

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

Paul calls in just in time to hear *Bruce* offer an impromptu historical lecture upon hill forts and the people who study them. Did you know that there is an English hill fort site called Danebury that was inhabited for hundreds of years? Now *Paul* does, and he cannot free himself of that knowledge. *Chris* and *Patrick* call in a moment too late – too bad for them! But *Patrick* appreciates hearing about *Paul*'s positive experience seeing the movie *Electric State*. He is bemused by the fact that it has seen so many bad reviews. *Chris* only wants to get a snack and a drink.

By the time *Ernest* rolls in, *Bruce* and *Chris* are lost in a discussion of hand-to-hand fighting styles in a world where everyone is blind. No particular reason, you know.

Farewell to Kingspire

The characters spent the 4th of Umbro in Kingspire, healing up and preparing for the next quest on their menu. One issue: they do not currently possess a boat. Another problem: they don't know a lot about the island of Lone Ait. *Hemp the Weaver* notes that much of the population of Kingspire was recently murdered by Elder Kith cultists, which suggests that there should be some boats available. He expresses an intent to just take what he wants. *Old Man Fish* prefers to offer someone a quantity of gold to someone who actually knows how to sail a boat, and who also owns a boat. He thinks that this should be possible for a remarkably low price.

Buying a 6-person sailboat normally costs 100 gp. *Old Man Fish* finds *Jorran "One-Eye" Vex*, a grizzled fellow who owns a modest boat and who is one of the few Kingspire residents to sail out into the bay. *Jorran* is willing to accept a gold chain (worth 50 gp) to charter his boat out to Lone Ait.

Jorran's boat is the *Black Gull* – a battered but reliable single-mast sloop, small enough to navigate the treacherous waters around the Lone Ait. The boat has seen better days, with patched sails and barnacle-ridden hull, but *Jorran* swears it's the fastest in Kingspire.

Hemp the Weaver takes this opportunity to split up the party treasure. He hands 61 gp and 5 sp to each character. Note that he keeps an electrum choker as his share – he intends to give it as a gift to *Morgan*.

The characters have quite an entourage, some nine people and seven horses plus a cart and two mules. They make arrangements for everyone to stay in Kingspire while they're away to Lone Ait.



Jorran Has His Limits

For all that Jorran One-Eye seems to be a worldly man of the oceans with a profound sense of derring-do, his major motivation is gold and he has no interest actually setting foot upon Lone Ait. He warns that he lost three old companions to that island – the men never came back from the Sanctum of the Sea Wizard. He carefully avoids describing his old friends as “pirates”, but that’s what the characters conclude of them – *Verrick the Red*, a solid fighter armed with a falchion, *Syla Moraine* (a female sorceress in robes with a wavy dagger), and *Aelric Duskwind* (an elvish thief). All of them engaged in totally upright business.

Hemp assures him that he can leave the boat off the coast of the island as long as he remains near enough fetch the characters back when they return triumphant.

The Sea Wizard

A half-century ago, the wizard *Shadankin* sought to gain the powers of the seas by developing friendships with various of the ocean powers. He built an alliance with the Ruen Queen *Cealheewalool*,

the sovereign of a people who long ago retreated under the waves and learned to live underwater. There are many strange tales of the physical changes the Ruen people embraced to help in their new environment. But unknown to all, Queen Cealheewalool contacted terrible powers that warped her mind and body, turning her into nothing more than a horrific shell. Her people appealed to Shadankin to stop her, but he was unable or unwilling to slay her. Instead, he trapped her in his deepest vaults and sailed beyond the horizon, searching for a cure for her condition.

Gallfred Weasel has no interest in the fate of poor Queen Cealheewalool. He wants to curry favor with the *Order of Vilom*. And they want the *Horn of Tudines*, a coiled trumpet fashioned from mother-of-pearl and adorned with gemstones

Jorran prefers a course that hugs the coast of the mainland. He tells the characters that there are few people living in the hills to the north, though some say that there is a cave there that can transport the unwary to another world. The characters listen carefully.

The Skeletal Ketch



Midway through the journey, Gallfred calls out that he sees something. There is a boat of skeletal soldiers, transporting a large box decorated with odd, ornate glyphs. Their boat appears to be a sailboat, but the visible sail is too tattered to propel it through the waves. Apparently, the undead do not require

normal sails. Hemp identifies eight skeletons and some kind of skeletal captain. Gallfred is able to hear anguished moans coming from the box.

Those characters who adhere to “heroic” ideals immediately conclude that this must be associated with the skeletal army rumored to be drawing close to Fythorp – and it must be stopped! Gallfred recognizes that he is utterly outvoted in this decision.

Podrick jabs at a skeleton with *ulftheonar’s wolf-spear*, discovering that piercing weapons aren’t the best choice against the undead. The skeletons swarm aboard the *Black Gull*, but they do little real damage. The skeletal captain watches with displeasure and intones, “Fight... harder...” The characters note with some dismay that the skeletons are infused with new energy and power – they move faster and with more purpose.

Hemp the Weaver brandishes the *shield of the lagomorph* and strikes a skeleton. His unfortunate target is knocked overboard to sink in the dark waters of the bay.

Gallfred misses a skeleton with a sling bullet, then wades in to chop at another with *shadeslayer*. He is flatly amazed that it fails to hit him. In dramatic and painful contrast, Hemp takes a critical hit from another skeleton – the wound blackens and a horrible infection from beyond the grave takes hold of him. He takes no immediate damage but remains infected.

The skeletal captain groans a strange incantation. His eyes flash an amber shade, and his minions draw up their strength.

Old Man Fish wants nothing to do with power-infused skeletons. He chops the skeleton that attacked Gallfred cleanly in half, then for good measure cuts off all its limbs. The twitching remains he kicks into the water. Podrick follows up by hammering another skeleton into the bay. Glub!

With only three skeletons left, one of them leaps over onto the deck of the *Black Gull*. Old Man Fish decides that turnabout is fair play – he leaps over to the undead ketch, bowls over a skeleton, and chops at its ribs. And Hemp knocks the skeleton boarder right off the edge. Down it goes!

Podrick latches onto a skeleton with *ulftheonar’s wolf-spear* and smashes it to pieces. He leaps to the deck of the undead ketch, by the barest of margins.

Gallfred manages to bonk the skeletal captain in the head with a sling bullet. The skeletal leader barely even notices – it strides over to Podrick and slashes at him. “I will paint my boat with your blood, and your bones will be my next First Mate!”

Old Man Fish, who has been in a killing rage for four rounds, crushes a skeleton into pieces and then settles down to take a brief nap. He is an old guy, after all.

Hemp notices that Podrick is grappling with the skeletal captain. He pulls out the *blazefire bow* and uses it to shoot the captain’s head off. Podrick is alarmed to observe that the captain continues to fight on in a way that is deeply disturbing. Also, he is on fire.

Gallfred clammers over to the undead ketch and looks for anything of value. He is drawn to the large, glyph-marked box. It radiates a cold, empty power. The moans of desperate suffering fill the air. He peers through the gaps in the sides and sees a spectral figure inside, a figure that is engulfed in unworldly pain.

Podrick parries another blow from the skeletal captain, distracting him enough to allow Hemp the Weaver to shoot the creature down. Its body finally collapses, though the skull remains active. "Don't count me out! I can still bite you!"

The characters examine the box. The skeletal captain's skull laughs, "You would release Varchus the Gory? He will surely slay all of you! He is a notorious, genocidal warlord who lived three centuries ago."

For his part, Varchus moans, "Please! Let me free! It hurts!"

While the other characters explore letting *Varchus the Gory* free, Gallfred fetches his *useful ship-scuttling dagger* back from Old Man Fish and goes below decks to cut his way through the hull.

Meanwhile, on the deck above the skeletal captain is promising to lead the characters to a location where they can perform a ritual to end Varchus' eternal suffering. And free him. Which might not work out in the favor of the living characters. "The box must reach the Site of Power!"

"And what site is that?"

"It is where our King waits."

Meanwhile, Gallfred is relying upon the *useful dagger's* insights about the best places to cut caulk and oakum out from the gaps in the hull to floor the vessel. He has zero interest in allowing Varchus the Gory his freedom.

The others eventually decide that Gallfred is already working on sinking the undead ketch in what is (probably) the most effective way. They leave him to it, then (once he is done) watch it sink. To Hemp's disappointment, when the boat sinks the energy goes out of the skeletal captain's skull. Hemp mounts the skull on the prow of the *Black Gull*. "What do you think about that, Jorran?"

Jorran reflects that skulls are plenty intimidating, but he's not eager to explain to law enforcement where he got it. Podrick (a Knight of Lushnia) insists that it'll be fine, and that is enough to satisfy Jorran.

After a couple of attempts, Old Man Fish is able to cure Hemp of his undead infection. He goes on to cure Podrick's wounds.

The Sanctum on Lone Ait

The character are easily able to see the Sanctum on Lone Ait – it is an eighty-foot stone spire just off the coast, linked to the main island by a stone bridge. The characters have been sailing for twelve hours, so they elect to land and make camp. Old Man Fish locates an excellent campsite.

Gallfred notes that the shadows are getting longer and the night is drawing near. He vanishes into the dark and reconnoiters. He spots some tall, gaunt humanoids wearing dark robes. There are eight of them, conducting a ritual around a book. Gallfred suspects (from a distance) that the book might be stitched together from human skin. He doesn't see them carrying weapons or garb, but all of them seem to have pockets and bags for spell components. He thinks he is looking at a group of eight wizards. He wrestles with the idea of trying to rob them but eventually gives it up on the grounds that wizards are unlikely to have any real cash.

Podrick spends his evening fishing. His fishing rod breaks. It is very unfortunate.

Hemp rests, so he can stand watch later on.

Entry to the Sanctum

The characters cross over the bridge to the door of the Sanctum. Gallfred examines the dropping-encrusted stone door and proclaims it free of traps. He pushes upon it and it opens with a grinding sound. The chamber below is a mix of natural and fashioned, with walls decorated with mosaics depicting an individual interacting with various sea creatures. And the entry to the chamber beyond is through a carving of a shark's mouth.

Podrick notices that the depiction of the wizard almost always includes three keys. Perhaps, three magical keys. He concludes that the characters will need to find the three keys. The others are more interested by the fact that the mosaics seem to depict the progression of Shadankin's courtship of both the various aquatic powers, and in particular of Queen Cealheewalool.

Old Man Fish asks, "Is there like a guild or association of artists who specialize in making this kind of artwork for wizards?"

Nobody knows.

Everyone proceeds down the corridor, led by Gallfred Weasel who thinks he is completely silent (though the others think he's falling down more stairs than John Wick).

Giant Floating Turtle Cave

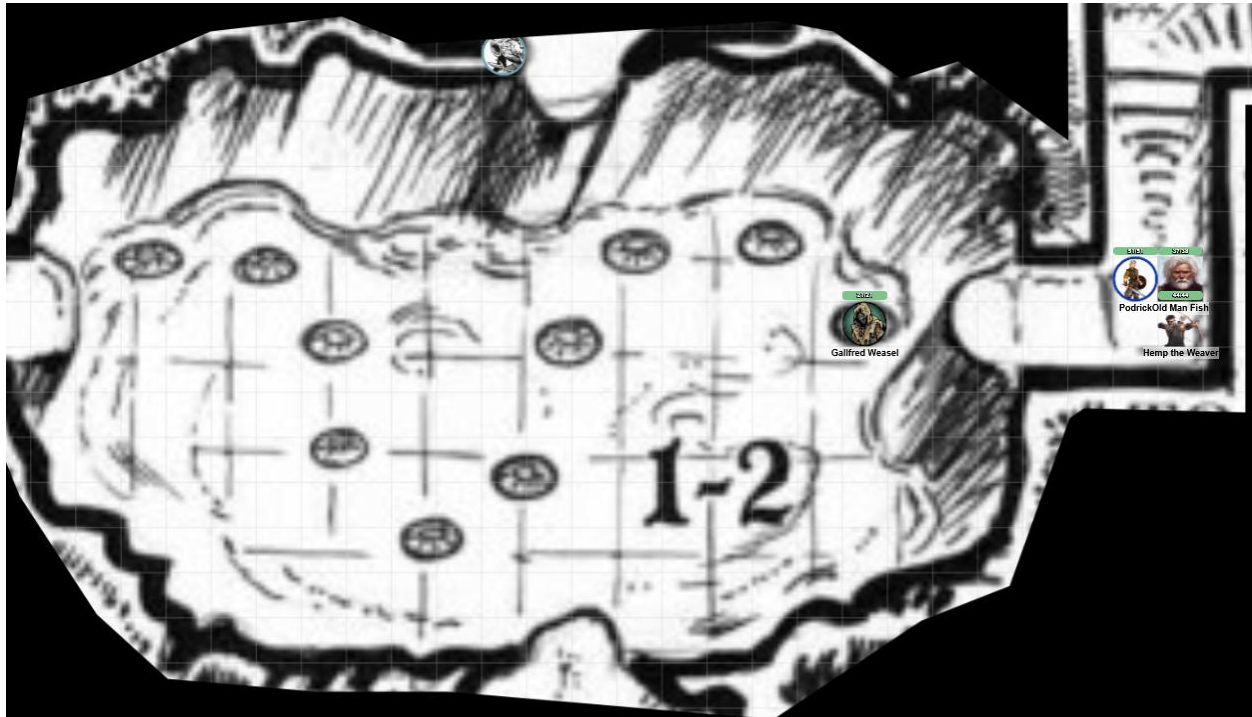
The stairs end abruptly in a chasm. The chamber plunges down thirty feet to the water. The only way across is by traversing a sequence of ten turtle shells that float without visible support in mid-air. The shells appear to be slick and slippery with ocean spray.

Hemp tries flinging some food down into the water. Nothing rises up.

Gallfred leaps to the first shell. He can see a path to reach the northernmost alcove by leaping across only three turtle shells. He is very confident.

Then the lamprey-men show up.

They look horrible, and they are clearly in the business of gouging giant holes into the flanks of tuna fish. And visitors. There are two on the north alcove, and two on the south. And two of them fling harpoons into him. Amazingly, he doesn't lose his grip and fall.



Gallfred does the honorable thing. He jumps back to the ledge and hides, leaving Old Man Fish to take the next round of attacks. He only gets hit once.

Then Hemp the Weaver steps up with the *blazefire bow* and shows the lampreymen what real ranged attacks are like. He kills the two lampreymen on the southern ledge. Podrick shoots one of the two on the northern ledge. The creature falls from the ledge and perishes. And Old Man Fish badly wounds the last. It decides that the best policy is to retreat.

With no harpoons, Gallfred is able to climb the rough walls to reach the northern niche. He finds that it was once a pleasant bath but now appears to be a birthing chamber for lampreymen. The pools are filled with their large, purplish eggs. And there are four of them present: one wounded, and three healthy. The wounded lampreyman explains what happened to it in a gibbering, fishy language.

Gallfred signals to the others but waits. He thinks he can garrote one lampreyman any time he likes but can't see a way to murder four. ("But what if they were carrying treasure?" "Oh, I can kill four lampreymen..."). He waits for the others to make their approach.

Podrick tries jumping, with Old Man Fish and Hemp holding safety ropes. The first time, he doesn't even seem to try jumping – he just walks off the edge of the alcove. The others haul him back up. The second time, he manages to grab a shell. It takes him some effort, but he manages to get up on top of the shell. The *first* shell.

The second shell is trivial in comparison.

The third is a bit rougher. Podrick ends up in the water. He is unhurt, because he has a *feather fall* amulet. He finds that the water is very shallow – a fall into it would inflict 2d6 damage.

Gallfred notes Podrick down in the water. He secures a rope to the top with his grappling hook and provides Podrick with a way to climb up. All this time, the lampreymen are having some kind of chirping, gallupping conversation on who is responsible for checking out the strange sounds and the arrow attacks.

Old Man Fish gets with the program. He secures a rope to the east platform and climbs down.

When Podrick shows up in front of the lampreymen they abandon their conversation and fling harpoons at him. Podrick ignores the harpoons and charges a lampreyman. He is overcome with battle rage. Two of the surviving lampreymen are so focused on him that they don't even notice when Gallfred garrotes their third companion to death. By the time Old Man Fish climbs up to the platform, all the lampreymen are dead. Old Man Fish asks, "Are you going to harm their young?"

"Not really. I was going to just let them desiccate and die."

Old Man Fish estimates there are 2000 eggs.

The characters loot the bodies. They pick up:

- 23 gp
- 11 pearls, each worth 10 gp

The characters move on through a side door and find that the alcoves are all connected. The last door is barred shut, probably because the lampreymen on the other side have a clear idea of how lethal the characters are. Gallfred finds that even with the *useful dagger* he's not able to open the door. Old Man Fish gives it a try and hurts himself in the process.

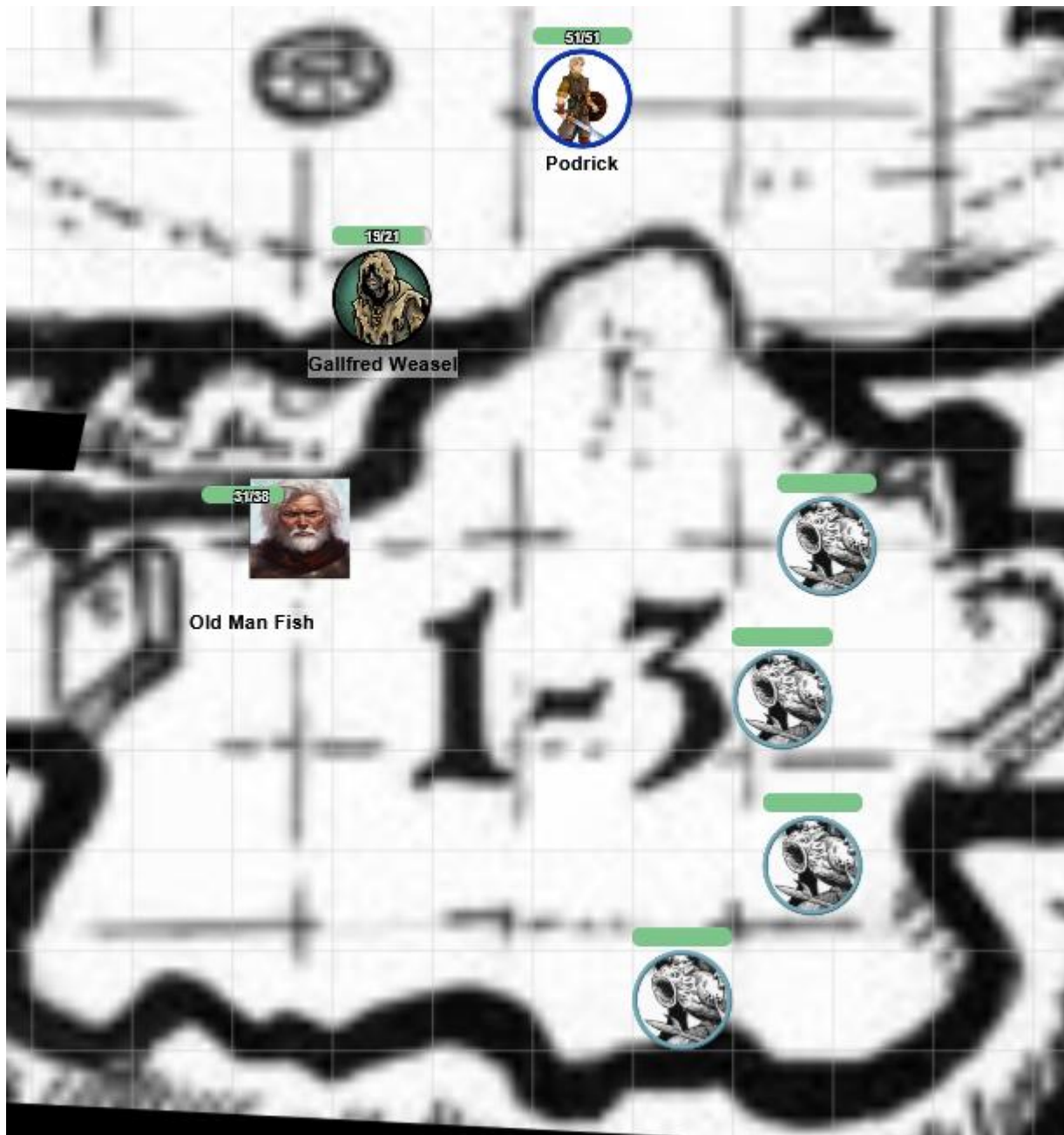
Getting in finally requires Gallfred to climb around and set up a rope for Old Man Fish to clamber up.

The Larder

Old Man Fish moves up into the chamber. The place is clearly the lampreymen's larder. Giant fish with horrible circular wounds hang from ceiling hooks, the floor is slick with fish guts and lamprey exudations, and the whole chamber smells of decaying fish. The four lampreymen stare balefully at Old Man Fish. Unseen, Gallfred Weasel is grateful that he can fade into almost any background.

Old Man Fish across the room to open the corridor door. Unfortunately, he slips on the slick flood and the four lampreymen converge upon him, intent upon sucking out his innards. Two of them latch on to him and start draining his blood. One of them doesn't get much opportunity – he gets garroted almost to death.

Then Podrick shows up and finishes off that lampreyman.



By the time Podrick shows up, there are two dead lampreymen and one lampreyman attached to each of Old Man Fish and Gallfred. Podrick simply kills both of them, because that's what he can do.

Old Man Fish heals himself in a single gesture.

Then there is looting. The room contains only rotting nets and wooden crustacean traps. The lampreymen have treasure on their persons consisting of:

- 200 sp;
- 40 gp;

- 3 pearls worth 25 gp each, and
- a small coral statuette depicting a whale with numerous lamprey eels affixed to it. It is worth 250 gp.

Gallfred decides that he's maybe been a bit too harsh on the lampreymen. Sure, they're utterly monstrous and they breed like a plague, but they do carry a fair amount of valuable coin.

The End of the Session

Each character gains 6 xp. Hemp the Weaver missed the last fight, so he only gains 4 xp.