

# DCC: World of Iriolis

## Our Group

Player	Character	Description	Class
Bruce	Gallfred Weasel	Guild Beggar	Thief
Chris	Old Man Fish	Locksmith	Ranger
Ernest	Hemp	Weaver	Warrior
Matt	Mordecai	Gravedigger	Wizard
Patrick	Podrick	Squire	Warrior
Tim	Ned Wimbley	Beekeeper	Wizard

*Chris* has learned how to find a quality breakfast in Las Vegas. Unfortunately, this involves walking down Stabbington Street at 2 am. *Patrick* thinks this is not an ideal breakfast plan, even if it does result in a Cubano sandwich the size of a small child. *Tim* contributes that he recently watched *The Emoji Movie*. He started with very low expectations, and those expectations were dashed. *Ernest* tells everyone that Jesse James was shot by the coward Robert Ford. And he only wishes that Robert Ford had been around to deal with the creators of *Madame Web*. Paul follows up with the discovery that there is a Canadian zombie movie, and it is also not good. In contrast, the Sumatra PDF reader is everything that was promised – a million thanks to *Kat*. And *Bruce* brings down the mood by mentioning that his Mom passed on this past Wednesday.

Tim recommends *The Adventures of Amina al-Sirafi*, by Shannon Chakraborty. It is the story of a Muslim female pirate coming out of retirement. He is particularly fond of the fact that it has a lot of middle-aged humor. He also suggests the audiobook of *Ambergris*, which is weird enough that Bruce might like it.

*Matt* is missing, at least for the moment.

## Will We Ever Leave Fythorp? Not Until After Brunch

The *Celebration of Temptation's Embrace* is over and it is Waterday, the 18<sup>th</sup> of Tenebraus. Thanks to miraculous cures, none of the characters are hung over. Everyone is fine. *Gallfred* is so pleased that he has finally been able to recover all of his lost STR points, and most of his LUCK. The others are certain that this will only be a temporary situation.

*Hemp the Weaver* suggests that everyone accompany him to brunch. *Ned Wimbley* orders a huge plate of pancakes, and a second supplementary plate of pancakes (one is for Ned, the other is for his invisible imp). *Podrick* is momentarily troubled because he cannot remember if samosas or mimosas feature orange juice and champagne. *Old Man Fish* knows the difference and sets him straight. Hemp keeps on referring to *Morgan* with creepy, vaguely sexual nicknames. Nobody remembers exactly what *Gallfred Weasel* orders.

The original plan to go to the Temple of Carnifex is on hold because *Mordecai* isn't around right now, so instead the group agrees to travel into the *Rusting Hills* to help Podrick look for the *Helm of Chistu*.

## The Road to the Rusting Hills

The characters set out on a path to the Rusting Hills, one that involves a river crossing and a distinct lack of established roads. Old Man Fish approves and leads the characters with his customary aplomb. Gallfred Weasel claims to be keeping watch, but the evidence suggests that he is not – the characters are taken by surprise... by four giant sleeping lizards. They are sleeping on the huge, furry back of a massive burrowing animal that the characters had mistaken for a moderate-sized hill.

The characters sneak their way past the sleeping lizards and the sleeping...whatever.

Old Man Fish's innate Ranger sense leads him directly to a workable ford across the river. On the other bank – the Rusting Hills. The hills have a high iron content, and the presence of iron veins has given them their distinctive appearance and name. And after a brief search the characters are able to find an appropriately massive structure.

## This Place Is Perfect

The characters quickly note as they approach the Tower that the entire landscape is perfect: flawless trees, flawless grass, flawless everything. Except for one rose with a single rotting petal. A worm sits in the center of the rose. The Tower itself has a teardrop shape and it actually floating just above the perfect grass. Beneath the point of the tower a massive ox, three times the size of a normal ox, lies sleeping.

Gallfred plucks the rose carefully, without disturbing the worm, and places it into a metal flask (provided by Ned, who doesn't mention that it once held tentacle juice).

Ned summons a couple of wolves. He expects that the characters will soon need to kill a giant ox.

Podrick tells the others about the steps needed to seek the Helm of Chistu, as related by four statues:

- Statue 1: "Hail, travelers! Welcome to the realm of Eldros, a kingdom of splendor now lost to the annals of time. We are the guardians of this forgotten realm, imbued with the memories and wisdom of a bygone era."
- Statue 2: "Listen, mortals, and learn of the legacy of Chistu, the great protector. In the depths of these lands, the Helm of Chistu holds power both dark and divine. It is said to bind the realms of life and death, a key to unlocking untold secrets."
- Statue 3: "Eldros, once a beacon of light, now shrouded in darkness. The helm's corruption lingers, seeking those who would exploit its power. Only through understanding the past can the future be forged anew."
- Statue 4: "Beware, for the path to the helm is treacherous. Seek the Shrine of Reflection, a sacred place where the boundaries of the living and the dead converge. There, the truths of Chistu and the helm may be revealed."

When the characters get within a hundred feet of the beast, the giant ox stands. His eyes are dull and clouded and his hide aged and bare. He proclaims, “Seldom do I see wayfarers abroad in this place. Do you bring the wisdom of my masters, or do you seek the cataphract who lies within? Speak, my lords.”

Podrick explains his intent to find the Helm of Chistu, a goal that sadly does not involve releasing the ox from his ancient duties.

The giant ox answers, “Then I am prepared to fight you.”

Podrick notes that there are runes inscribed upon the backs of the ox’s horns, written in Lawful. Ned is able to translate them in part: “Taurziel, First Born of Oxen, Guardian of the Cataphract, Bound to Remain...” His scholarly pursuits are interrupted by the fact that *Taurziel* seems to be able to scent Gallfred – or perhaps the rose he carries. Taurziel grumbles something about, “Foul chaos scuttlings...”

Hemp and Podrick start chanting, “Orathbarn! Orathbarn! Orathbarn!” This has no effect.

Ned Wimbley does the same. Again, doesn’t help.

Then Taurziel the Lawful Ox attacks Gallfred. Gallfred drops the rose jar. He flings himself to the side and attempts to hide. He finds that not only is it difficult to hide in a Lawful environment, the nature of the perfect grass and sunshine and perfect rocks actually conspire to ensure that he is perfectly visible.

Old Man Fish tries to dispel Taurziel by making ox noises. This doesn’t do anything.

Podrick finally manages to intone the charm properly. Taurziel stops immediately. Beams of golden sun shine down upon his skin. He thanks the characters for liberating him from his watch, then turns into glowing dust that drifts away. A curving stairway leading up to the tower appears.

Hemp uses the *blazefire bow* to shoot the chaos-infested rose. The arrow pierces the flask and the rose. Dark black smoke pours up along the arrow shaft as the rose and the flask both turn black and decay into dust and slag.

## The Very Lawful Entry Hall

The characters go up the stairway and find a pentagonal room with five doors, each inscribed in Lawful. Ned translates:

- Creation.
- Construction.
- Enlightenment.
- Sacrifice.
- Judgment.

Podrick chooses the Creation door. He passes through, and as he does everyone is transported to a different area.

## The Hall of Divine Clay

The characters find themselves in a room of darkness. A column of light illuminates a container holding a lump of clay. A voice speaks, explaining that the characters witness the last spark of divine matter and urges them to step forward and embrace the creativity of the gods.

Podrick steps forward and picks up the clay. He makes it into a dog, symbolizing loyalty and companionship. Nothing happens. Then the clay melts in his hands and falls to the floor. There is a sparkle of creation as it becomes a puddle of (hostile) primordial slime.

Old Man Fish responds quickly. He thinks that salt would be the ideal weapon against a slime, but he doesn't have any so he stabs it with the *useful dagger*. His strike is dead-on, but mostly demonstrates that blades aren't a good weapon against slime. So, Hemp shoots it with the *blazefire bow* and kills it with fire. It vanishes, and slightly less primordial clay reappears in the basket.

Hemp the Weaver tries making a water buffalo, a symbol of protection. He does really well, but that's not what was needed. He gets another primordial slime. The characters dispatch it.

The characters think about symbols of creation. Hemp the Weaver tries once more, creating a truly excellent likeness of a baby. It is so realistic that it assumes actual life and becomes a real baby. It ascends up into the column of light, and the characters are whisked back into the anteroom. The Door of Creation is dimmed now.

## Rainbow Bridge, Anyone?

The characters next move into the Hall of Creation, a hall walled by riveted iron. The hall is 300 feet long, bisected by a chasm 100 feet across. There is another door at the far end. And just before the chasm there are five delicate stands, each holding a vial filled with a liquid of a different color:

- Tangerine
- Crimson
- Azure
- Gold
- Emerald
- Plum

Rearranging the order of the vials does nothing. Pouring liquid anywhere is also useless – the liquid vanishes as it leaves the vial.

Podrick tries drinking the crimson liquid. He feels a strange tingling. Nothing else happens. He drinks more, in rainbow order. Once he finishes, his eyes start to weep rainbow tears that grow in size and coagulate into a rainbow bridge across the chasm. Gallfred tests and is able to easily walk across the bridge. He is almost disappointed to have not perished horribly. The others follow. As before, it's back to the entry hall.

The Door of Enlightenment is next. The door leads to a ballroom. Ten glittering pillars support a ceiling painted with scenes of pastoral life. The floor is of perfect marble. Torches and ivory tapers light the chamber. A strong feminine voice intones, "There is an absence in this oasis of perfection. If thou art a true champion of Law, make steps - however dire - to address this absence. Through its presence you shall pass your trial!" Pale, courtly dancers follow an intricate pattern across the floor. Hemp and Podrick try to join in the dance and find that they must work hard to avoid collision.

Gallfred notices that there is an absence of shadows in the room. The dancers, columns, and characters all cast no shadows. He mutters and weeps, "No shadows... No shadows..." He scuttles around like a cockroach looking for refuge, until Ned writes "Shadow" on a cardboard box and puts it on Gallfred's head, which calms him slightly. He croaks out, "Destroy the lights! Destroy the lights!"

Ned tries extinguishing a torch. He flings a cloak over it. Some of the ghostly dancers vanish. Mordecai extinguishes another using a waterskin, at which point dancers start to attack the characters. Old Man Fish and Mordecai are the unluckiest and face their wrath – with Old Man Fish taking a kick to the chin. Then the characters take out the rest of the tapers and the room is plunged into darkness. The music and the dancers both fade.

Hemp lights a lantern. He sees no dancers, nor normal shadows. He doesn't see a way out of the room. Placing the lantern at the center of the room and dancing around it does nothing. Then Mordecai tries relighting the torches. The torchlight is normal, and once all are relighted the shadows form a doorway...

## A Nightmare of Sacrifice

The Chamber of Sacrifice is dominated by a demonic thing grabbing screaming villagers with its tendrils. Everything is on fire. A childlike voice suggests various levels of sacrifice that might be necessary, up to and including one's own life.

Gallfred hides.

Ned Wimbley offers some of his blood to the creature. A voice whispers, "Would you do so of your own free will?" Ned is all on board and sacrifices 2 hit points of blood. This seems to hurt the monster.

Podrick thinks about sacrificing his lute by smashing it. The small voice guides him to options for sacrifice: hit points, attribute points, class abilities, or life. He and Hemp both sacrifice hit points, which again weaken the monster.

Gallfred gives up his abilities to *forge documents*, *read languages*, and *handle poison*. This almost kills the monster, and costs Gallfred a good quantity of his past.

Podrick gives up more hit points. That weakens the monster critically.

Ned sacrifices his knowledge of the gnoll language. The monster collapses into a steaming pile of gore, taking the villagers with it. The characters end up back in the anteroom, and their sacrifices do not return.

## Do We Judge, or Are We Judged?

The characters enter the Hall of Judgment. They find themselves in front of a giant weighing pan, one of two. The apparatus of the scales are translucent and insubstantial. A giant azure key hangs above the rightmost pan of the scale. Four growling lions stand upon a platform. They have silver fur and golden manes.

The characters approach the lions, who take exception to everyone in the group except for Podrick.

Old Man Fish runs for the rightmost pan, under the key. He hears a voice, “Only he who has led a goodly and Lawful life will ascend above others. If you have led a goodly life proclaim your deeds and be judged. You have thirty heartbeats!”

Gallfred hears the voice and concludes that the scales are not for him. He evaporates into darkness.

One of the *law lions* attacks Ned. The creature swipes a claw across his chest, giving him a nasty scratch and knocking the dagger *pestis* away. Ned clammers onto the other pan of the scale – maybe his bad deeds will combine with Old Man Fish’s good deeds and allow him to claim the key. He speaks out some evil deeds and descends 10 feet – causing Old Man Fish to rise by 10 feet (of the 35 feet needed to reach the key). Old Man Fish offers some good deeds, which only rises him up by about 5 feet.

Gallfred steps out from nowhere and garrotes a law lion. The creature is blinded by the blood, but (barely) survives. The lions strike back at the characters, but only the lion fighting Hemp manages to connect – a limited triumph, because Hemp slashes through its torso. Then Ned’s summoned wolves finish the lions off.

Ned confesses several more sins, propelling Old Man Fish up another ten feet. Old Man Fish offers a couple more good deeds and grabs the key... which dumps everyone back into the entryway. But now the shimmering staircase ascends another twenty feet up, providing access to the roof of the tower. The stairway ends at a golden door with a keyhole appropriate to the key Old Man Fish now holds. He opens the door, accompanied by the music of the spheres. The chamber beyond is a huge domed chamber...

## The Chamber of the Heavens

The characters look out on a giant domed chamber. There is a walkway around the perimeter and a bridge leading to a triangular platform hovering unsupported at the center of the chamber. Six ghostly figures that look exactly like the characters stand around a plinth. A helmet stands upon the plinth.

As the characters get closer, they can see that the ghostly figures appear to be idealized versions of the characters. Characters suffering from corruption do not see the same afflictions in their duplicates. It is difficult to recognize the mirror versions of Ned, Mordecai, and Gallfred at all.

Podrick leads the way. The defenders of the helm demand that he display the *Sigil of the Scions*. He has no idea what they are talking about, and says as much. His shadow intones, “Then prepare for combat!”

Hemp responds by shooting the shadow Mordecai in the head. He kills him instantly. The body shatters like a mirror. Podrick stabs Fake Ned in the throat, rendering him mute.

Then the fake characters strike back. Ned suffers a deeply damaging hit from Fake Hemp. And (of course) Fake Gallfred vanishes into the shadows, just like the real Gallfred. Ned covers himself with a *magic shield* as he sends his summoned wolves to attack Fake Hemp.

Unsatisfied by the ongoing survival of his double, Hemp uses the *blazefire bow* to shoot his imitator and set him on fire. And then Gallfred hits Fake Hemp from surprise with a sling, knocking him prone. Old Man Fish hears that someone is prone, and shoots him as well. Surprisingly, Fake Hemp survives.

Podrick jabs at his mirror. His mirror evades and jabs him straight back. And a second later, Ned blasts it with a *magic missile* that leaves it gasping. A follow-up missile finishes the job, causing Fake Podrick to shatter into pieces.

The Fake Gallfred shows up right next to the real Gallfred and just about guts him with an imitation *shadeslayer*. Gallfred responds by vanishing into the shadows. As does Fake Gallfred a moment later.

Podrick eliminates the Fake Ned. Everyone is glad, because real Ned just demonstrated how lethal he can be. Then

Nobody comments when Mordecai cuts down Fake Podrick with his mighty blade.

Hemp spots where Fake Gallfred is hiding and shoots him with the *blazefire bow*, shattering him.

Podrick strikes Fake Fish, delivering a punishing hit, and Hemp follows up by shoving him off the platform to shatter far below.

## Donning the Helm of Chistu

Podrick reaches out for the *Helm of Chistu*. It is bright blue and feels both cold and hot to the touch. He puts on the helm and is overwhelmed by the combination of powerful Law and powerful Chaos. He is unable to do anything while he is wearing it due to the conflict. He discovers that he must either cleanse it of Law or Chaos to make it a usable artifact.

## Mundane Wealth (or not) and Camping

Gallfred looks around for anything of value that isn't a magical Lawful helm. He notes that the doors are apparently plated with gold. He tries to steal the *useful dagger* back from Old Man Fish... but fails. And even his pathetic pleas to give him the dagger so he can use it to scrape gold off the door have no effect upon Old Man Fish. Unwilling to give up, Gallfred uses *shadeslayer* to scrape some gold from the door... only to find that it very Lawfully ends up right back on the door as soon as he looks away from it. It's very, very frustrating.

The others note that there is almost no chance of hostile encounters in a floating Temple of Law and elect to camp for the night. The various abilities the characters sacrificed do not return, but then once

the group gets out of the Valley of the Temple they do come back. It was only a temporary sacrifice, apparently.

## Vampire Bats in Daylight? Inconceivable!

The characters know that there is an old monastery fairly close to the Rusting Hills, and more or less on the path to reach the Temple of Carnifex. Nobody knows much about the monastery, so Old Man Fish leads the group there. Gallfred hopes that the place is civilized enough to offer pleasant lodgings to travelers.

Unfortunately, the journey isn't without its troubles. A giant vampire bat flies out of clear skies to bite Gallfred, who squeals like a wounded marmot. This doesn't trouble the bat at all. It latches on to him and starts to *drink*. Mordecai hits the bat with a *death ray*, obliterating the creature. There is nothing left of the bat except bones and dust. Which Mordecai takes as a resource for animal summoning later on.

## The End of the Session

Each character gains +12 EXP. The group is approaching a small monastery on the South River.