

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

Ernest is concerned because his weekend plans for Christmas activities were forced to move indoors due to the rain. This meant, of course, going to see *Wicked*. *Patrick* is horrified to discover that the movie is only the first of two parts. He is even more horrified to learn that it was based upon not just one but *four* books. *Chris* suggests that if more songs are needed the filmmakers should call up Lin-Manuel Miranda, because he's the only person currently licensed to write movie musical songs. *Bruce* celebrates the unlimited reach of the monoculture. Huzzah!

Paul shows up just in time to hear Bruce complaining about the intrusion of AI into the Chillhop music space. Fortunately, *Tim* arrives with another installment in the soap opera that is *Max* the cat's life. Today, *Courtesy* realized that Max has food in Tim's office and pleaded endlessly to be let in so she could get some of it.

Matt is not with us today. He's suffering from an excess of holiday celebrations, combined with an ongoing need to hold down paid work. We all feel his absence, and hope he makes it back to us next time.

Climbing Mount Tyche

The characters are headed towards the mountaintop temple to *Aphiel* controlled by *Glipkerio*, in the ongoing hope that they can prevent him from messing with time. They've recently killed a giant orange-skinned demon and recovered a broken medallion forged of black metal and engraved like the top half of a clock. And *Hemp the Weaver* has a magical helmet that renders him undetectable to the enemies of *Aphiel* but is undone by the number seven.

Also, today is the day of the *Triumph's Dawn* holiday.

The characters are at the base of Mount Tyche. *Old Man Fish* tells the others, "I feel a slight vibration in the mountain. The last time I felt a vibration like this was just before a volcanic eruption. So, you know, let's not worry about that after this. It's probably nothing."

The path up looks a bit difficult for horses to traverse, so Old Man Fish asks his horse (who is a very, very special horse, of course) to watch over all the other horses until the characters return. Hemp and

Podrick lead the group's two mules up the path, because they anticipate finding valuable items that are too weighty for a person to carry back down.

The Defeated Monks of Aphiel

Mount Tyche is a remarkable mountain with a peak 6800' above sea level and a truly unreal aspect ratio. There is a spiral path that winds around it and makes ascent less than impossible. The characters start their climb and very rapidly ascend above the tree line. Shortly after that, the group encounters a group of robed figures staggering down the path. Their robes are singed, and they are not moving quickly. Hemp quickly establishes that they are monks of Aphiel, and that they were forced to flee the temple after it was attacked by dragons. They ask for healing because one of their number has a broken arm. Old Man Fish uses his powers to help the wounded monk.

Hemp asks if they can raise their hoods and show their faces. The lead monk explains that is forbidden, they have taken an oath to hide their faces. Hemp winks, "Yes, because of the sharpened teeth, I know!"

They go on to explain that the temple was attacked by dragons that might have come up out of the volcanic caldera. There are stories that Aphiel trapped a dragon down in the lava aeons ago. When asked about interfering magicians, the monks indicate that they have seen no such thing.

Hemp is unimpressed by the monk's defeatism. He tries to remind them that they serve the God of Victory, a detail that the monks prefer to forget. He also points out that the characters' horses are trained to fight and embody the precepts of Aphiel far better than the monks do – so if they try to mess with the horses they are likely to regret that choice. Both Hemp and *Ned Wimbley* give them some of their provisions. Ned also convinces a monk to accept a "healing potion" in a silver flask. He is disappointed when Old Man Fish takes the potion back and admonishes him to give up on trying to turn people into tentacle monsters.

Gallfred points out, "Hey, did you see a whole flock of dead birds fall burning onto the trail up ahead? I'm sure it's nothing."

What Burned These Birds?

Old Man Fish eventually listens to Gallfred, after he remembers that Gallfred is even standing there. He leads the group up to see the dead birds. Old Man Fish tells the others that the birds are [alpine choughs](#). He insists that these are birds that are born to be eaten and gathers up a half-dozen of them.

Gallfred mentions, "They look like crows. I thought crows were kind of oily and aren't really edible?"

Old Man Fish answers, "You realize that might be true for la-de-da folks like guild beggars, but the rest of us will [eat a lot of things](#). It's a rough world out there, and sometimes that world requires you to sauteed a crow, finish it on a grill, and serve it with diced tomatoes, oregano, and a balsamic vinegar."

Winged Devils on the Attack



The characters continue up the mountain. They feel an unholy presence, then look up to see a group of diminutive obsidian creatures on an overhead ledge. The creatures grin menacingly, then launch themselves to the attack upon leathery wings.

Ned Wimbley (because he knows these things) calls out, “Devilkin!” He casts *magic missile* and shoots three of them down. Reasoning that he might have drawn aggro, he follows up with *magic shield*.

The devilkin swoop down upon the characters. They don’t attack – instead, they try to steal magical items. *Podrick* pins one to the ground with *ulftheonar’s wolf spear*. One of them grabs *shadeslayer* from Gallfred and flies off. Another steals Podrick’s magical lute.

Hemp the Weaver (who appears to be invisible to the devilkin) takes a shot at the one who stole *shadeslayer*. The creature drops the sword. Gallfred reclaims his blade and hides among the rocks.

Ned shoots down the lute-carrying devilkin to death with another *magic missile*. One of the two survivors perishes as Podrick stabs it through, long before it was able to grab anything out of Old Man Fish's pack. The last flies away. Old Man Fish is able to wing it. It hides among the rocks far above, out of sight.

Old Man Fish proposes building a town and waiting here until the devilkin shows up and can be slain. Hemp has a better proposal: set up a bear trap, baited with a sparkly piece of quartz. Old Man Fish agrees this is a better answer and sets up a really excellent trap.

Ned Wimbley summons a *giant bee* and sends it up the mountain with instructions to bring back anything shiny, and to kill any imps it finds. It bring back:

- 21 gold pieces
- 35 silver pieces
- A silver dagger inscribed with the name "Lady Blackbird"

Ned examines the dagger. He finds that the base of the pommel is a button. He presses the button. This causes the blade to glow like a torch. Gallfred (whom Ned refers to as "the weird thief") claims the dagger. Why does he want it? That's hardly far – he's avaricious and he wants everything. But in this case, even though he can vanish into darkness he can't actually *see* in darkness.

The Path Is Collapsed

The path ahead of the characters is collapsed, and the only way forward is over a thin ice bridge. The wind howls viciously. Gallfred climbs along the mountainside above the ice bridge, using the *useful dagger* (which for some reason is back in Old Man Fish's possession), along with a rope. Halfway across, a pair robed figures emerge and start casting spells. Gallfred considers this to be a very unfortunate development.

Podrick nocks and arrow and sends it downrange at the monks. They take cover, but they hardly need to: Podrick slips on perilous ice and falls. Ned attempts to cast a *magic missile*. His cast doesn't go well. Even worse, one of the monks counterspells him and hits *him* with a *magic missile* that inflicts a single point of damage.

Gallfred winces as a *flaming orb* cracks across the ice near him. He loses his grip upon the ice and falls into the abyss. Fortunately, he has a safety rope. The other end is secured to a mule, and this saves him from a fatal fall. Though the mule is pretty surprised by the sudden jerk on the rope.

Old Man Fish answers by shooting one with an arrow. This has an appropriately dramatic effect, complete with a lot of yelling and screaming from the monk.

Hemp sends another badly aimed arrow at a monk. The monk hides among the rocks and largely ignores him. The other monk casts a *magic missile* at Ned Wimbley, who promptly counterspells him. The monk's spell fizzles while Ned stands defended by a strong *magic shield*.

The second monk decides to send a *magic missile* at the mule currently preventing Gallfred from falling to his death. Unfortunately (for him) he fumbles his cast. Meanwhile, Gallfred gets a grip on the mountainside again.

Podrick manages to get a solid crossbow hit on one monk, but a second before the bolt would kill the man he vanishes in an orange flash of light reminiscent of the orange flash of light that brought a demon down upon the characters yesterday.

Ned Wimbley remembers that he has a summoned killer bee. He sends it at the remaining monk, who is none too pleased by this development. Hemp follows with a shot from the *blazefire bow*. As before, the monk vanishes in a flash of orange light just before the arrow can kill him. The characters start to recognize that this is a manifestation of the time manipulations of Gilpkerio.

Gallfred finally makes it to the other side and affixes the rope to a solid object. The others (and the mules) make it across one at a time.

Komodo Dragon Man Time

A fit further along the path, the characters pass a sign with “TURN BACK NOW” written upon it in the common tongue. They ignore this request.

Lanky brutes covered with scales lope across the path ahead. They seem to be some kind of lizard men, perhaps Komodo dragon men. A pair of ghostly red eyes appears in the mists beyond and intones, “Kill!” Ned Wimbley immediately thinks of Arlo Guthrie.

The Komodo men do not think of Arlo Guthrie. Five of them fly into a rage, tearing up chunks of ice and stone and advancing with menacing intent. Podrick meets them square on, charging them at speed. Ned Wimbley casts a very weak *enlarge* upon Old Man Fish, giving him enough size to reach the upper shelf in the pantry but not enough to really affect his fighting abilities. Ned tries again, and Old Man Fish grows substantially larger – enough to actually give him some real bonuses in melee.

Podrick reaches the Komodo men and promptly takes a hit right on the helm, breaking it and leaving him momentarily deafened. Hemp manages to bloody one of the advancing Komodo men.

Two Komodo men start flinging rocks at the distant characters while three more try to club Podrick into the ground. One of them hits his unprotected head leaving him deafened and (briefly) stunned. Hemp manages to shoot the (un)lucky Komodo man again, leaving him desperately injured.

Old Man Fish moves up to support Podrick. This doesn’t stop the Komodo men, one of them clobbers Podrick again as if Old Man Fish weren’t even there.

Ned Wimbley spots Gallfred carefully sneaking along the cliff face, otherwise unnoticed. He casts *enlarge* and makes the shocked thief 10% larger, and 10% more detectable. Gallfred starts to understand the complaints the others have sometimes uttered about out-of-control magicians.

Hemp sees that one Komodo man is hanging back and throwing rocks. He sets the creature on fire with the *blazefire bow*.

Podrick is hard-pressed by three Komodo men. He jabs with *Ulftheonar's wolf-spear*, but they are so close in that he can't get a good hit on them.

Hemp moves right in close, having realized that the Komodo men cannot see him. He shoots one in the head in an incredible blow-through attack that kills two of them with a single arrow. Amazing!

Gallfred suddenly appears from the cliffside and garrotes a Komodo man with a poisoned garrote. The lizard man gasps bloodily, loses an ear (somehow), and is critically slowed by *centipede oil* – he loses 8 AGI and his AC is reduced by 4. Podrick follows up and cuts the lizard man down, because he became a lot easier to hit. He flings the dead Komodo man into the adjacent fighter, staggering and disorienting him.

Hemp moves around to invisibly strike both remaining Komodo men with a single arrow, wounding both of them. Sadly, this is when his magical helm fails him. It cracks as its magic fades away. But all is not bad: Gallfred stabs the first Komodo man through the lungs, killing him instantly.

Old Man Fish refrains from killing the last Komodo man in favor of healing Podrick. He returns a lot of hit points, but Podrick is still deafened. So unfortunate. But that doesn't stop Podrick from stabbing the Komodo man to death.

Gallfred is disappointed by how little time it takes to strip-search a Komodo man. For one, they weren't wearing any clothing. For another, they have absolutely nothing of value. Except that they do have poison glands that he can harvest – which he thinks about doing until he notices that Podrick actually got poisoned by a Komodo man bite. The stuff takes a minute to work, and only costs him 1d2 AGI. Gallfred's harsh gaze inflicts more damage than that. He gives up on harvesting Komodo man poison. Old Man Fish quietly heals the poison.

Hemp spots a small shrine to Aphiel along the path. He severs a Komodo man's head and places it upon the shrine as an offering. Old Man Fish has tried Tjap-tar's patience with his healing efforts recently, so he sets up a little shrine to his patron and offers some blood and a Komodo man head. This reduces his fumble range, though the impact of disfavor he recently incurred is still there.

The Final Stair

As the characters move further up the mountain they scent the unpleasant aromas of dead fish and sewage. Freezing winds blast from the Northeast, accompanied by a high-pitched whistling sound. The last step of the ascent is twenty-two steps carved with mysterious runes. At the top is the gate to the actual Temple Grounds.

Gallfred tries to read the runes. He thinks they relate to numerology and asks Hemp what numbers are important to Aphiel. Hemp suggests, "Seven is bad. I think two and three are both good." Beyond that,

he has no idea. Gallfred guesses that the runes might be magical and asks Ned to come up and take a shot at them.

Ned Wimbley thinks that the temple above might not be entirely in this universe – so ascending the stairs must be done properly to be able to actually reach the temple. He advises Hemp to skip steps 7, 14, and 21.

Hemp tries the third step. The runes glow with purple light, the air grows warmer, and the winds diminish. He decides to step by threes, but skipping step 21 (3x7). He makes it to step 6, which also glows. Then he steps to step 8 and all of the glowing runes immediately go dark. He finds himself back in the mundane world.

Ned casts *enlarge* and makes Hemp 50% larger, which makes stepping on the proper steps a lot easier. He finds that he can make it to the top by stepping on steps 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, and 22 (to avoid step 21). Once he reaches the top, all the steps light up and stay that way for 5 minutes. Everyone moves up as quickly as they can.

The Temple Grounds

The top of the step is clearly in another place. The sky is dark and dotted with stars. The temple is surrounded by a strong wall. And the door is a horror, surfaced with flayed human skin. The place that would be a keyhole is an open mouth. Nobody wants to stick their hand into the mouth. Gallfred is willing to try picking the lock, as long as he doesn't need to put his fingers inside it. He is able to make progress. And as soon as Gallfred starts to make progress the undead figures embedded into it animate and try to grab and oppose him. Podrick starts chopping at the undead limbs with the goal of keeping them away from Gallfred. This isn't totally successful – the arms grab him. He continues trying to pick the lock even so. It starts kicking him, which is very painful.

Hemp decides that the gate isn't something of Aphiel, it is something created by the sorcerer Gliplerio. He shoots it, and it creaks open. The others pull Gallfred free of its grasp and enter the temple grounds.

The Temple grounds beyond are decorated with colorful tropical vegetation. The sounds of trickling water and tree frogs provide a peaceful background. The characters move down the path to a fountain shaped like a waterwheel that sends water trickling down its body. Hemp discovers that drinking from the fountain (once) restores 1d3 hit points and 1d3 LUCK.

The characters wander the temple grounds. They find a kitchen and an administrative building with a locked coffer. Gallfred ensures that the coffer is no longer locked. It contains:

- ~~300 gold pieces~~. Actually, only 275 gold pieces. Gallfred clinks slightly as he walks away.

The kitchen has significant food reserves, including a jam made from a strange tropical fruit, something called the "mango". Beyond the kitchen are two buildings that were once inhabited by all the monks that Gliplerio sacrificed to make the Corpse Gate. Gah. No wonder the surviving monks wanted to get

away from the compound. There were originally 27 monks. Five of them escaped – so Glipekero sacrificed 22 to make the gate.

The monks' quarters include simple clothing – but strangely none of the clothing looks like the robes either the “survivor” monks or the two apparent monks who threw *fire orbs* at the characters. The clothing and furnishings suggest that the monks lived fairly simple lives. Hemp and Old Man Fish are able to find some Aphiel prayer beads (Hemp takes a set), some journals (none of which include mention of being dismembered and sacrificed to make a Corpse Gate), and several prayer books and holy codexes. Hemp collects a couple of these as well.

Hemp walks around the temple path. He looks upon the lovely pond, and upon the lovely trees. He asks Aphiel for guidance on what to do with the meddling wizard. He hears nothing and assumes that silence means to follow the standard guidance of “kill the wizard and all his servants!”

Strangers Arrive

A flock of birds appears far above in a vortex. They swarm down into the courtyard and conceal an area. When they disperse, there is a collection of eight newcomers in strange clothing. They seem confused by their presence but tell a story of being summoned to kill a wizard. They're generally not that enthusiastic about marching against Glipekero when the characters seem to have the situation all under control.

Hemp advises them to go to the kitchen and make some dinner. The meth dealer *Maynard* investigates the outhouse and finds the pipe weed that was hidden there.

The Temple Gates

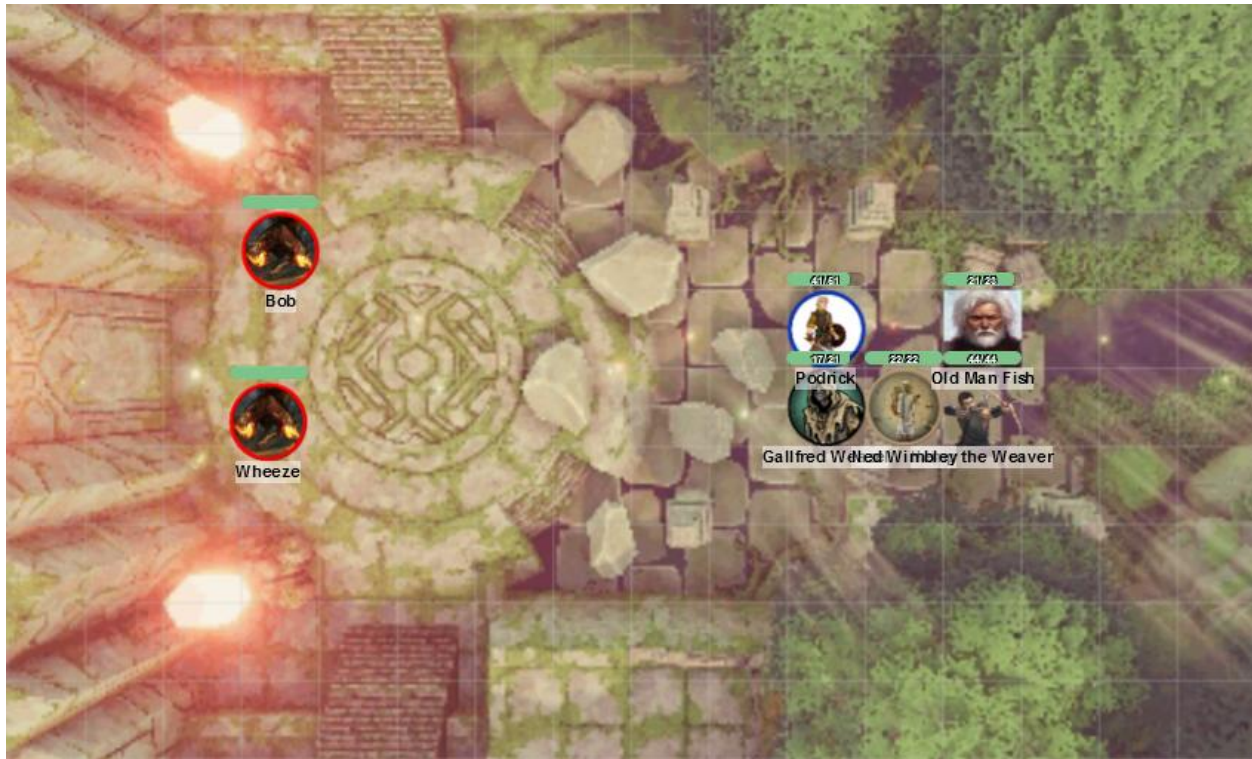
The characters approach the gates to the temple sanctum. As they approach, the great double doors swing open to allow two giant, heavily muscled two-headed dogs to rush out. Foul vapors drift from their flanks. The sanctum doors slam shut as soon as they are clear.

Gallfred vanishes into the nearby greenery. Old Man Fish does the same, but in a different area of vegetation. The two-headed dogs storm the remaining characters and engulf them in a smoky blast of warped time. Podrick ends up aging by two years. Hemp gets three years younger. Hemp responds by shooting *Wheeze* and setting him on fire.

Ned casts *enlarge* and makes Podrick 50% larger (+2 hit, +2 damage, +2 AC).

Gallfred emerges from hiding and garrotes Wheeze to death. Twice. Old Man Fish slides out from behind Bob and slashes the beast badly. Then Hemp makes a devastating strike upon one of Bob's heads, killing the dog instantly.

And then the characters enter the temple sanctum.



The Temple Sanctum

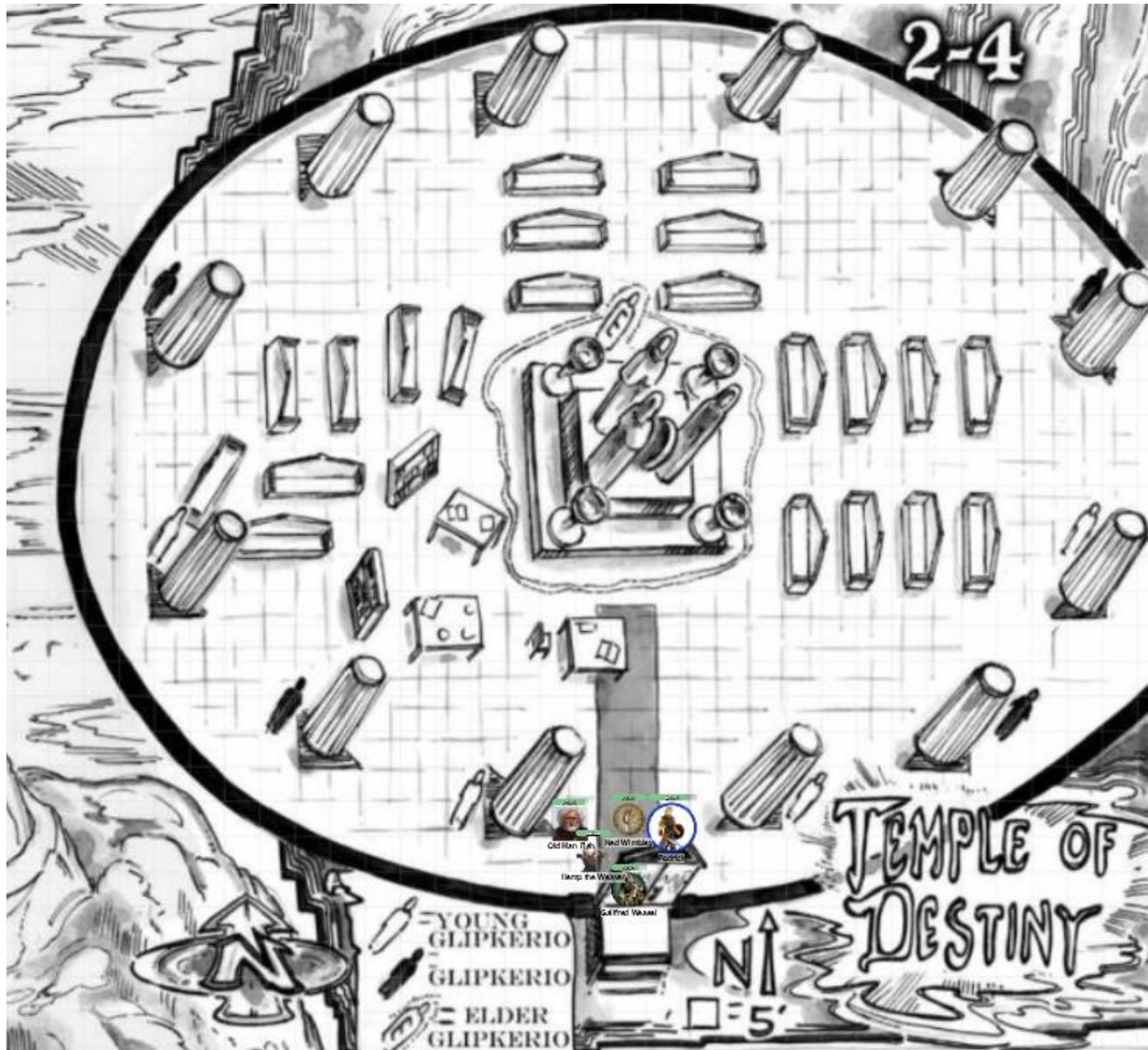
The characters enter the temple sanctum. The chamber is rounded, with white columns around the borders and a red carpet leading to the central altar. Statues of three aspects of Aphiel stand above the altar, looking down at the chamber. The entire altar is surrounded by a line of white powder, likely a binding. And several tables littered with books and papers suggest that the place has been repurposed from temple to lab.

As the characters examine the scene, a strong voice thunders out. “I know not what sorcery allowed you to reach this place, but you will not leave.” Cowled men step forward from behind the pillars around the circumference of the room. They remove their cowls to reveal that every single one of them is... Glipekero. Some are old, some are middle-aged, and some are elderly. It is very clear that he has been manipulating his own time stream in revolutionary (and dangerous) ways.

Hemp is intolerant to any attempt to bind Aphiel. He moves forward and breaks the white line. Old Man Fish invokes his *berserker's bearskin* and stabs one of the younger Glipekeros with the *useful dagger*. The wizard falls backward, strikes his arm on the floor and breaks it in a manner exactly the same as the “monk” the characters healed before. The screaming wizard vanishes in a flash of orange light, and another wizard appears on the other side of the chamber, completely healed. Podrick kills another one, only to see Glipekero vanish just before the blow strikes home and reappear on the other side of the temple.

The elder Glipekeros casts *mirror image*, but loses the spell. Hah!

Three of the middle-aged Glipperios cast *magic missile* and all three of them blow the casting. The characters are feeling pretty good about this.



Then the younger Glipperios cast a spell they don't have to roll for. They cast *harmful spell* on everyone, inflicting trivial injuries on half of the group.

In the center of the room, one of the statues of Aphiel animates and casts a *lightning bolt* at the elder Glipperio. Hemp follows up with a shot from the *blazefire bow*. He sees the elder Glipperio burst into flame, but then vanish and reappear elsewhere in perfect condition.

Old Man Fish is charged up like a wolverine on berserker drugs. He rushes a middle-aged Glipperio but damages his weapon in the process.

Ned Wimbley finds himself short of spells, so he invokes his patron *Palymbidis*. The tentacle-god answers in style, with a seven-tentacled monster that lashes out at five of the Glipperios. Four of them are (about to be) ripped apart by tentacles and reappear. The characters notice that when they reappear, they all look slightly more mutated than their predecessors were.

The elder Glipperio tries to cast *flaming hands* at Ned and fails horribly. His own hands ignite, but not so badly that he sends himself into a time loop. Hemp shoots him but misses. Ned stabs the elder with *pestis* and kills him. The replacement elder has fur and feline eyes.

Podrick cuts apart a young Glipperio. The magician vanishes and reappears – but the replacement is notably more hunchbacked, with glistening skin.

Gallfred sneaks up on a middle-aged Glipperio and garrotes him. A moment before Glipperio dies, he clutches his amulet and vanishes only to reappear. Gallfred thinks of a clever plan involving stealing amulets.

The elder Glipperio finally manages to hit Podrick with a *ray of enfeeblement*. Podrick visibly shrivels, losing 5 STR. The middle Glipperios lash out with *orbs of fire* while the younger ones annoy the characters with *harmful spells*.

Hemp shoots the latest elder Glipperio and cripples him.

Old Man Fish tackles a middle-aged Glipperio and tries to remove his medallion. He holds him in place.

Victory!

Podrick stabs at a young Glipperio and tries to stab his medallion. Unfortunately, his strike is too good and Glipperio vanishes first. He moves over to engage the elder Glipperio. This distracts the wizard enough that Gallfred is able to steal his amulet. He is immediately replaced in an orange flash by a massive cat-headed demon with a single tentacle arm. The creature lashes out at Gallfred and breaks the amulet into two pieces, then vanishes leaving Gallfred with the lower half of the amulet – to match the upper half the characters already have.

The statue of amulet speaks to the characters, thanking them for cleansing the Temple of Aphiel.

Beyond the broken time amulet (which could technically be fixed with *mending*), Glipperio left behind:

- *Glipperio's club*, a giant *coprolite club* made from an entire tree branch
- *Glipperio's tome*, a book containing two L2 spells: *ray of enfeeblement* and *mirror image*.

Coprolite Club +1

A foul bludgeon bestowed by Glipperio's demonic patron, Obitu-Que. The shaft is wrapped with studded black leather bindings to make it easier to grip. On a critical hit, the target makes a DC 20 Fort save or takes additional poison damage (1d6) in addition to normal effects of a critical hit.

Hemp the Weaver is able to dedicate himself to the gods of Chaos at the Temple. This changes his alignment and makes it much easier for him to activate the special powers of the *blazefire bow*. Podrick shakes his head as another soul falls to Chaos. Hemp is pleased that his new title as a 4th level Chaotic Fighter is Ravager.

Ned absolutely claims *Glipkerio's tome*. Nobody really wants the *coprolite club*.

Aphiel's Tenets of Faith

- **Embrace the Fury:** Unleash your inner fire and channel it into battle.
- **Crush the Tyrants:** Overthrow oppressive rulers and oppressive systems.
- **Unyielding Resolve:** Stand firm in the face of adversity, never faltering.
- **Embody Courage:** Fearlessly charge into battle, inspiring others with your bravery.
- **Triumph through Sacrifice:** Give everything for victory, even at personal cost.

Triumph's Dawn Resolutions

The custom upon Triumph's Dawn is to make resolutions for the coming year.

Who	Resolutions
Old Man Fish	Make more sacrifices to Tjap-tar, but no children
Gallfred	Find another echo of Cheret the Lost, and make good friends with the cider-making monks in Fythorp
Hemp	Topple the evil empire of the Wizard King
Podrick	Cleanse the <i>helm of Chistu</i> and restore the waning order in the world.
Ned	Topple the Wizard King. His dagger tells him to.

Ned reminds Hemp that he has a magical dagger that wants to overthrow all kingdoms and empires, one by one.

The End of the Session

Each character gains 9 xp. Old Man Fish goes up to 4th level. Ned Wimbley needs another 10 xp to level up.