

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 is unsure if his voice can be heard. *Bruce* assures him that while that might be true in the immediate, practical sense, in a much more meaningful societal level he has no voice. Even if he must scream. *Patrick* cannot hear either of them due to the screaming. Oh, wait, that's just in his head.

By the time *Paul* and *Tim* call in, *Bruce* is talking about "white sheets", which just means how TI provides annual compensation increases but which absolutely sounds like some kind of deeply objectionable supremacist gang. "We don't know why they hate, but they hate a *lot* of people."

Ernest shows up a bit later. He admits that while he might have found faith and a sense of purpose, but not much ketamine.

A Whole Village of Elder Kith

The characters are in a time-loop experience in which the Kingspire is attacked every day by protohumans. It's not a pure time-loop, in that some of the participants are aware of their situation and have some power to change events from loop to loop, but the King of the Elder Kith has indicated that the only way to get out of the time-loop is for the characters to kill his brother. The characters are skeptical about this, especially since the Vizier seems to have his own plans and may be more central to the problem than either the King or his brother (whom the characters haven't met yet).

But now, the characters are down at one end of a crumbling bridge leading to a cyclopean stalagmite with what looks like a small, ancient, ruined village surrounded by a wooden palisade on its top. There is a flanking tower, and a group of friendly Elder Kith natives have emerged upon the top of the tower. They appear to be eager to welcome the characters with their javelins. Interestingly, the javelin-throwers are not the elegant, tall specimens of Elder Kith the characters met up in the castle: they are gray-skinned and gaunt, moving with preternatural quickness.

Ned Wimbley calls out, "You want to parley before violence?"

A voice calls back from behind the village wall, "Why?"

Old Man Fish suggests, "Because we come from the outside! We bring news, and hope!"

Ned adds, “And we want to break the time loop? And we want to be friends! And we need a magic sword to kill the elf king!”

“You need many things. What do you offer?”

“What do you want?”

“We want nothing. Go back to your surface world.”

Unseen, *Gallfred Weasel* sneaks across the bridge.

Ned Wimbley decides that talking is getting nowhere, so he uses his magic dagger *pestis* to cast *choking cloud* on the top of the tower. He learns that devolved Elder Kith are quite vulnerable to poisonous clouds.

Gallfred finds that climbing over the palisade is not difficult, but it is slow (2 rounds). He crosses over the palisade and sneaks up behind the shaman.

Podrick also chooses violence. He rushes the gate and attempts to force it with brute strength. The gate is better built than that and fails to move. The situation changes when Ned casts *enlarge* on Old Man Fish and triples his size. He’s not quite big enough to be able to just step over the palisade, but he’s pretty close to it. He is big enough to pick Podrick up like a housecat and place him on the other side. He finds himself facing a half-dozen *exiled knights* armed with bronze long swords and (probably) armored in crude armor. Behind them, a *devolved kith shaman* is eager to cast hostile spells. And they swarm Podrick. One knight clambers up the inside of the palisade like a spider monkey. He pushes his head over the edge and is immediately shot by *Hemp the Weaver*.

Podrick discovers that the shaman has magically accelerated his followers – they unleash a hurricane of sword strikes against him. He takes a couple of hits but survives pretty well.

The shaman chants. A *ray of filth* springs from her outstretched finger and strikes poor Podrick. He is hurt both from the perspective of his pride and more important from his unpoisoned status.

Ned Wimbley’s two giant vipers slither right over the palisade and execute two exiled knights.

Old Man Fish reaches over the palisade and pulls the bar on the gate away. He opens the gate, giving Hemp a clear shot at another exiled knight. The knight falls with Hemp’s arrow through his organs. Another collapses, his leg severed by Podrick’s spear. Podrick is crazy lethal with his spear.

Three exiled spears emerge from hiding to fling poisoned javelins at Old Man Fish. One spear bites deep, forcing the gigantic ranger to the ground. Fortunately, his resistance to poison is exemplary and he casts off all ill effects from it.

Gallfred Weasel comes from nowhere to try and garrote the shaman, an attempt that goes disastrously wrong. She evades his strangling cord, leaving him exposed and visible. Hemp does what he can to help:

he shoots the shaman in the mouth. The shaman is deeply offended and inflicts *necrotic worms* upon the unfortunate thief. Gallfred chokes and spits up worm-infested blood. He is in poor shape.

Ned's snakes follow one unfortunate exiled spear into a building. The man dies thrashing. For his part, Ned casts *mirror image* upon Podrick, creating a half-dozen images to confuse the situation.

At this point, the situation turns badly against the exiled warriors. Ned's giant vipers and Hemp's arrows bring an end to the shaman. Old Man Fish tramples through a hut in search of a surviving exiled spear. He discovers a tripwire trap and avoids it (mostly) while collapsing the hut but doesn't let that stop him from killing the exile inside. Podrick steps into another hut, cuts down the spearman inside, and discovers that the place contains a poison manufactory. Gallfred is there in a trice, collecting poison. He has no interest in the fact that there are still two surviving exiled spears flinging javelins at the group.

Hemp sees one spear vanish into a tall building. He covers the place with his bow, waiting for the exile to show himself. After a moment, the fighter appears, and Hemp shoots him down with a burning arrow. Ned is less discriminating: he commands one of his snakes to enter another building (triggering a trap that the snake avoids). It finds the exiled spear and ends him.

The characters quickly search the (surviving) huts in the village. They find plenty of arms caches, mostly consisting of poisoned javelins. Gallfred is able to recover 10 doses of *fermented mushroom toxin*.

The others are able to see that there is a ruined great hall with a roof made from animal hides in the center of the village, down a series of stairs. Podrick heads down the stairs, exploring.

The Great Hall

The interior is ruined and cavernous. It is clear that the exiles, with no available access to metal, have been using an altar furnace as a forge to recycle their old metal objects. It becomes much clearer that the exiles are not caught in the same time loop as the castle above. Podrick is able to collect:

- 15 gp worth of gold trinkets and scraps

Beyond that, the exiles had piles of skins and furs (mostly stitched together from cave rat hides) and low-value furnishings. The skins of the roof are *also* made from cave rat skins: the exiles have been down here for a long time.

Hemp the Weaver finds that the shaman carried a staff. It is nicely lacquered and polished and looks very old. He is disappointed to find that it doesn't obviously have magical properties. Even Ned thinks it's nice, but not magical.

Fermented Mushroom Toxin

The exiles use a poison made of fermented mushrooms that does 1d5 damage plus paralyzation and 1d3 damage per round for 1d5 rounds (DC 12 Fort save to avoid paralysis; DC 12 Fort save to avoid secondary damage). If the Will save fails, the pain caused by the poison immobilizes the victim until the additional damage has run its course.

Ned finds that there is a significant hole in the floor of the hall. It goes directly down to the mushroom forest hundreds of feet below and represents an excellent opportunity to have a fatal fall. He backs off.

Based upon both the shaman's powers and the carvings at the entrance to the cave that the exiles might have followed some kind of worm deity. The stones out in the castle included carvings showing the skeletal king's throne supported upon the back of a two-headed worm.

Gallfred adds, "Yes! And he has treasure hidden inside his throne!"

The Basket Lift

The characters find a narrow stairway off to the east of the hall. At the end there is a crude basket lift, with the basket carved from the cap of a giant mushroom. It looks like the lift provides access to the cavern floor and the mushroom forest below.

Gallfred examines the winch and counterweights. He loudly tells the others that the system is made all wrong, that it will surely fail, and it needs to be completely disassembled and rebuilt. He refuses to be quiet on this, but nobody else pays him any heed. He refuses to get into the basket, but he is willing to just jump after Ned casts *feather fall* upon him (also, on himself, and on the snakes).

If the characters are to reach the bottom, someone must be at the top to operate the winch. Or Gallfred can climb back up again and operate the winch. More problematic, someone needs to stay at the top to operate the winch on the way down. The characters finesse this problem, especially given that Ned and Gallfred have already leaped into the darkness.

Welcome to the Mushroom Forest

The characters reach the bottom. The ground is mostly deep humus with huge mushrooms growing like trees. Someone has placed stones to make a path. Gallfred hides at the edge of the path and creeps along it... which would make more sense except that Podrick just walks down the path in full view. He finds that there is a stairway upwards, ending in a small side cavern.

Ned isn't interested in portals. He is interested in eating mushrooms. He finds one that is poisonous (1d20 damage and -2 to Fortitude saves for a week). Gallfred collects a bag of mushroom scrapings to make into poison later on.

Podrick ignores both Ned and Gallfred. He goes up the stairs and enters the smaller cave. He finds a body upon a carved throne. The body is skeletal, clad in mithril armor and bearing a black blade. Mold and fungus covers it all. Podrick touches the body and it collapses into a slithering pile of rot. Podrick carefully extracts the skeleton's armor from the fungus. He collects:

- A suit of mithril plate armor (Mithril armor weighs slightly less than iron or steel armor of the same type and can be worn by the elf without the pain normally associated with metal armors.)

He calls back, "Hey Ned! Get your butt up here!"

"I'm busy vomiting!"

"Walk it off, then come here to study the runesword!"

Ned determines that the sword is both highly magical and highly chaos attuned. He is pretty sure it exists only to bring death and destruction. He has heard legends of the *Winter Blade* and the *Tirfing*, a blade that exists only to cause ruin to those who carry it. He picks up the sword. He immediately hears its voice in his head: "To achieve true peace for all, sacrifices must be made!" He sees a vision of himself as a benign tyrant, all enemies vanquished and all power in his hands.

Ned calls out, "Hey, Gallfred! I need a favor."

"What?"

"I need you to come over here and expose your neck."

"Not a freaking chance."

Ned further suspects that it is the power of the blade that is keeping the cavern from being trapped in the timeloop – which implies that bringing it back to the castle might end the timeloop there.

Run! It's a Devourer Worm!

Outside, Hemp the Weaver feels something moving underneath the deep organic soil. He sees the mushroom stalks moving, as if a creature approaches from beneath the ground. He runs for the basket, yelling, "Reel me up!"

There is nobody up above at the hall to do this. Hemp is yelling to no purpose. But he is not to be dissuaded: he starts climbing up the basket lift rope. He has a long way to go: the village at the top of the stalagmite is hundreds of feet above.

Gallfred hides and moves to the base of the stalagmite. He starts climbing, but in his eagerness loses his grasp and falls. Oops!

Podrick and Old Man Fish run for the bucket. Ned sends his snakes out into the loam and instructs them to thump their tails against the loam as if they were thumpers in *Dune*. He joins the others in the basket and casts an amazing *invisible companion* spell. He ends up with a *permanent* companion from some strange corner of the universe. It has abilities well beyond what is necessary to operate a winch and will follow him until it dies of old age (in decades). Unfortunately, the spell takes 10 minutes to cast – so he needs the others to keep the worm at bay until it arrives.

The devouring worm arrives. It is massive. It eats a giant viper in a single gulp.

The Tirfing

One of the four blades forged for the Courts of the Elder Kith, the Runeblade exists only to bring death and destruction. Known in legend as the Winter Blade, and the Tirfing, the blade brings ruin to any that dare to wield it in violence.

Gallfred flings his bag of poisonous mushroom scrapings next to the other decoy snake and hides.

The devourer worm tears the second giant viper in half. It consumes both snake, and bag of poisonous mushroom scrapings. It doesn't appear to be significantly slowed by the poison.

Hemp and Podrick both climb up the rope. Once he has some elevation, Hemp flings a grappling hook over to the stalagmite. He hopes to laterally drag the basket over and up enough to raise it out of the worm's grasp.

Podrick has a simpler plan: he ties himself off and attempts to bodily haul the basket out of danger.

Ned is deeply occupied in spellcasting. He sends his (invisible, flying) familiar off as a decoy. He has the familiar scream as loudly as it can. The worm swallows it in one. Ned keels over in immense pain and suffers tremendous (permanent) damage – but doesn't lose his spell.

After that, the others are able to haul

Ned up far enough that he's out of immediate danger. They wait until his *invisible servant* arrives and pulls them all back up to the top of the stalagmite. Ned introduces it to the others as *Luiginoth* and points out that it has STR 22.

Ned continues to vomit black blood and worms. Losing a familiar takes a lot out of a body.

The Castle Jailer – Elder Kith About Town

The characters camp for the evening in the ruined village. They intend to wait until the timeloop resets, because that gives them a chance to save the King's daughter – whom the Vizier will trap inside the iron maiden early in the day.

Rested and ready, the characters head back into the castle and the timeloop. They expect that the *Runeblade* will immediately disrupt the timeloop effect.

Ned's Amazing Invisible Servant

The caster reaches out into the infinite cosmos to call forth the invisible servant most useful to his purposes. This companion appears and pledges permanent service until it is dismissed, killed, or dies of old age (in 2d20+60 years = 89 years). The companion moves at 150' and can fly. It is not man-shaped, and although its exact form is difficult to discern, it makes its capabilities known at the time most useful to the caster. As long as the companion is present, the caster can make a Luck check once per week in a dire situation, and on a success it is revealed that the invisible companion has some heretofore unknown ability that is helpful in that situation (judge's discretion). For example, the companion may be able to pick locks, or create fresh water, or heal wounds. The companion is considered to have ability scores of 22 and can carry as much weight as a large draft horse. It can communicate simple information verbally in the Common tongue. There is a 75% chance that it has some knowledge that is useful to the caster (whether from prior tasks or something from its native plane), provided he asks the right questions. It has AC 23, 11d8 hp, and all attacks against it have a 50% chance of missing due to its invisibility. It can wield weapons at a +9 attack bonus, and its attacks are considered magical.

It takes the characters hours to climb up the stairs. When they reach the top, they find that the Vizier has collapsed the tunnel leading to the fomorian's torture chamber and the rest of the castle. They take the *other* tunnel, with Gallfred sneaking along in the lead. He finds a spy chamber – there is a crude table made from crates in the center of the room, and evidence that people were (at one time) playing dice and drinking wine here. There are also gold and silver coins scattered on the floor.

Gallfred knows his priorities. He gathers up the coin. There is a total of 5 gp and 19 sp. Gallfred keeps 4 gp and 4 sp for himself, passing 1 gp and 15 sp to the group treasury. Hemp rewards him for his honesty by passing out 5 gp to each character.

Hemp the Weaver sniffs the wine. It smells very strong. He needs some courage, so he drinks a bit and finds that it really is very strong wine. He takes along two clay jugs of strong wine – one for him, and one for party treasure.

There's no obvious pathway out of the room, but there is a secret door. Gallfred finds it, once he's done stuffing coins into his pockets. He also finds eyeholes to the room beyond, which he uses. He sees a long, narrow cot in a room lit by a hot brazier of coals. He also sees a chair decorated with hundreds of rodent skulls, attached in a strange pattern. It is obviously the fomorian's bedchamber – but that is wrong. It is actually the *jailer's bedchamber*, and he isn't a fomorian.

Gallfred sneaks into the chamber, then around the corner. He finds a large chamber, cold with moisture and stinking of mold. Clean-picked skeletons line the corners. Manacles hang from the walls. And at the center a tall, manic-looking Elder Kith dressed in furs and rags, and surrounded by a swarm of (apparently) pet rats. He sneaks back to warn the others. "His expression says he's not in a negotiating mood."

Hemp the Weaver sneaks around and shoots the jailer right through the leg, severing tendons and reducing his movement. Then Ned Wimbley fills the jailer's chambers with a *noxious cloud*. This doesn't slow the jailer down, but it does slow down most of the rats. Old Man Fish shoots a rat.

Then the rats swarm out of the room, because they don't want to be in a poison cloud. There are swarms of little rats that wash over everyone. Ned sustains a nasty rat bite but is grateful that he doesn't seem to be sickened. And then the giant rats arrive. They bite a lot harder. It's very painful. Finally, the jailer marches out. He is thoroughly maddened. He calls out, "I don't know where you came from!" He rubs his hands together and licks his lips. "If you can forgive my armies, it has been so long since I had visitors. We could parlay!"

Hemp apologizes, "I'm sorry, I was told you weren't going to parlay."

Podrick evaluates the situation and decides the jailer is really trustworthy. "Sure, we'll talk! Call off your rats!"

The jailer makes a strange squeaking noise and the rats back off. Gallfred immediately hides behind Old Man Fish. The jailer tells the characters to clear the way to his throne. He seats himself upon the chair

decorated with rat skulls, adorning himself with a cloak of rat skins as he does. He is (by his own admission) the King – giving little credence to the words of the Kith upstairs.

Hemp asks the jailer a number of questions about the behavior of the fomorian torturer and whether the King's daughter deserves to be imprisoned. The answers are less than helpful. It's pretty clear that the jailer didn't know about the secret door to the stairways below, and that he thinks Prince Rynth and his exiles went down into the basements hundreds of years ago.

However, because Old Man Fish killed *Dorotea*, he must be punished. But the punishment will be a simple one: a single blow from the jailer's (spiked) club. The jailer assures him it isn't much of a punishment, because *Dorotea* will be better when the time loop cycles in 12 hours.

Old Man Fish declines the honor.

The jailer instead accepts an offer of peace. Several of the characters swear oaths to not harm his people (the rats). But that doesn't stop him from demanding satisfaction for *Dorotea*. He also wants all of Old Man Fish's food and water to feed his people. Old Man Fish turns over his rations and watches as the jailer distributes it to the rats.

The characters head out into the jail. They find two padlocked cells, one of which probably has a secret door in the back. Gallfred unlocks one of them, then Hemp finds the secret door at the back.

Confronting the Fomorian, Again

The characters make their way up to the secret door leading into the fomorian's torture chamber. Gallfred goes first, silently unlocks the secret door, and then steps aside to let literally everyone else go first. Podrick enters the torture chamber first, with *ulftheonar's wolf-spear* brandished,

Things start to go wrong when the fomorian realizes what is happening and avoids the wolf-spear. Hemp is able to sink an arrow into the creature, knocking his spiked mace away. And Ned sends his *invisible servant* in to club the fomorian with his own magical club. The fomorian reels. Then Ned hits the fomorian with a barrage of *magic missiles* and kills him instantly.

Sadly, the characters find out that the King's daughter is already stuck in the iron maiden. All they can do is grant her a final death – the presence of the *Runeblade* means that she will not reincarnate again.

Run! There Are Archers!

The characters walk out of a side door in the torture chamber, onto an external stairway that leads up along the periphery of the castle. The cacophony of warfare echoes around the characters: the primitive hordes are once again making a push into the courtyard.

Ned Wimbley realizes that he might get shot at. He casts *magic shield* on himself. The others aren't so well-protected, they just run. Old Man Fish and Podrick are both hit multiple times on their journey up the stairway.

The characters were able to take the fomorian's key, so entering the storeroom at the top of the stairs is an easy matter. They find the place piled with bundles and crates, with little real organization.

Next Steps

The characters suspect that the courtyard outside might be overrun by primitive warriors. They discuss their plans. The consensus is to find the king as quickly as they can, potentially killing the Vizier on the way if they can manage it. The hope is to get the timeloop to end with a victory for the King's people, leaving a present-day Elder Kith kingdom at Kingspire.

The End of the Session

Each character gains 8 xp. Ned gains +1 LUCK for carrying a terrible Chaos artifact.