

Excerpts From The Personal Journal of Speaks With Wind

Session 15 – September 2, 2011

Beaver Moon – 14th Day

October 23

The rings Dawn Flower & I obtained from the dwarves took effect today. I felt no hunger or thirst all day, and felt no need of sleep after a long day of work. With the additional time this grants, I will be able to use the nighttime to engage in enchantments and the study of spells, freeing the day for the occasional social activity.

I began work tonight on a headband to sharpen my wits and focus my mind. It will impart skill in reading the body language of others, hidden meanings and innuendo, and other such things as needed to perceive the motives of others.

Beaver Moon – 15th Day

October 24

We have encountered several creatures that have resistance to lightning. I have decided that, considering my medicine focus, I should research what creatures are resistant to my favorite energy. Therefore, I spent most of today in the library reviewing bestiaries and tomes on the outer planes. I also searched through some of the documents copied from the dwarven library.

I have broken down the resistance to lightning into 5 categories:

- Slight¹ – The creature can totally resist the effects of a Jolt cantrip, but little more
- Minor² – The creature has a mild resistance to lightning. Such resistance is granted by a beginning arcanist using the Resist Energy spell.
- Major³ – The creature is quite resistant to lightning. Such resistance is granted by a skilled practitioner using the Resist Energy spell.
- Greater⁴ – While not totally immune to lightning, only the most powerful of energies can injure such a creature. The highest levels of the Resist Energy spell can grant such levels of tolerance.
- Immunity – The creature is totally resistant to lightning.

1 Electricity Resistance of 5 or less

2 Electricity Resistance of 10

3 Electricity Resistance of 20

4 Electricity Resistance of 30

It is clear that this is an endeavor that will take some time.

Finished the basic enchantments on the headband. I will enhance them down the road.

Beaver Moon ~ 17th Day

October 26

Slow progress on the categorization of creatures. Mostly I have noticed that resistance is greatest among certain creatures of the Outer Worlds, or creatures that have ties to the air Sky World.

Creatures that have fiendish or celestial blood tend to have some resistance to lightning. If they only have a trace of such blood⁵, their resistance is Slight at best. If they are a true half-blooded fiend or celestial, they tend to have Minor resistance.

I will begin work on enchanting a crystal tonight.

Beaver Moon ~ 20th Day

October 29

I spent much of the day bird-watching. Towards the end, I cast a spell that allowed me to converse with all flying creatures and had a conversation with several crows who have been perching upon the eaves of the agency building. All of the corbies are quite intelligent, and these were no different.

After a short time, we came to a deal. They would keep an eye out throughout the city for any truly unusual events. While much of what people do is strange to them, they said they would look for happenings far outside of the norm, such as creatures appearing out of thin air. I also told them to be on the look out for meteor stones. They also promised to recruit other birds in the city to keep an eye on things.

In exchange for their services, various leftovers from the meal hall would be given to them.

5 Such as Aasimars or Tieflings

Beaver Moon – 26th Day

November 4

Basil relayed a complaint from several of the staff. Apparently my feathered friends are getting a little too numerous and raucous. I counted them today – there were only two-score and twelve after the evening meal. Still, I had a word with them, and they will not all be showing up at once anymore, but rather will stagger things out a bit.

It is clear that two of them tend to be the in charge of the others – I have named them Heklus and Jeklus, in honor of some children's stories I have heard.

After dealing with the crows, I went fishing. I used the same spell that I use to speak to flying creatures to speak to swimming creatures. Worthless – ravens, magpies, crows and other corbies are intelligent. Trout are not. The one I spoke to had an attention span of about three heartbeats. I spent 5 minutes just introducing myself.

He was tasty, though. I gave the head to Heklus and Jeklus.

Beaver Moon – 28th Day

November 6

I have adapted one of the rituals that Hssht taught me to humanoid creatures. The goal is to slowly build up my resistance to lightning. Today I finally had a chance to begin it.

I traveled to a small grove in a park outside of the city. I drew a pentagram upon the ground and set up the lightning rods obtained from Hadron at each of the cardinal points. I connected the bottoms of lightning rods to a small plate in the center with some copper wire. I then drank an infusion on deadwort leaves and vermillion air-grass and cast a spell upon myself to resist electricity. I then lay upon the ground, with my arms, legs and head oriented towards the cardinal points to the star.

Then the tough part: I began channeling discharges of static energy into the lightning rods. I slowly increased the strength of the discharges over the course of an hour or so. This was not difficult – just painful.

I am very glad my wife is a healer.

Long Night Moon – 2nd Day

November 10

Dawn Flower has been discussing creating a healers facility to treat the poor of Palnu. Personally, I think she has gotten tired of riding all over the city. Anyway, she dragged me to see a building in the poor quarter.

It was an eight-room stone house that has seen much better days, and apparently has been abandoned. I will speak with Basil tomorrow to see if he can provide me some guidance in how one would go about purchasing the clinic, especially as there is no obvious owner.

Long Night Moon – 3rd Day

November 11

Basil and I had lunch today. He told me that my best bet might be to hire an agent/man of affairs to handle the purchase of whatever building we decide upon as well. Basil also said that having a man of affairs should be useful in managing my business dealings. He gave me the names of several people he knew of, who might either need a position or know of someone who does.

Long Night Moon – 23rd Day

December 1

I hired a man of affairs today – one Quintus Servilius Maximus. He is the fifth son of a minor merchant family. Seeing as he was unlikely to inherit much in the way of the family business, he was been working as a business agent for Lady Ludmilla of the Protacia family. Unfortunately for him, his employer died recently and he is without a position.

Basil knows him and says he is of good character and fairly skilled at his job, although he lacks the experience of an older man.

His first task is to finalize the purchase of the building for Dawn Flower's clinic.

Snow Moon – 9th Day

December 22

Audience With The Emperor

We were summoned to an audience with the Emperor today. Emperor Weishaupt wished to inform us on certain matters dealing with the pit. He had decided, wisely I think, to clean out the pit and has devoted a great deal of the military and other imperial resources to doing so. There is also a lot of construction upon the pit itself; they are building some sort of pyramid structure on top of it⁶.

The Emperor also gave each of us (not just the agents) a ring with a triangle upon it, indicating that we are in the service of the Empire. I wonder if the triangle on the ring is related to the pyramid he is building. They are not ensorcelled in any way I can discern. He wasn't carrying the demonic falchion and neither Dawn Flower or I sensed that he was under any outside influences⁷. Emperor Weishaupt was evasive on the details of how he ascended to his position. He did say that he had been working on it for a great deal of time.

Dawn Flower says I am being paranoid, but I am suspicious. It just seems too easy to me. He says that the stones are safe and that he keeps an eye on them, but still...

Emperor Weishaupt had another reason for summoning us today. Apparently they are having some difficulties in clearing out some of the vaults in the pit. The "Boxers" who built it did not leave a great deal of information on its design and some of the traps they left are taking a great toll on the workers. Two puzzles specifically are causing problems. No one has been able to solve them, and if someone fails (in the words of the Emperor), "fiery death ensues". The last apparently he determined via scrying upon workers attempting to solve the puzzles – he saw a blast of fire and then his sensor disappeared. All that was left of the workers were piles of ash.

The first puzzle is a simple 1x7 grid that has three copper coins on one end and three silver coins on the other. The instructions state that the goal is to move the coins to the opposite sides of the board. There are the following restrictions on moving the coins:

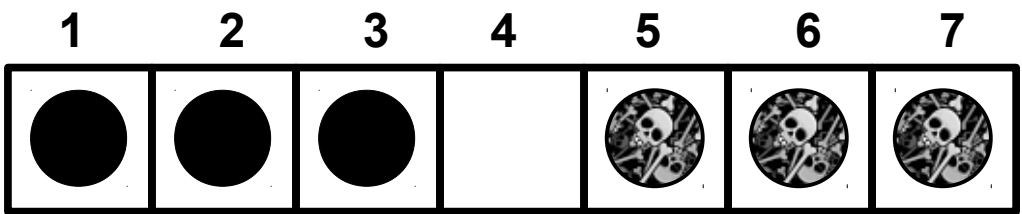
- Each coin may move forward one space at a time
- Coins may not move backwards
- Each coin may jump forward over one coin, to land on the other side, but it may not jump over two coins in a row.

⁶ Mysterious pyramids never bode well - <http://darksun.wikia.com/wiki/Tyr> as an example.

⁷ Sense Motive +15 and +10 respectively for Dawn Flower and Speak With Wind.

Grogmar figured out this puzzle easily. I shouldn't be surprised – while he doesn't appear that intelligent, our dwarven druid is something of a savant when it comes to solving riddles. We learned that in Hadron's laboratory.

I have made a diagram of the puzzle below, numbering each position 1 through 7. Below that I have copied down Grogmar's 15 step solution.



Moves		
1) 5→4	6) 7→6	11) 4→2
2) 3→5	7) 5→7	12) 6→4
3) 2→3	8) 3→5	13) 5→6
4) 4→2	9) 1→3	14) 3→7
5) 6→4	10) 2→1	15) 4→3

The second puzzle is somewhat more complicated. This Boxer built a game-playing machine that runs a game similar to the "Noughts And Crosses" that I learned as a child. The difference is that instead of a 3x3 grid with the object to get three in a row, this is played on a 10x10 grid and the goal is to get 5 in row.

Caylx and I played three games against each other. It is not as simple as the child's game; there is no obvious way to force a draw although I am guessing that a perfect player could do this all the time.

								o	
x					x		x		
x	o		x	o	o	x	x	x	
x	o	o	o	o	x	o			
o	x	o	o	x	o				
	o	x	o	o	x	o	o		
o			x	o	x	x			
				o	x		x		
			x	x	x	x		o	
					o				

The number of dead workers indicates that the machine is quite skilled. I have laid out a sample game grid below.

Missing Children

After we returned from our audience with the emperor, Caylx's schoolteacher friend sought him out with a problem. She told him that a half-dozen or so of her pupils have disappeared in the past week. She provided Caylx with a hairbow belonging to Bethany, one of the girls and Caylx used it to cast a Scrying spell upon the child.

He found the girl in a barred cell with eleven other children. Using another spell, he managed to speak with and interrogate her. According to Bethany, she was kidnapped by a "scary-looking" men who lured her with an old-style Palnu princess doll. The scary-looking men were taller than normal and they wore loose-fitting robes and wrappings about the head and face. All they gave the children to eat were bugs and spiders.

Caylx, Mordin, Dawn Flower and I checked out toymakers in Palnu, as the doll seemed somewhat distinctive. The first toymaker directed us to Enrique, who made the doll in question. Apparently it is a rather expensive design called "Palnu Princess Barbie." Enrique sold only two in the past month – one to Senator Halifax and the other "strange-looking gentleman in dark robes" a few days ago. The "gentleman" paid with gold coins and small gems. Enrique showed the gems to Caylx, who recognized them. Apparently Caylx owns a small jewelry store⁸ and the gems came from his shop.

We proceeded to Caylx's shop, where we found his shop closed. His shop worker was dead

8 A good way to fence goods, no doubt.

and has been for several days. The exact cause of death was unclear – there were weird, reddish marks upon his neck. They had a resemblance to bite-marks, but didn't seem to pierce the skin. Dawn Flower examined the body, and believes that the shop worker was drained of certain vital energies and nutrients⁹.

All of the gems were gone from Caylx's shop, but unadorned rings were not touched.

Our group proceeded to the school where the disappearances took place. Mordin and I¹⁰ spoke to a rather bold raven who was perched on a fence next to the school. A quick bribe of food and he was very communicative. The raven said that he hadn't noticed any kids disappearing but that several large spiders have shown up in the alley behind the school in the past week or so. By large – he meant human-sized and larger.

Investigating the alley, we found a human-sized¹¹ spider corpse stuffed in a trash-can. The spider looked like it had died in the same fashion as Caylx's employee. It didn't look like an ordinary spider, either, although we couldn't pinpoint (other than size) what was different about it.

As the schoolteacher said that she had reported the missing children to the constabulary, we decided to look up our old friend Constable Munch, who was appointed to Inspector General by the Emperor, replacing Antonio Montano.

From our meeting with Munch, we learned the following:

- There have been about thirty or so people who have gone missing in the past week or so, which they are trying to "keep hushed up."
- It is not just children disappearing – about half of the missing people are adults.
- Lots of giant spiders have shown up in the last week as well. Fourteen according to the Inspector General's notes.
- They have lost some constables as well.

Groggar joined us as we returned to the alley to sniff around some more – quite literally. Groggar changed into his dwarf-rat form and checked the area for unusual smells. I found some unusual hooved-footprints that appeared to belong to a biped around the areas where we found the spider and Groggar said that they smelled "weird". We found another spider in a trash can and Groggar said that it smelled weird as well.

9 Dexterity drain.

10 Elemental Speech spell.

11 Size Medium

Murder Investigation

As we were investigating, a constable ran up to us and said that Inspector General Munch requested our presence.

When we got to Munch, he told us that they had found a skeleton in an a back-alley in the past hour. He had a constable take us to where they found the skeleton, which they had cordoned off to keep out the populace. When we arrived at the area, we saw a skeleton of both a human and another skeleton of a horse. The horse skeleton was missing its head.

Both skeletons were surrounded by flies – they didn't look like normal flies, but were not that unusual. There were no marks on the bones, but remnants of the man's clothing was on the body. The headless horse looked like its head had been yanked off. We found another set of hooved footprints, but these looked to belong to a much heavier creature. Groggar said they didn't smell like either the spiders or the weird smell that he found by the other hoofprints.

We were very lucky, though, as there was a witness to the death. The witness had been skewered by an arrow and was suffering from a disease. Dawn Flower healed his wound and fed him a potion that removed his disease. Here is what he said:

- He saw a big "thing" with black wings and no head appear out of nowhere.
- The creature was about twelve feet tall.
- The thing breathed a black cloud of flies upon his victim, which devoured the flesh from his bones almost immediately.
- It repeated that with the man's horse, then ripped off the horse's head and place it on the top of its body, making it the creature's own head.
- The creature saw the witness and shot him with an arrow. It saw the witness was ok and just disappeared.
- The arrow made the witness sick immediately; it was the source of the contagion that infected him.

We are going to rest and refresh our spells and continue the investigation tomorrow.

Snow Moon ~ 10th Day December 23

No battle today, but we think there will be one tomorrow. Today we spent gathering more

information and laying a trap for the slavers – for that is what the kidnappers are.

We began the day with Dawn Flower meditating, asking the Ancestors a single question, "What is the best way to find and rescue the children?". After an burning an offer of incense and rare herbs in a censer, she saw the following words written in the smoke:

"Take the black ship to the lands beyond the ether"

I have heard of the back ship.¹² In one of the stories I was told by Hssht, there are creatures from the Outer Worlds which travel the planes, coming to this world and others to take slaves.

Both Mordin and Dawn Flower cast spells to allow them to speak with the spirit of the dead employee of Caylx's. Mordin's questions:

- Q: "Who or what killed you?"
A: "Weird creatures with tentacles in their mouths."
- Q: "How did they kill you?"
A: "They hit me & bit me."
- Q: "How did they get in?"
A: "They walked in through the door"

Dawn Flower's questions (cast after Mordin was done):

- Q: "How many were there?"
A: "Three"
- Q: "What did they say?"
A: "Give us your rubies"
- Q: "Did you see or hear anything prior to seeing them?"
A: "It sounded like birds"
- Q: "When precisely, did this all happen?"
A: "Before closing" Note: Caylx says they close at the 21st hour¹³.
I am guessing the creatures are not exactly afraid of daylight.

We did another search of Caylx's shop. I found a piece of cloth that probably belonged to one of the creatures; it did not look to be from around here and Groggar said it smelled weird.

We returned to the agency. Caylx went to use the piece of cloth and disease arrow to attempt to scry on their owners. In addition, he took the spider body we found and one of the flies and

¹² Knowledge (Arcane) check of 35.

¹³ 9:00 PM.

showed them to a couple of experts on the local vermin population. Both attempts at scrying failed, but the vermin experts did say that the spider was definitely not a local creature. They couldn't comment on the fly. Caylx showed an image of the spider Bethany had held up to him. The experts said it was also not native to the area and might be related to the larger spider whose body we possessed.

I spent the time Caylx used to scry to search the library for references on the Black Ship. Nothing immediately, but then Mordin did a spell to send a message to Hadron, asking about the Black Ship. Hadron's initial reply was, "I don't know. I'll have some guys research it." About an hour later, Hadron sent a message back with this information:

"Denizens of Leng. Strange creatures from the outer planes, into slavery. Resistant to cold & electricity. They sometimes use a black ship."

With that information, I was able to refine my search in the library and found some data. Leng is a cold and arid plateau, found in the Outer Worlds, where different realities converge. The Denizens of Leng are bipeds at perpetual war with the Spiders of Leng, which can grow to the size of a house. The Denizens of Leng have legs like a goats (explains the smell and hoofprints) and can travel the Worlds without using a ship. They have an especial fondness for rubies.

With that information, the odds of finding the captives on this world seem rather dim. Still, on the off chance they were still in this world, Dawn Flower cast a spell¹⁴ that would send an invisible flying hand to Bethany. If there were a path available to Bethany, and she was within 5 miles of the Dawn Flower, the hand should have disappeared without returning. After four candlemarks, however, the hand returned and showed its palm to Dawn Flower, meaning it could not find the girl.

As the teleportation spell cannot bridge the gaps between the planar worlds, we cannot use the scrolls Grogar obtained from the Emperor.

I didn't find any information on the creature that breathed flies. Caylx returned to the library after his scryings and grabbed the Book of Pazuzu¹⁵, flipped it open and saw a drawing of the creature staring back at him¹⁶. It is a leukodaemon, a creature from one of the Hell Worlds.

14 *Helping Hand* – a rather non-standard use of the spell.

15 In Golarion, Leukodaemons are associated with Appolyon, the Horseman and Daemon-Lord of Pestilence. I figured that the demon of evil wind spirits and pestilence might have info about them as well.

16 He rolled a natural 20 on his research check.

They stand upwards of a dozen feet tall, wear skeletal horse heads as they have no true heads of their own, they have legs like goats, instead of feet and they have rotting wings similar to those of a carrion bird. They are resistant to normal weaponry, but are vulnerable to silver or holy weapons. They are totally immune to disease and poison and have minor resistance to lightnings, fire or cold. They are associated with plague and pestilence, as we found out from the tainted arrow.

As far as we can tell, the leukodaemon has nothing to do with the kidnapping of Palnu's citizens, so we have placed it as a lower priority than dealing with the Denizens of Leng. As we cannot teleport to them, we have come up with a plan to lure the Denizens to us.

It is clear that they have some sort of intelligence in the city. Calyx will use his connections in the city's underworld to spread the rumor of a large shipment of rubies arriving tomorrow night at half-past the eighteenth hour in a warehouse in the trade district. He will make sure the denizens of the underworld will know of it, by "warning them off" of said transfer.

If the Denizens of Leng do indeed have connections in the city, they should learn of this. With luck, their avaricious appetite for rubies will bring them to the warehouse.

We will be waiting.

Snow Moon – 11th Day December 24

Success beyond measure – we have recovered the prisoners and forged a trade agreement between the Denizens of Leng and the Empire. And all of this was done without any of us being harmed in any way.

Mordin spoke to the raven we talked with yesterday, who agreed to keep watch for us. Who notices the birds in a city, anyway? They are everywhere.

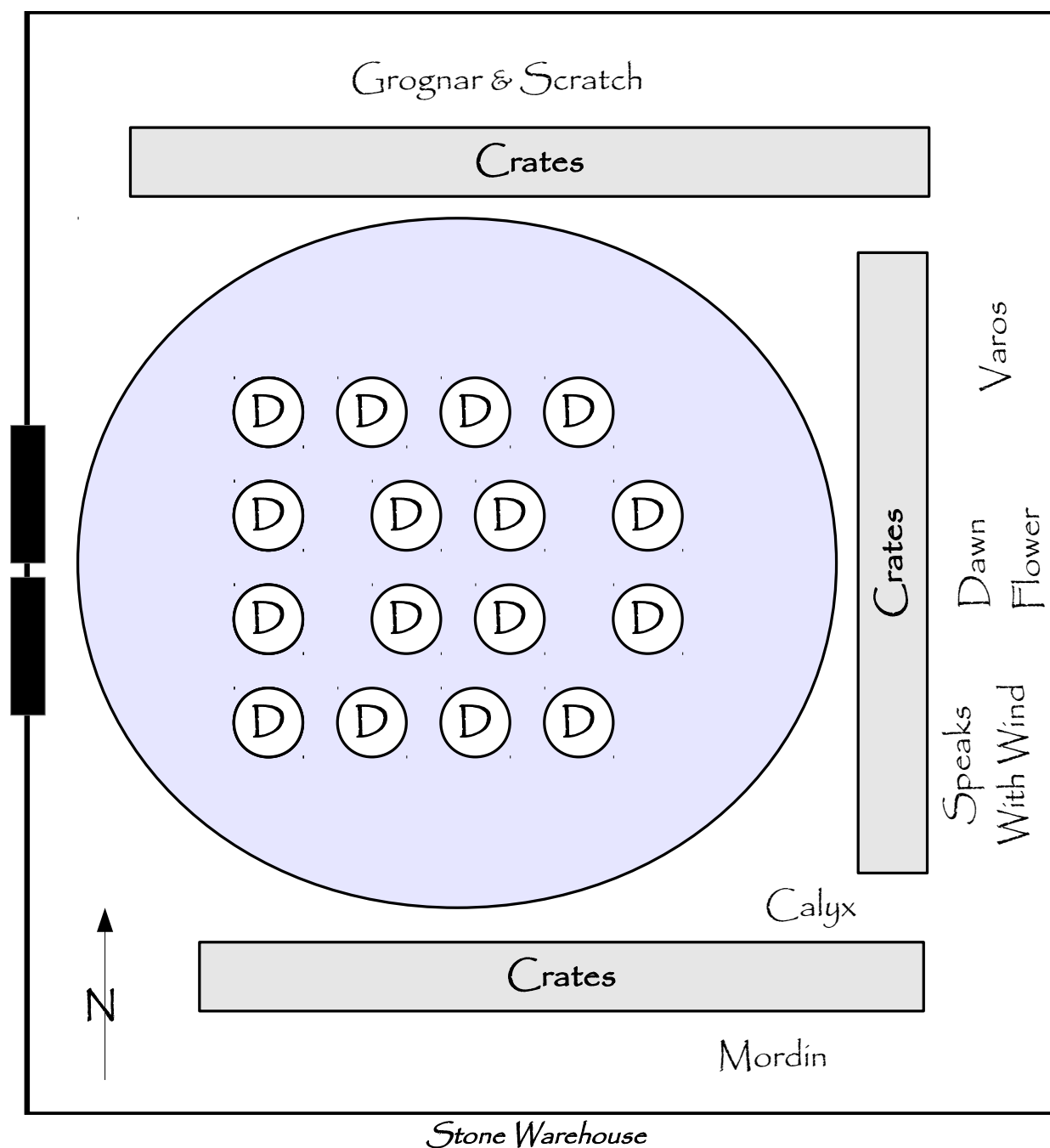
We then proceeded to the warehouse where our ambushade was to be performed. It was made of sturdy stone, about 30 feet high and approximately 60 feet on each wall. Large, stout double-doors made of wood were the only entrance, and they were placed in the center of the west wall.

We rearranged the crates in the room so that there were three walls of crates. The north wall

and east wall of crates were some five feet high, while the south wall was between eight and ten feet high. It was laid out so that there was an approximately 45 foot by 45 foot area clear in front of the door – which we planned to use as a killing zone.

Grognar and Scratch were stationed behind the northern set of crates. Varos, Dawn Flower and I were stationed (from North to South respectively) behind the eastern crate wall. Calyx was standing out in the open, near the east end of the southern wall of crates.

I have drawn a crude diagram of our positions below. The (D) symbols are the Denizens when they first entered the warehouse.



I cast *Countless Eyes and Protection From Arrows* upon myself, as well as using my dwarven rod to cast a lengthened *Heroism* upon myself. Dawn Flower used the rod also as she invoked the ancestors to create a circle of protection from evil forces upon her.

The Denizens were quite punctual. Scarcely half a candlemark after the eighteenth hour had passed when we heard a large "caw, caw" from outside. The doors were thrown open and a dozen of the Denizens Of Leng entered. Calyx dropped a small box of rubies he had been pretending to examine.

The following conversation ensued between Caylx and one of the Denizens.

Calyx: "This is private property."

Denizen: "Give us your rubies and we may let you live."

Note: At this point, Blizanthium, Caylx's Wind Person Spirit Guide¹⁷ activated the Dwarven lock device we obtained to fight the Night Hag. We figured this would prevent the Denizens from vanishing into the Ghost World¹⁸.

Calyx: "Who are you? This is private property!"

Denizen: "We are here for your rubies."

Calyx: "Did you bring the gold?"

Denizen: "If you give us the rubies we may not take you as a slave."

Calyx: "Do you know who I am?"

Denizen (pulling coverings off of his face): "You don't know who we are!"

Calyx: "Denizens of Leng."

They look surprised (or so I thought – they are very difficult to read)

Denizen: "You do know who we are."

Calyx: "Yes. And you need to keep your arms down or you will be my slaves."

Denizen: "We are slaves to no one."

Calyx: "I didn't mean you. I meant your souls." (Pause)

"I take it you are the leader."

Denizen: "I am."

Calyx: "You have something that belongs to me."

Denizen: "What can I have that belongs to you?"

Calyx: "A child. Twelve of them."

Denizen: "Oh. You claim those whelps, do you?"

Calyx: "Well, there's twelve of them, and there are twelve of you."

Denizen: "Mere coincidence."

Calyx: "A soul for a soul."

Denizen: "We admire your bravery."

Calyx: "So that is all you came for? The rubies? And slaves?"

Denizen: "We mainly come for slaves, but we heard about your rubies and we could sense them."

Calyx: "I am glad you got my message, as every trap needs bait."

Note: At his point, Caylx disappeared from sight.¹⁹

17 Small Air Elemental Familiar

18 Ethereal Plan.

19 He had been holding a *Greater Invisibility* spell ready and discharged it.

Calyx can be irritating, but he does have a certain panache, and we recognized our cue to act.

Groggar called upon the mountain reshape the area where the Denizens stood. As he finished his invocation, the stone floor reshaped itself so that every space was covered with sharp points, so fine as to be near invisible²⁰. Calyx tossed a Ball of Abysmal Flame²¹ upon them, searing seven severely. The other fives' otherworldly presence resisted the power of his medicine²². I myself conjured up a field of rubbery black tentacles to grapple with our foe, which was most efficacious. Dawn Flower worked medicine²³ to bestow good luck in battle upon us and bad luck upon our foes. Varos killed the leader with a volley of arrows.

The Denizens were overmatched. We slaughtered ten out of the dozen within a couple dozen heartbeats²⁴ of Calyx's disappearing act and received no wounds whatsoever.

Calyx then made a deal with them. If they brought back the prisoners and troubled our world no more, we would release them. Not being fools, we sent one out to bring back the prisoners keeping the other as surety for their good behavior.

While we were waiting for the one we had released to return, we interrogated the prisoner we did have. Somehow Groggar managed to negotiate a trade agreement with the Denizens – I was there and still have trouble believing it. We would sell them weapons and armor, which they did not have, in exchange for precious metals and rubies, of which they have many.

They kept their word.

All thirty prisoners were returned within a half-candlemark. We did learn a few interesting pieces information:

- They were following the spiders to this world from their Outer World of Leng. The robberies and kidnappings were just side-benefits to the opportunity to fight their ancestral foes.
- They know nothing of meteor stones.
- They have heard of leukodaemons, but know nothing about the one that appeared the day before yesterday.
- They believe someone is responsible for summoning the Spiders of Leng to this world.

20 *Spike Stones*

21 *Fireball*

22 He failed to overcome Spell Resistance on 5 of the Denizens.

23 *Prayer*. She failed to overcome Spell Resistance on 7 of the Denizens.

24 About five rounds.

I believe a meteor stone is responsible for the appearance of the spiders and leukodaemon, but have no proof. Either way, that is still something to be dealt with.

The corpses of those we killed dissolved into a vile goo, but did leave some valuables behind:

- We found 10,000 aureii worth of coins and gems (mostly rubies).
- A ensorcelled rope²⁵ which may be commanded to entangle a foe.
- A black, tattered cloak²⁶ which allowed the wearer to cling to walls, better resist the influence of toxic substances, and can move freely (if slowly) through spider webs. A single time per day, the wearer can create a giant web themselves.

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

25 Rope of Entanglement

26 Cloak of Arachnida