

Excerpts From The Personal Journal of Speaks With Wind

Session 14 – August 12, 2011

Beaver Moon – 5th Day

October 14

The chamber the technicians pointed us to was the laboratory on the northwest side of the building, just opposite the library. There was a great deal of unusual equipment in there, but nothing of immediate value to us.

Of interest was what appeared to be a 12' tall statue of a dwarf, made out of mithral. It looked like a golem, and detected as magical, but it did not seem to be animated. There was also a backpack-like device with a short hose attached to it that ended in a firestick-like tube. Winston seemed quite taken with this, so he took it.

On a small table was a metal tray with metal-tiles on it. Each tile had a corresponding Dwarven rune written upon it. They were not in alphabetical or any logical order we could see, but each rune was only present one time. Connected to the tray on the back was a strange mirror-like device. Next to the metal tray was a large mug. It had the following written on it in Dwarven runes:

EVIL
PRIEST

I suggested to the group that this was yet another of Hadron's riddles, that we would need to figure out two 8-letter words that meant "Evil Priest" and then select the corresponding runes on the tray. I suggested perhaps "NEGATIVE CHANNELS" or "NEGATIVE ENERGIES" was the correct phrase. I then went to the library to get some paper and when I returned¹, Groggar said that a Dwarf technician told him that Brindel (the dwarf who worked here) was fond of rhymes. Groggar said that he thought the phrase was "SINISTER MINISTER."

I am not sure whether I should be grateful that Groggar finished it so quickly, or annoyed that I never got to hear the clue. I am leaning towards grateful as I really don't care for riddles.

¹ The clue was sent to the group while I was at work and I didn't get to see it until after Groggar's player had solved it.

We gave Grognar the honor of pushing the keys on the tray², entering the phrase. When he finished, the following glowing letters appeared on the mirror-like device attached to the tray:

D.O.S. 1.0 (Dwarven Operating System)

Welcome, Brindel!

WARNING

Laboratory Explosive Charges have been enabled! Evacuation is recommended!

WARNING

Security Lock Down is in affect. Evacuation is not permitted at this time!

WARNING

The Collider is not calibrated properly! Unexpected results may occur!

What would you like to do today?

1. Manage Collider power systems
2. Calibrate the Collider
3. Scan Collider
4. Override local force wall.

As typical for us, we got into a debate on which option to choose. As our magic and spells are running low, we have decided to get some rest and recover our spells, while the Dwarves and some of us search the library for information upon the panel and the control room.

Beaver Moon – 6th Day

October 15

Hsht, I have come to the conclusion that all dwarves are insane – it is only the degree and nature of that insanity varies. Hadron is the final proof of this, as I will explain later.

After we recovered our spells, Caylx showed us a diagram that said it was for the control room. We did not find anything about the four options on the tray device in the laboratory, save that the collider systems are very, very complicated. Rather than meddle with dangerous things far

² While we stood a safe distance back.

outside of our area of knowledge (unlike dwarves), we decided that option 4 – "Override local force wall" was our best choice, as that looked like it might get us into the control room.

When the tile-button on the tray was depressed, none of the obvious force walls we could see went down, but when we looked into the ring to the northeast of the laboratory we saw that the force wall blocking the way to the control room was gone.

We decided to wait until the lightning flowing along the ring had passed by and then we would run for the control room. Dawn Flower and I cast enchantments of protection against lightnings³ just before we made our run. They were unnecessary, as it we made it to the control room easily.

The control room had some devices that corresponded to the diagram Caylx had dug up.

There were the following devices and instruments:

- A dial, numbered 0 to 11 that was supposed to control the power levels of the collider. It was currently set on 11. I present this as more proof of Dwarven insanity – Hsht taught me that dials should never go to 11.
- Two buttons that looked like they were controlling the lock-down – one that said "Activate Lock-down", the other said "Inactivate Lock-down"
- Immediately to the right of the lock-down buttons, were five buttons arrayed in such a fashion as to match the layout of the teleport entry rooms we arrived in. We presumed (and later learned) that these would allow access to those rooms during the lock-down.
- There was a panel with buttons that matched the positions of the force walls. We discovered that we could raise and lower the force walls with this panel.
- There was a hemisphere labeled "Teleport Control" whose workings we could not figure out on our own. We learned later that this was the control mechanism for the outgoing teleporter, and how to use it.
- There was a device with buttons on it labeled "Televoyance." Next to it was some kind of viewer. Pressing a button on the device allowed one to scry that room using the viewer. Note that room with a button that we could not scry was the "Receiving Chamber".

By turning power dial down, we were able to slow down and eventually turn off the collider. As the only area we had not really investigated were was the Receiving Chamber, we decided to make our way there, via the ring. We went widdershins around the ring, setting up a relay of dwarf technicians so we could tell them to raise and lower the force walls as needed.

3 Resist Energy (Electricity)

We turned off the northwestern force wall and were ambushed by what we later found out was a Gelugon, or Ice Devil. It looked vaguely like a 12' tall, blueish-white bipedal beetle (although with only 4 limbs) that carried a long spear covered in frost. It conjured storms of ice and hail with which to attack us, and created a wall of ice to bar our path to it. And it flew. Despite hailing from one of the Ice Hells, it was immune to fire.

Dawn Flower called upon the ancestors to send us aid from one of the Higher Worlds. A Hound Warrior⁴ appeared for a moment, but then disappeared. The battle seemed to last an hour, but in reality only took thirty or so seconds. Several of the dwarves and Scratch were sorely wounded. Despite that, we managed to slay the devil – Tesh struck the killing blow while in the grip of The Frenzy. We later learned that the lock-down redirected the Hound Warrior to one of the holding rooms, such as we arrived in.

There were a few items of value on the devil:

- The large spear⁵ contained a simple battle-enchantment of the first magnitude and could envelope itself with freezing energies upon command of the bearer.
- An amulet⁶ that caused the wearers skin to harden like armor. The enchantment was of the second magnitude.
- A set of bracers⁷ that surrounded the wearer with a sheath of force, about half the strength of a mage armor spell.

Mordin took the spear and amulet, and Winston took the bracers.

After healing our wounds, we proceed on down to the receiving chamber. Of course, we found a meteor stone. It was set on top of pedestal that was clearly the target of the lightnings of the ring. Immediately upon seeing it, Caylx summoned the stone and placed it in an agency box.

We also found Hadron's body, frozen in ice. After thawing it out, we saw that he was quite dead. Not much of a surprise, but as he was a wizard... Anyway, we searched the body for clues as to what he was doing and found a document titled "Last Will & Testament". It said simply, "take my body to the golem in the laboratory."

We debated a bit, but decided to do so. When we got there, the golem animated. It grabbed the body, sliced open the skull and ate the brain. After doing so, its eyes began to glow with a

4 Hound Archon

5 Standard ice devil spear - +1 Frost Spear sized for Large creatures

6 Amulet of Natural Armor +2

7 Bracers of Armor +2

silvery light.

Hadron had made provisions for his own resurrection – as a golem. Hadron said that he had wanted to do this for ages. Hence my earlier declaration that all dwarves, and Hadron in particular, are crazy. Bad enough to seal oneself deep underground, away from wind and sky – but then to trade a living, feeling body for one of dead metal. Insane.

The Hadron-Golem then explained what he had been trying to do. He was attempting to use the collider to cause the meteor stone to summon Lightning Elementals, which he would then imprison in glass jars. They were then to be used as a source of power. The collider calibration was what was used to specify what sort of otherworldly creature the stone would summon. Unfortunately for Hadron, the collider tended to go out of calibration very easily – which is what had happened.

When it went out of calibration, Hadron called for a lock-down and the collider to be turned off. The lock-down happened, but the collider remained on. Before Hadron could do anything else, the Gelugon appeared. The devil asked Hadron his name. While insane, Hadron was not stupid. He told the ice devil that his name was Nongor Krigitek which is the dwarven word for a type of insect that resembled the devil. Before Hadron could do anything else, the devil froze him in ice.

Hadron did have some further information on the meter-stones and there was some information in the library. Specifically:

- The meteorites come in cycles, approximately every one hundred years or so. Note: we need to have astronomers back in Palnu see if this corresponds to any movements of heavenly bodies.
- The last such cycle was during the period of the Hsifan wars.
- The meteor stones decay over time, although locking them away in lead or gold prevents or retards this decay.
- Earlier stone falls are responsible for the presence of many of the non-human races upon the world, including the dwarves.
- The dwarves don't think the stone falls are a bad thing as they bring diversity to the world. More evidence for my dwarven insanity hypothesis. I should mention this is what Hadron says; the king seemed less than thrilled with the stones.

Hadron shut down the explosive sequence immediately after he was golemized. He didn't say how he did this, but I am assuming that somehow the golem had a mental link to the control

systems of the laboratory. He then showed us how to use the teleporter.

One of the dwarves, Brun-Hilda, teleported us back to the dwarven city and we reported to the king.

The king was quite pleased with us, less so with Hadron although he did not seem to be surprised at his wizard's changed appearance. The king ordered Hadron to turn over any other meteor stones that he possessed or knew of to us. In addition, he gave each agent a reward of 13,000 gold pieces, one thousand each for each of the twelve dwarves we rescued alive and an additional thousand for Hadron.

We plan to spend the next week or so here, finalizing the trade agreements as well as purchasing items and such. Then we will use the teleporter to return to Palnu.

Beaver Moon ~ 9th Day

October 18

Hadron delivered three more meteor stones to us, already encased in protective boxes. He said that these were the last stones of which he had knowledge. This makes six total meteors recovered on this trip.

For a person trapped in an expressionless golem body, Hadron seemed quite downcast. For a moment, I thought he was going to cry.

Beaver Moon ~ 10th Day

October 19

Acquired five custom lightning rods from Hadron. He asked me what I was going to do with them. I informed him that I was going to use them in a ritual I learned from Hssht, but had not yet had the opportunity to perform.

Beaver Moon ~ 13th Day

October 22

We left the dwarven city late in the day. The teleporter sent us right to the agency. I spoke to Basil and set up an appointment with Senator Belarius early tomorrow.

Beaver Moon ~ 14th Day

October 23

Senator Belarius had strange news for us. The Seperan Empire has now acquired an Emperor: by unanimous proclamation of the senate, Professor Weishaupt has been raised to the position of Emperor. Strangely enough, there were quite a few mysterious deaths of Senators in the months while we were gone - those who opposed the agency or who were vocal in their dislike of Weishaupt.

Belarius was unclear on whether or not Weishaupt still had the demonic falchion Tesh had given him in his possession.

The fortunes of our particular group have risen with the ascension of the new Emperor. I have been appointed ambassador to the Thran Confederation. Grognar has been appointed as ambassador to the Dwarven Kingdom. Tesh has been enrolled into the Senate.

I am unsure if Caylx was promoted. He was told to report to "Poison Wand." He looked somewhat surprised at that. I wonder if I should worry - a name like Poison Wand does not bring to mind an upright, outstanding member of society. Instead, visions of a skulking villain engaged in duplicitous, underhanded behavior of questionable morality and legality appear in ones head. Still, Caylx is quite competent at dealing with people like that and I expect he can take care of himself.

I am told we should get our pay for our reports and recovered meteorites in a few days.

Ave Imperator Weishaupt!

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