

Attendance

Paul, Chris, Patrick, and Tim all arrive on time and discuss the relative value of *Aquaman 2*, and film directors who understand that superhero movies should actually be fun. There is also a discussion on using duolingo to learn ConLangs.

Ernest arrives somewhat later, shouting something about *Manos Hand of Fate*. As per usual.

The group has a couple NPCs with them, Coltrane the boatman, and Morgan Haverson the cooper's daughter, both refugees from Kingspire.

We're on a Boat

The characters are exhausted and *sleepy*. They are in a boat, in the choppy waters of the bay. They decide to make a triangular island the south; it looks safe and nondescript. Unlike the larger island to the east, which has two forests and a stone circle, but is perhaps more trouble than it's worth for *sleepy* adventurers.

Morning on the Island: Making Camp

Ned attempts to strike camp, but contracts a nasty case of lice. The party sets up camp elsewhere, and Old Man Fish treats Ned's new affliction. The rest of the group rests.

Old Man Fish also goes fishing, and catches enough to feed himself and one other person later.

Afternoon on the Island: The Mystic Oak

Ned and Old Man Fish take a turn sleeping, while Hemp keeps watch. He hears weird whispering from a tree, and decides to go off and investigate. First, though, he wakes up Old Man Fish, because you don't go talking to weird magic trees without a buddy system.

The magic tree talks to Hemp the Weaver, and tells him his destiny involves the Mystic King, in the city of Sewich (the capital city). But it requires sacrifices to tell them more. Hemp offers "um, want this evil pirate sword?"

Oddly, the tree accepts. What it wants with a cursed rapier is a mystery. It opens a hollow, and Hemp places the sword inside.

The tree continues: *The Mystical King, in Sewich, is replacing his dukes (like the Duke of Dolonde, back in Weebrook) with lycanthropes and undead, in order to make the people accept his armies of undead as their protectors.*

Hemp thanks the Tree for this information, which it apparently gleaned from a nature spirit whisper network, and returns to the group to relate some valuable information about the World At Large. Ned, for one, is weirdly astonished that people outside of his own hometown have any bearing on his life.

Hemp and Old Man Fish decide not to tell anyone about the sacrifice of the sword, on the grounds that Galfred might be upset. Instead, they will feign ignorance, and maybe blame the theft on immigrants.

Evening on the Island: hunting, cooking, and flirting

Old Man Fish cooks some dinner, and the group discusses their plans.

There's some discussion on the Duchy of Dolonde, which is what our world map represents. The kingdom of Sewich encompasses a larger territory of other duchies and baronies and other varieties of governmental divisions that the PCs don't really understand.

Dolonde is kind of a backwater, where the duke only really controls about four towns (one of which the PCs don't even know the name of), and the rest of the territory is lawless frontier.

Ned goes looking for animal bones, to use in casting Summon Animal, because he's running out of ant mandibles. He finds something, but also rolls badly, and suffers a mishap – an insect stings him,

inflicting 3 damage and a point of stamina lost. Ned now has the skull of a ferret (“Dire Ferret” “No, regular ferret”) and something to whine about.

Podrick goes hunting, and brings back a fox. This feeds three people, and a pelt. Along with OMF’s fish haul from earlier, they can feed five people. The rest eat rations. Ned notes that he can live on dirt, but still eats rations because it’s tastier.

Ned requests the skull (also for summoning purposes).

Hemp decides to spend the entire quarter day flirting with Morgan.

Night on the Island: Boat Mummy! Maybe it will be friendly.

Ned takes a rest action to recover from his insect sting.

Old Man Fish takes first watch. Off in the distance, he spots what looks like a barge going across the water. The person polling the barge is completely wrapped in funerary bindings, like a mummy. Fish considers covering the fire and avoiding the fire, but then decides that maybe the mummy is friendly, and wakes his companions. Then he throws more logs on the fire to attract the boatman.

The mummy arrives on land and extends his hands to absorb everyone’s souls. Old Man Fish is dissappointed (“oh, he’s not friendly”). Hemp points on that if we survive the fight, we get a free haunted barge.

Podrick charges into melee, and misses. Ned casts Magic Missile, but the spell fizzles. Then Hemp opens fire with his magic bow, scoring a critical hit, knocking the monster down and inflicting piles of regular damage and piles of fire damage. It turns out that the mummy is resistance to normal damage, but is vulnerable to fire damage. In the end, the mummy loses about a third of it’s hit points, and then spends it’s turn rising back to its feat.

Old Man Fish dips his arrow into the campfire and then fires it into the mummy. The burning arrows reduces the mummy to about half health, and it is now on fire! Podrick attacks, and misses. Ned casts *Field of Tentacles* to entangle the Mummy, but it makes it’s reflex save and escapes. Hemp opens fire some more, and tags the mummy with another arrow.

The mummy then tries to grab Podrick with outstretched hands; Podrick dances out of the way. The mummy whispers “your soul... give me your soul.” Podrick replies “no, I’m using it.”

Old Man Fish fires another impromptu flaming arrow into the mummy, knocking it down to a quarter health. Podrick stabs the mummy. Ned runs over to try and cast *enlarge* on Podrick, but the spell fizzles. Hemp then sinks another flaming arrow into the mummy, which turns out to have an embarrassingly low AC. The mummy collapses, and continues to burn.

Old Man Fish awkwardly apologizes. “Sorry guys, I honestly thought he’d be friendly. Good job on killing it through, everyone.”

The players secure the barge, and search it. They find a stash of 9 electrum funerary coins (worth 90 gp). Also, free funerary barge!

Island Day 2: Morning

Because of going all day without sleep, Hemp suffers 2 int and 3 cha damage. He is still *sleepy*.

The party decides to stay on the island another day, while Hemp recovers from insomnia related brain damage. None of the existing quests have a time limit on them, so taking some time to rest makes sense.

Hemp sleeps in, as do Mordecai and Ned.

Podrick goes hunting, and bags a deer. Ned and Mordecai collects the inedible bits for summoning purposes. Old Man Fish goes fishing, but suffers a mishap; he returns to camp dripping wet and refuses to explain why. He spends the rest of the morning sitting naked by the fire and waiting for his clothes to dry.

Island Day 2: Afternoon

Mordecai, feeling refreshed, goes scavenging for spell components. He finds some bones from a grizzly bear. Score!

Some people come sailing towards the island in a small boat. There are six of them, and they are wearing white and blue robes. Old Man Fish and Ned decide to go hide in a bush to observe the newcomers, while Podrick pokes the fire and waits for the newcomers to announce themselves.

The boatmen pull a large box off of their boat, and it appears to be heaped up with soil. They begin hauling the box to the spirit tree, with ceremonial dignity.

Podric approaches to ask what they're up to; they want to ask the tree for advice, and have brought an offering of sacred ox manure. Ned wonders if he could use manure to summon a sacred ox, but decides it's not worth pursuing.

The six visitors are acolytes of Areril, the Scribe of Omens (a lawful deity).

Podric tries to eavesdrop on their requests to the tree, but these things are a private affair, and the acolytes shoo him away.

After they finish their business, they offer pleasant farewells, and prepare to leave. Hemp and Fish ask them for news of the south lands, and find that the folks of Wymoor are depressed and listless, having lost faith in their duke, for the duke did not send aid when they needed it.

Hemp goes fishing, returns soaking wet. The riptides around the island is a *problem*. Old Man Fish also goes fishing, and his fishing gear gets broken. The local fish are *also* a problem. Old Man Fish returns to camp to lie about how large the fish was

Podrick takes a watch action.

Ned confers with the whisper tree, asking "I have heard of wizards with bonded animal companions. Can you tell me how to go about finding such an ally?" He offers his hydra skull trophy as a sacrifice. The tree whispers: "*There are many powerful wizards in the world. Seek the emerald enchanter. His tower is to the northwest of Weebrook*"

Island Day 2: Evening

Hemp the Weaver goes to work making everyone matching cloaks. He starts with Podrick's cloak, decorated with fox pelts.

Old Man Fish works on restoring the rusted chain mail that the party retrieved in the last adventure. Podrick offers to help. It turns out to be fancy dwarven chainmail. Ned and Mordecai look at the runes on the armor, and figure it's magical, and devoted to the strange underground gods that the dwarves worship. "Ew, it's *lawful*" says Ned.

(It's +1 chainmail for Podrick, with some extra benefits if the wearer is a lawful dwarf, and/or being healed by a cleric of the dwarf gods)

Ned sleeps and Mordecai rests.

Island Day 2: Night

Ned wakes up and takes watch while everyone else sleeps. There are no random encounters.

Leaving Oracle Tree Island

In the morning, the group decides it's time to move on, and sails towards Wymoor, getting most of the way across the bay. At night, Podrick takes watch.

Which is fortunate, because there's another random encounter. This bay is *crowded*.

Podrick spots a school of giant scaled fish, colored green, and approximately human sized. Podrick checks with Coltrane and Old Man Fish if they know what these are, and learns they're some sort of 3HD crocodile type monsters. "So we should sail around?" "Yeah, we should sail around."

Beautiful Downtown Wymoor!

The party arrives in Wymoor in the following afternoon.

The water around the town is polluted with foul smelling muck, with dead fish floating on the water surface. Mordecai carefully extracts a sample of the water to study later, but not carefully enough: he gets some foul muck splashed on his hand. It causes a painful, pus-filled blister to form (1 hp damage). He does, however, collect a sample in a metal flask. From the fizzing noise, it sounds like it will eat through the metal eventually, being highly acidic. Also, it smells *bad*.

The people in the town look very depressed (probably because their waterfront is now stinky and acidic).

The docking fee is 1gp, which the PCs complain about bitterly. Hemp asks if the tax collector if the bay is always this nasty, and is told no, it's a side effect of some agricultural project by Count Zodra. (Old Man Fish: "with a name like that, he's totally a vampire. Especially since he's a count. That's just basic logic." Mordecai: "yeah, the only way to be more obvious is if he was named Chocula")

Asking about a good place for lodging, the PCs get referred to *the Bronze Queen*, so everyone heads on over. Old Man Fish fantasized about finally getting a bath, but Ned warns that the local water quality looks questionable. The rooms in the inn cost 7sp a night (2sp for additional guests). Podrick does some math and concludes that this is about the same as inns back in Weebrook.

Hemp tries to convince Morgan to share an inn room, but due to some missed Personality tests, she declines. Ned then offers to share a room, but not in a flirty way. He mostly just sleeps in dirt these days, and doesn't want the rest of the room to go unused. Again, Morgan politely declines.

Podrick sussess out where the local temple is, so he can go pray in the morning. Then spends some time getting himself cleaned up and presentable.

Shopping

Ned goes shopping for spell components, and spends 140 gold (cash) to 150 gp worth of components for casting *Mortal Runic Alphabet*. He promptly blows 1/3 of the components in a failed attempt to cast the spell.

Mordecai goes shopping for armor and weapons, since his new eye-socket orb gives him proficiency. Old Man Fish goes along to help haggle. The trade a bunch of party loot for a suit of half plate, a greatsword, and enough cash for everyone to get 49 gp.

Old Man Fish seeks out a silversmith to get his 20 silver rings reset into 10 silver rings that fit him and have cool animal heads on them. This costs 17 gp. He also buys a set of manacles and key for purposes he would rather not elaborate on.

Ned considers the information that the mystic king is employing were-monsters, and that the town has a silversmith, and to get his 20 silver rings reforged into arrowheads. This nets him 20 silverheads, for the cost of 17 gp.

(note for later: silver arrowheads cost 5gp each)

(also note: silver heads are tracked individually, not by resource dice, because they're so expensive)

Hemp the Weaver decides Ned is onto something, and does the same deal.

The local silversmith is *exhausted*, but also 51 gp richer, so he's not complaining too much.

Podrick buys some dice, and then goes hanging out in the tavern to make a carousing roll (a luck test). He rolls a 13, which results in getting blind drunk and waking up with the unexplained ownership of a fancy new lyre ("did I get seduced by a bard?").

That night, everyone spends 1gp for a nice meal and a good bath and some laundry service. The meal is nice, and sleeping in actual bed is restful. Everyone feels *a lot* better.

Snappy dressers:

Hemp makes sure everyone has a matching cloak and decorative short sword, in some sort of attempt to make the group look like a cohesive unit and less like a gang of vagrants.

- *lovely cloak of grey cloth with some inside flame effects and a fur lined hood*
- *short swords made of bronze (reduce the damage die by –1d on the dice chain each time a natural “1” or “20” is rolled) with begemmed scabbards worth 30 gp each*

The Sacred Buffalo Lodge

In the morning, the party head out to find the sacred buffalo lodge (mostly because a hungover Podrick insists on it).

It's a nice looking building; the knights have dropped some decent cash on the décor. Podrick goes knocking on the door to announce himself. The door is opened by a cleric of Jopha the Healer. Podrick explains that he would like to join the order. This turns out to be slightly complicated, since the cleric (named Nylm, two syllables) is the only member in residence.

But, Podrick has good timing! The lodge has been having trouble with the local lord, but if Podrick helps, then he can join. Nylm asks for some papers to verify that Podrick is of royal birth, to the warrior's dismay (“Um, dad was a knight, but he didn't keep any documents”).

Undeterred, Nylm starts pulling books of genealogy off the wall to see if Podrick actually has any famous ancestors. Turns out that Podrick is descended from a famous warrior, Cliffton the Courageous, hero of the Battle of Atalie. Also, Podrick has actually served as a squire, working for his father. Nylm makes cheerful “uh-huh!” noises while taking copious notes.

Normally, rich applicants are asked for a hefty application fees. However, since the PCs look like a gang of vagrants, Nylm offers to waive the fee in exchange for helping with Count Zodra. They call the blight on the bay “the feculance,” while the servants of the Count have brought stories of disfigured and mutated livestock. The farmers complained to the Count, but he explained that the feculance is the side effect of an agricultural project. However, the feculance is also impacting crops, and is *not* good for the local agriculture.

Yesterday, Nylm went to the Count's estate to investigate, but no one answered. There was a haze over the hedge maze, and she started to check it out, but a hulking undead monster (some sort of rat-ogre) is guarding it. It was repelled by her holy symbol, but she couldn't press further.

Hemp asks if the Count is a new appointment, or recently made a journey to Sewich, but apparently he's been in fief for 30 years, and while he makes annual visits to Sewich, his last one was several months ago.

She explains that the hedge maze is weirdly elaborate, with multiple entrances, which trigger different solutions, but it's not hard to navigate.

Also, all of the Count's servants have gone missing, which is probably suspicious.

Podrick agrees to look into it.

Also, about this other quest...

He also informs her of the grim fate of the knights the party encountered on their journey. Nylm is chagrined, but pulls another book off the wall, and asks for exacting and macabre details of where, when, and how they died, so she can record it for posterity. The party is able to hand over some of the knight's belongs (that haven't been sold off) like maybe tabards and pennants.

She is also distressed by news that the order's signature magic helmet is corrupted and cursed. She is suspicious of the information source (“They learned this from a circle of talking stones? Really?”), but dutifully records it, along with whatever details Podrick can remember of the various trials required to purify the helm.

On the plus side, Nylm can share the information that the trials probably need to be done in the *Rusting Hills*, where the sacred buffalo was first spotted. It is located south of Weebrook, across the river.

She also lets the party study a book of lore about the *Elder Kith*, which are some sort of very old elves, but won't let the party just take the book with them. Podric gets the wizards to take copious notes.

Then the party decides to stop worrying about a future Rusting Hills quest, and instead focus on the current quest.

To prep, or to go charging off like idiots?

There's a question on whether to immediately run to the Count's estate, or spent a while on investigation and other prep work. The eventually decision to budget a couple days to prep.

How to spend the afternoon

Ned tries to make more runes, and burns through the rest of his components. The first casting results in an *alarm* rune. The final casting fails, and fails badly to result in a new level of patron taint:

Groundswell Companions, level 3: The caster is constantly accompanied by a retinue of earth elementals and tentacles, causing significant social challenges and making it difficult to move unnoticed.

Old Man Fish reads the book about the Elder Kith, and Ned transcribes notes. Fish is a little perturbed that the little elementals keep being "helpful" by holding the books, fetching ink pots, carrying candles around, and other trivial tasks. ("those things are going to lose us our deposit")

Mordecai sends off a letter. He is very secretive as to who it is for and what it says.

Hemp and Podrick hit the town to talk to the folk, and ask if the Count is acting weird, and any other relevant gossip. He comes back with enough unrelated gossip for an episode of reality television, but also learns that the Count recently got some bad news which changed his behavior.

He was visited by a messenger from the capital city; the messenger was in a creepy palanquin, and accompanied by masked servants, and after that, the Count alternated between despondent and angry. However, the Count cheered up when he discovered some new agricultural innovation.

The count had sent off to the country side for some "experts" who ate a whole bunch of food in the castle, then went into the estate garden to do ...*something*, even dismantling an old mill for raw materials to build their weird device. ("Experts in what?" "Unclear"). The experts came from far away, and were constantly sniffing things, and crept out the locals.

BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD

Hemp realizes that his *blazefire* bow wants something. It wants him to drink *human blood*. He comes up with various schemes to trick locals into the hard-earned blood, before Ned suggests: "just impersonate a doctor, and treat everything with bleeding people and giving them cocaine"

Hemp decides "that's not an entirely stupid idea" and goes off to find the most unethical doctor in town, and bribes him to give him any leftover blood. He follows the Mulvaney method for finding the worst doctor in town, who is convinced he wants the blood for weird wizard shit, but for a few coins, he shrugs and doesn't worry about it. Here's your blood, sir.

Hemp suspects this guy sells bits to necromancers semi-frequently, and passes the contact information to the party necromancers.

Food and Lodging expenses

Some notes for later: it costs 7sp for a room, and 2-3 sp for a good meal (mere copper for a shitty meal). Everyone just deduces 1gp per day to live comfortably. We assume that Gallfred does *not* do this.

Mordecai and Ned spend the evening and night resting and sleeping to maximize their spellburn recovery. Hemp also spends the evening resting, to try and recover lost Int and Per from his earlier sleep deprivation.

Old Man Fish asks around for anyone who can see in the dark. He finds out that the Old Miller in Kingspire can see in the dark, ever since he “received a revelation” from the Elder Kith. He also asks if Coltaine if he wants to return to Kingspire or stay here, and Coltraine figures he’ll stay put, and maybe join the local fisherman guild. (“the fisherman have a guild?!?” “everyone has a guild, even the beggars”)

Morgan has some interest in staying in town as well, and maybe finding a husband. Ned suggests pooling some party treasure into a dowry so she can get an advantageous marriage. Old Man Fish stares at the necromancer in open astonishment, waiting for the other show to drop, but Ned just stares back in total innocence. His elemental servants cavort about creating little marriage scenes. Old Man Fish: “you know what, fuck it, I’m backing the necomancer’s plan for some reason.”

The rest of the party, to their own surprise, ends up getting behind the vague future scheme of getting Morgan married off, like they’re a noble family in some regency era novel trying to marry off the daughter. (Possibly married to Hemp, but only if they legitimately hit it off, which seems unlikely)

Old Man Fish also tries to heal Mordecai’s pus finger, and successfully lances the blister and restores the Mordecai’s lost hit points. The GM ominously notes “ah, the infection does not advance to the next stage then.”

The Day After

Various characters spend the morning resting to recover attribute points, and then head off to the Count’s manor house in the afternoon.

End of Session

Everyone gets 6 xp.