

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 indicates that he actually prepared for the game – so he has an uncommon sense of confidence going into this session, except that he still needs to arrange some things on Roll20. *Chris* uses his words to thank *Paul* for all his efforts, though his inside voice warns that *Paul*'s confidence won't last more than 15 minutes of actual play. *Bruce* just contemplates how the various new features Roll20 is implementing all sound really nice in the marketing copy, but don't seem to do much for real. Even the Mood Lighting.

Patrick disagrees. He's all about new Roll20 features. He uses them every day!

Tim calls in just in time to hear *Chris* proclaim, "Fuck squirrels! Fortunately, they'll eat poisoned bait just as eagerly as rats will."

Leaving Wymoor

The characters head south out of Wymoor after spending the evening of 16th Umbro partying in town. *Old Man Fish* won big while gambling, winning enough to pay for the entire townhouse. He actually used his proceeds to fund a business for one of the characters' companions, and to equip the two Squires with proper gear. As a reminder, there are several points of interest in Wymoor:

- The Chapter House of the Knights of Lushnia
- The *Snoring Dwarf Inn*
- The characters' newly purchased town house, now inhabited by many of their one-time zero-level companions.

There are a couple of important holidays coming up in the month of Umbro:

21 st	Fateweavers Revelry
22 nd	Spring Renewal, a day sacred to Findire

Thinking about holidays, shopping, and begging mean that the characters only get underway at midday. They make really good progress through the plains with nary a threat to be seen. But then at the end of

the day they set up camp, misjudge the distance between their fire and their tent, and set their camp on fire. Nobody actually dies in the conflagration, but it's a near thing. *Ned Wimbley* panics and splashes the fire with a vial of unholy water, while shrieking, "This will make it better!" It doesn't make things better.

In an effort to distract from the camp accident, *Podrick* and *Old Man Fish* go hunting. Podrick falls into another hunter's pit trap and is forced to lie there until Old Man Fish comes back and pulls him out. For his part, Old Man Fish has an excellent hunt: he manages to bag a deer (5 meat, 3 pelts), then finds Podrick while he's looking for someone else to carry the carcass back to camp. He examines the pit trap after rescuing Podrick and notes, "No deer would have ever fallen into this!"

The characters feast upon venison in the burned ruins of their camp.

Trail of the Mushroom Folk

Later that night, *Gallfred Weasel* spots a dozen man-sized creatures moving sluggishly to the east. He damps down the fire and remains quiet. The creatures pass on by, none the wiser. Based upon their gait and their willingness to travel in darkness, Gallfred guesses that they were undeads.

The next morning, Old Man Fish checks their path to see what went by. Gallfred suggests, "I think they were undead. Maybe you could look for lost toes or something?" He doesn't find any toes, but he does see a trail of small mushrooms growing. He looks at the mushrooms and doesn't trust them. Ned Wimbley recognizes them as the kind of mushrooms that usually grow in caves.

The Centaur Tribes Are On the Hoof

The next day, Gallfred spots a group of eight centaurs digging in the dirt. They might be burying something. Old Man Fish explains, "I know a lot about centaurs! They have the body of a horse and the torso of a man! Also, they are reputed to be proud and elusive."

Podrick suggests, "Maybe they are burying treasure."

Gallfred notes, "Speaking as someone who knows a lot about burying treasure, only a moron tries to bury treasure on the plains in broad daylight. In which case, these might be moron centaurs and we should be able to do well talking to them."

The characters approach the centaurs. Their outriders (?) note the characters at a distance and ready their bows. Ned Wimbley calls out in Gnollish, reasoning that it's also a beast-person language – though maybe one diametrically opposed to centaur interest. Fortunately, it turns out that some of them have halting fluency in Common.

At closer range, it is clear that the centaurs are burying something. They are burying manure. Because that seems like a worthwhile hobby to pursue.

Old Man Fish calls out a greeting.

The centaur leader answers, "Many human sheep."

The characters spend some time trying to interpret the centaur's words. They note that these centaurs do not look like the more sophisticated type of centaurs: their spears have fire-hardened tips and their bows use flint arrowheads.

Old Man Fish finally figures out that the centaur is trying to say that there are human shepherds nearby, and that the characters might want to talk to them in preference to bothering centaurs who are just digging a midden. He gets directions, then waves farewell.

Entry into the Shrine of the Bethines

A short time later, the characters find a limestone-lined canyon. Within it, Old Man Fish locates a small jade plaque set into the stone of the canyon wall, right above a wide hole drilled into the stone. The plaque has no words but depicts a bent-backed old man in tattered robes stepping upon a small demon. Podrick suggests, "That might be Orvun the Healer, stepping upon the demon Serron." He is convinced that this means the characters have found the Shrine of the Bethines.

There is a rope ladder fixed to one side of the shaft. It drops about 30 feet to a stone platform above a cavern. Old Man Fish tests it, then climbs down. He sees that the platform is just above a pristine pool of water about 3 feet deep. A wooden bucket stands to the side of the platform.

Gallfred asks Podrick, "Who am I?"

"Weasel..."

"Oh yes. Also, why are we here?"

"We're here to cleans the *helm of Chistu*."

"So, you've got water and a bucket, and I have a rag. Go ahead and clean it." Gallfred starts to wonder if Podrick actually knows how things are cleaned.

Podrick muses on how to properly perform the cleansing ritual. There's supposed to be a ritual, but he doesn't really know it. So he tries pouring water from the pool over the helm. This prompts everything to fall into darkness and shadows. Out of the darkness the characters see nightmarish forms, overseen by a huge statue of a bent-backed man. Black tentacles spiral from a wound in the statue's chest into the water. Then a gaunt creature straight from nightmare emerges. It has a huge snapping vertical mouth at the top of its otherwise featureless head. It stares at the characters from an eye placed at the center of its chest.

The shadows clear, but the creature remains. Only Podrick can see it clearly – to the others, it is translucent. The *Zeron Servitor* claws at him twice but proves too eager. It overbalances on its first attack and misses the second.

Gallfred hides (because that's just what he does), then emerges a moment later to garrote the Servitor. This inflicts some damage, but also leaves the Servitor disoriented (-4 to attack for 2 rounds). Podrick jabs at it with *ulftheonar's wolf-spear*, but his attacks miss. Cursed creatures living outside the realms of normal space! Ned Wimbley concludes that Podrick's biggest problem is that he isn't big enough. He casts *enlarge* to fix that problem. This turns out to have been a correct choice: the creature flails helplessly at him. Podrick responds by stabbing at its eyeball, missing, and puncturing a lung instead. The creature wheezes through its horrible vertical mouth. *Luigiphon* flies in with the *coprolite club* and crushing its misshapen skull.

The Servitor of Zeron's body dissolves into mist, but the black onyx teeth knocked free by the *coprolite club* remain. Gallfred frantically works to collect them. He manages to get 22 of them. He pawns three of them but is forced to hand 19 over to the group.

Then Ned Wimbley convinces Gallfred that these are the *charitable teeth of Gregor*, and if he collects all of them they'll cleanse him of his ethical failings. Gallfred is horrified. He turns over the other three teeth.

For real, Ned determines that the teeth really are magical. He determines that swallowing one of the teeth will provide supernatural adaptation to hostile elements. Actually swallowing one might be difficult, because they are quite sharp.

Podrick notes that the *helm of Chistu* is mostly unchanged – except that it now seems to be covered in oil. Or at least it smells like it is. He tries setting it into a fire. Nothing happens. Then he uses water from the lake to extinguish the fire. The fire goes out but emits a nasty dark smoke. He tries putting more water on the helm. Once again, he sees a vision of being underwater with a giant stone statue. And another Servitor of Zeron shows up. Gallfred hides. Because of course he does.

Podrick responds to the arrival of the second Servitor by stabbing it in the eye and blinding it. Then Gallfred garrotes it to death. The creature flails and falls. Sadly, it only leaves one tooth.

Podrick suggests, "I think there's something wrong with the shrine. Whenever I try to cleanse the helm it gives me scary visions and summons monsters."

Gallfred offers, "This seems like a really good way to farm XP and teeth. Do you think we could make this into a mob farm?"

Nobody else has any idea what this actually means. Also, they think it's a terrible idea.

We Eat the Teeth

The characters recognize that they need to travel down into the waters of the shrine. Fortunately, they have a way to survive hostile environments. Everyone eats a tooth. The experience of swallowing malign chaos magic is deeply unpleasant, about like smoking, eating the contents of the ashtray, and washing it down with Ivanovich vodka. After that, the characters each experience a mild, cold numbness. Their pupils turn pitch black. Also, they have *water breathing* and *freedom of movement* underwater.

Old Man Fish notes, "This is cool!"

The characters swim down into the water. This turns out to be quite deep, some 300 feet. This would be a crushing depth, but the teeth are still good against that.

The Submerged Statue

Down at the bottom of the pool the characters find a gigantic statue of a bent-backed old man covered in interlocking jade plates and layered with black algae. One of the plates is marked with a glowing symbol of concentric squares. A strange gray fluid leaks from the symbol, tainting the water around it.

Ned Wimbley suggests, "I think this is a door, but we must take an action to get it to open up."

Podrick tries touching the *helm of Chistu* to the symbol. He feels a shock go through his body, but he is unharmed. The jade plate slides away and the characters are sucked inside – there was air in the space beyond. They find themselves in a spacious L-shaped chamber. The walls are densely carved with symbols and glyphs. The southern end of the room is closed by a large round stone seal marked by the same symbol of concentric squares. The plate behind the characters slides closed and the chamber drains of water. The air is cold.

Podrick examines the glyphs. They tell the story of the Bethines Order of knights and the sealing of one of their members. Apparently, the bent-backed old man is not Orvun the Healer, but the order member who fell to evil. Ned Wimbley studies the runes but isn't able to come to any strong conclusions. Gallfred also understands runes and just wants to open the door. He interprets:

"Place the sign of the Order at the center. Speak the words of commitment. Let the true line stand upon the seal."

Podrick tries placing the *helm of Chistu* at the center of the seal and speaks, "I dedicate myself to the Order of the Bethines, and to defeating the evil of Zeron!" The seal and the surrounding area start to glow. Everyone (after some dithering) steps into the glowing area... and get transported further into the shrine.

The Ritual Postures Are Important

The characters arrive in a chamber that is humid, with walls and floors thick with mildew. It smells like a shower that hasn't been cleaned in a while, perhaps in a YMCA. The walls are carved in detailed bas relief. A seal of the Bethines is embedded in the North wall. And the bas reliefs show various ritual postures and practices. Ned Wimbley tells the others, "I think this depicts a ritual gesture. We need to touch left hip, right hip, right shoulder, left shoulder before stepping into the door. Also, hold up a lawful holy symbol. Or there's an alternate – clasp hands in a gesture of peace.

Podrick steps through the door with the *helm of Chistu*, making the gestures of the Bethines.

Gallfred tries the gesture of peace. He is struck dumb and cannot speak.

Ned really doesn't like what happened to Gallfred, so he decides to follow Podrick's example and utter a vow of Law. He promises to honor the community association guidelines of any township he enters. This stirs the gods of both Law and Chaos. He isn't struck dumb, and in fact he gets away with it: he breaks (or at least stretches) the laws of the universe.

Old Man Fish isn't Chaotic. He does the ritual and nothing happens.

The characters see a complicated arrangement in the corridor ahead: a Bethine seal upon the ceiling is surrounded by glowing runes and faces a raised dais on the floor with a recessed handprint at the center. There is a scorched body wearing Bethine robes and clutching a book with chains upon the cover. Based on the body's expression, the man died hard.

Servitors Are Inbound!

Most of the characters hear a clicking sound suggesting the approach of Servitors of Zeron. Podrick is caught unawares, so he is pretty surprised when everyone else hides or starts casting spells.

Then five Servitors show up. One of them walks right past where Old Man Fish is hiding. Luigiorth clubs it in the face, Old Man Fish shoots it and blinds it, and Podrick ineffectually stabs at it.

Then the Servitors attack the characters. It turns out that when they target someone, they are only fully visible to that person: everyone else takes a die penalty and a miss chance. They are also able to inflict *limb paralysis* upon their victims, which Old Man Fish discovers to his regret: one of them paralyzes his right arm. They merely tear chunks out of *Hemp the Weaver*, who was here all along. Ned Wimbley evades as two of his *mirror images* get destroyed.

Hemp manages to set one monster on fire with the *blazefire bow*, leaving it almost dead. Gallfred notices that one of the Servitors is blinded (thanks, Old Man Fish!) and garrotes it. It falls to the ground, where Podrick uses *ulftheonar's wolf-spear* to slay it. Not satisfied with the straightforward kill, Podrick whirls about to wound a second Servitor.

Hemp the Weaver takes a crushing strike to the head. It glances harmlessly off his helmet! He responds by killing the Servitor.

Then Ned Wimbley summons an *elder tentacular avatar*, a horrific apparition of tentacles, mouths, eyes, and undifferentiated organs. It utterly crushes the Servitor facing Ned and almost crushes the one facing Old Man Fish. It is clearly not dissuaded even a bit by the Servitors' invisibility trick.

Podrick kills the Servitor facing him.

The surviving Servitor manages to paralyze two of Old Man Fish's limbs, left arm and right leg. It doesn't last long: Gallfred comes out of nowhere and garrotes it.

The dead Servitors leave behind 57 onyx teeth. The characters collect them.

How About that Cursed Book

Both Ned Wimbley and Podrick feel a strong attraction to the book held by the dead Bethine monk, Ned because he is a chaotic wizard and Podrick because he is holding the *helm of Chistu*. Ned picks up the book and sees that the title *Shambles of the Living God* is burned into its waxed cover. He feels the weight of divine judgment pressing down upon him, but that's nothing new to him as a wizard: he feels that every day! Ned opens up the book and finds that it contains a wealth of information about the Bethines, various demonic lords, and so very much more! Actually studying it in detail could provide spell knowledge or other effects but is likely to take hours. Maybe dozens of hours.

Ned is eager to spend some quality time with his book, but he tears his eyes away long enough to examine the glowing runes on the ceiling. It looks like an invocation ritual to him – and he could expend a 1st level spell to trigger it. He doesn't know what it will do, though.

Gallfred examines the runes. He concludes that the runes will trigger a false ritual that activates a trap, which will seal this room and send massive waves of water crashing in, drowning everyone. He communicates this to the others by pantomiming drowning. Amazingly, they figure it out.

Meanwhile, Hemp (who is also unable to speak) sees a scorched, blackened doorway near the end of the corridor.

The Charnel Chamber

Beyond the burnt seal is a blackened cavern. The walls are etched with foul prayers carved in multiple language. The glyphs shimmer and crawl from one language to another with no sense of reason. A pile of scorched bodies lies in the center of the chamber, twisted bands of metal entwined and warped around the bones of the dead.

Ned walks into the chamber and starts studying the words upon the walls. He is quickly enthralled. The words tell him that the *helm of Chistu* would be purer in his hands, that he doesn't need the others.

Gallfred "borrows" the *useful dagger* from Old Man Fish and uses it to search the pile of corpses for change purses. He finds nothing.

Podrick and Old Man Fish conclude that the dead were probably knights of the Bethine Order. They manage to find a single intact chain shirt, with the symbol of the Bethine Order woven into it with silver wire. Hemp manages to pull two more intact chain shirts, decorated in the same manner. Hemp puts one on and feels nothing beyond what he'd normally feel from wearing a chain shirt.

Eventually, Ned allows Gallfred to drag him out of the room. "Wow. That was like ASMR for chaotic wizards!"

The Hidden Stairway

The characters stumble across a hidden hatch in the corridor floor. Gallfred sends Podrick down first, into a long rectangular chamber that is surprisingly dry. He sees about thirty hooded figures inside, all kneeling in prayer. The chamber is illuminated by sconces made in the shape of a pair of steepled hands.

Podrick steps into the chamber. As he does, the corpses rise in perfect unison and bow their heads to him, then remain motionless. He calls up, “Hey guys! We’ve got like thirty animated corpses in here!” The corpses make no other motion towards him.

The other characters, mostly wearing chain shirts or using ritual “I am peaceful” gestures, make their way carefully through the dead.

Beyond the rectangular prayer room, Podrick enters a throne room. An armored figure seated upon the throne speaks to Podrick, “I am Knight Commander Armand Tergin of Knights Bethine. Many years ago I sacrificed myself so that Orvun would be trapped forever, but now his spirit scratches within his tomb seeking freedom. Would you pledge yourself to the Bethines and destroy his shadow?”

Podrick is drawn to promises like this like a moth to a flame. He agrees instantly and is rewarded in return with the *Shield of the Bethines*, a +1 shield with some other attributes. In return, he needs to destroy an ancient corrupted magician.

The actual sepulcher of Orvun isn’t really obvious, so Podrick walks around looking for a “feeling”. The *helm of Chistu* draws him towards Ned’s book. Ned caught his eyes upon some more carvings, so Podrick just takes the book from his nerveless fingers. Then Ned starts having visions of ancient members of the Order of the Bethines performing rituals using the book and the helm. He gains understanding of three rituals:

- **Ritual of Purification** (to cleanse the shrine’s inner spaces)
- **Ritual of the Seal of Consequences** (to safely open the arcane portal on the ceiling)
- **Ritual of Consecration** (to purge Orvun the Corrupted and erase the last traces of Zeron)

The characters return to the corridor with the Seal of Consequences. Podrick sits down to conduct the Ritual of Seal of Consequences, which takes four hours.

While the Warrior Quietly Meditates

Podrick is busy performing the Ritual of Seal of Consequences, leaving the others with little to do. Gallfred sets up a silent dice game. He loses 11 gp to Hemp. Ned and Old Man Fish both watch them play. After five minutes, Ned goes back into the evil hypnosis room and stares at the walls. He starts to feel a kinship to Zeron’s mistress, *Princess Neyach*. She is a demon princess – and he if he were ever interested in abandoning *Palymbidis* he could take her as a patron. Or he could learn a random demonic spell! He chooses to learn *curse* (level 2 clerical spell – but treat as a wizard spell in Ned’s hands).

Podrick finishes the ritual, at which point the runes glow white. Everyone steps up on to the dais one at a time, vanishing as they are transported to the tomb of Orvun the Corrupted.

The Tomb of Orvun the Corrupted

The characters stand in a cavernous stone chamber. The air is dry and smells slightly of camphor and spices. Everything is dark. There are signs nearby that someone dragged something heavy towards the north. Old Man Fish can see through the darkness; he spots a figure in rotted clothing sitting against the north wall.

The characters move across the chamber. As they do, the corpse-like figure speaks: “So, you have come at last at the behest of the scions of the Faith. I expected someone to come when the bonds of this place started to break. You might think me a monster, but I am in truth a Saint! But do what you come for! Destroy me so this corruption can be dispelled and I can rest in peace!”

Podrick steps forward and strikes him. He has 1 HP and puts up no resistance.

Once Orvun dies, the demon that has been possessing him boils out of his body. Orvun’s spirit is released to whatever reward he is owed. The demon manifests as a cloud of black smoke. Ned Wimbley casts his new spell and curses a demon – which is a pretty badass boast to be able to make. Podrick tries stabbing it, which really doesn’t work well when it’s nothing more than a cloud.

Zeron tries to steal away Podrick’s strength. Podrick ignores his attempt. Which is also pretty badass.

Hemp shoots Zeron with the *blazefire bow*, burning the demon with divine fire. This surprises the demon quite a bit. It wasn’t seriously expecting to be attacked by the gods.

Luigiphon floats in and strikes Zeron with the *coprolite club*. If Zeron had a head, Luigiphon would have beaten the demon unconscious. It’s perhaps fortunate that the creature has no head when it’s in the shape of a smoke cloud.

Then Zeron strikes Podrick and drains away 6 STR. Podrick turns pale and staggers but doesn’t drop the *shield of the Bethines* (even though it’s suddenly a lot heavier).

A second later, Hemp shoots Zeron again, using the power of the *blazefire bow* to force the demon to take physical form. Zeron manifests as a 12’ giant with humanoid form but containing only the void. He is covered by glowing maggots with human heads, one for each soul he has dominated. And as soon as he manifests, Gallfred stabs him through with *shadeslayer* and he falls. His void expands to fill the room and vanishes as all of his trapped souls flee screaming.

Even More Ritual Recitation

The Ritual of Consecration requires twelve (twelve!) hours of recitation and chanting from the book. Podrick is the only lawful character, so this ends up being all his task. The others just sit around, prepare dinner, and (in Gallfred’s case) search the desiccated body of Orvun the Healer for spare cash. For the record, the ancient dead healer had nothing.

When the Ritual of Consecration is completed, Podrick feels the pure, cleansing light of Law spread through the formerly corrupted shrine. A shimmering portal appears where Orvun’s body once was. The

characters step through, returning them to the stone platform underneath the spring on the morning 19th of Umbro. And as a side bonus, this cleanses the *helm of Chistu*. Among other things, this will allow Podrick to turn demons and undead as a Cleric of his level +2 (which will probably allow him to decimate armies of low-level undead).

As soon as Hemp and Gallfred leave the shrine they regain the ability to speak. And the first thing Hemp says is, “Hey, we’re really close to the Secret Cave!”

The first thing Gallfred says is, “Hey, you owe me 5 gold!”

Ned hands Gallfred 5 gold. They had a bet, you see.

Podrick Is Exhausted. We Need to Camp

Ned Wimbley sets up another camp because Podrick is too tired even to walk. He does a great job, right until it develops that a lot of the group’s water supply is tainted. Ned tells the others not to worry – they’re close to the ocean, and they can fill up on water there. Nobody seeks to correct him on this.

Podrick sleeps.

Gallfred looks around for poisonous herbs. He finds one unit of them and is pleased by this.

Old Man Fish stares at Podrick while he sleeps. Then he decides that is creepy and goes hunting instead. He comes back with a mouse. It’s worth 1 meat – Old Man Fish fries the little creature up and eats it whole.

Ned Wimbley takes his unholy book back from Podrick and reads it. Sadly, the book’s contents blur into madness. He gains nothing, but he can try again in 3 days.

Hemp goes hunting and suffers a bit of a mishap. He brings down a rabbit. Unfortunately, the rabbit is sick. He shares his catch with Podrick, and while Podrick is unaffected Hemp suffers from a case of *warren rot*. Fortunately, Old Man Fish comes back from his hunt and uses the power of Findire to fix him right up.

Why Does Ned Always Set Up Camp?

The characters head out towards the Secret Cave in the afternoon. They camp in the evening, and as usual Ned sets the camp on fire again. Fortunately, Old Man Fish is able to bring down a boar (4 meat & 2 pelts) so everyone eats well. Hemp goes fishing (2 units of fish). And Ned eats rocks.

Gallfred sets everyone’s concerns aside and collects up another unit of poisonous herbs. There are lots of poisonous plants in delta wetlands!

The End of the Session

The session ends on the eve of 20th Umbro with the characters camping out along the coast, heading towards the Secret Cave. Podrick gains 2 LUCK for cleansing a Lawful shrine and the *helm of Chistu*. Each character gains 8 XP – leaving Podrick only 1 EXP shy of 5th level!