, giving them the strength of a (lesser) giant.
- A pearl that allows the wielder to recover a single spell of the 2nd magnitude after it has been used
- A cloak containing an enchantment of the 2nd magnitude that better enables the wearer to resist adverse afflictions
- A pair of glass lenses, that when affixed over the eyes, gives the wearer enhanced perceptive abilities
- A metal horn that produces an endless amount of fog whenever it is winded.

While I was pleased with our loot, it was less enjoyable to listen to Caylx and Gragnar squabble as to its disposition. The entire trip back – bicker, whine, bicker. I am sure that we will have plenty of time to figure that out. A message from the Senator was waiting for us, congratulating us on the recovery of the meteor and requesting that we return to Palnu.

This and my other game recaps may be found at www.launchpadzero.net .

Vargouile image from <http://michaeljaecks.deviantart.com/art/Vargouille-for-Paizo-141422831>

Revised on 03/27/11 to switch Flower Moon to 30 days.