

# 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

*Bruce* is on time, or at least a fraction of him is: he's kind of virused up at the moment and isn't confident he'll survive through the whole session. *Chris* has different problems: it's his Mom's birthday, and he's decided that blood is more important than hanging around with his layabout friends.

*Patrick* calls in, but he is very silent. He is also quite morally conflicted. He asks, "Am I doing the right thing?" Bruce avers that we are all asking this all the time, and so often the answer is, "No..."

*Paul* summarizes the situation when he joins in: Bruce is sick, Chris is out, *Ernest* will be late because he is doing the right thing, and *Tim* is having webcam problems. He suggests that this is the right time for a really intense, high-density play experience.

Tim eventually resolves his technical problems and then describes how the new edition of *Coriolis* thoroughly embraces the "fail forward" idea as a way to keep games moving.

By the time *Ernest* finally arrives, everyone is grinding their way through a conversation about the application of real physics and astronomy to science fiction settings. He turns things around by delving into the parallels between *Alien Earth* and zombie apocalypse worlds.

## Wilderness Travel – This Time with No Ranger!

It is the morning of 20<sup>th</sup> Umbro. Tomorrow is *Fateweaver's Revelry*, followed by *Spring Renewal* the day afterwards. Apparently, the Vernal equinox is full of holidays. Fateweaver's Revelry is important to the cult of *Areril*, who is associated with Nature and Fate. And the Spring Renewal festival is just a big party, with lots of dancing.

*Hemp the Weaver* complains about all these newfangled religious holidays. Except that he really likes it when all the women start wearing sundresses. *Ned Wimbley* snaps back, "Okay, Boomer!"

Holidays and nostalgia aside, the characters are moving through the river delta south of the Secret Cave. Up ahead, they hear the chittering clack of insect legs. They draw closer and see a group of cloaked women throwing spells at a giant, glossy centipede. One of the women (possibly witches) is already down, half-crushed by the huge arthropod.

The characters are distressingly virtuous (at least from *Gallfred Weasel's* perspective) and the prospect of just leaving the witches to their centipede-food fate is not something most of the group is willing to consider. Even *Podrick* indicates that he is honor-bound to first save the witches and then judge them for their witchery afterwards.

The fact that they appear on the battlemat as “Drowned Fen Nice Ladies” doesn’t clarify the ethical implications of the conflict all that much.

Both Podrick and Hemp open fire with their bows. Both of them miss. It is very disappointing.

From closer up, the characters can see that the nice old ladies are dressed in silt-stained robes. They bear fetishes made from bone and leather. The oldest has eels woven into her long gray hair and has webbed hands. The others follow the same general fashion aesthetic, just with less overall commitment. The characters watch as the centipede bites and poisons the youngest of the ladies. Apparently, old ladies of the fen don’t have very good Fortitude saves. The oldest casts a *magic shield*, while the youngest (still not yet dropped from the poisoned bite) uses *chill touch* ineffectively against the centipede.

Podrick tries to climb down the cliff, but his recently drained muscles betray him and he actually ends up tumbling down. He is merely grateful that he didn’t actually break any bones. Hemp takes the opportunity to shoot the centipede in a way calculated to enrage it enough to charge Podrick. This tactic works brilliantly, though Podrick isn’t nearly as pleased by the outcome of this experiment.

Nobody sees Gallfred as he climbs down the cliff. They do see him when he gets to the base, because it’s daytime and he’s out of cover.

The centipede goes for Podrick, which provides plenty of opportunity for the witch to almost kill it with *chill touch* (a spell that has a 30’ range, for all that it’s name includes the word “touch”). Another witch summons up three swamp rats, which swarm over the centipede and kill it.

The witches are very pleased to see the characters, “Yes! This centipede was drawn by the Vernal equinox! The bog spirits will surely favor you!”

Ned scrambles down the ledge. He addresses the witches. “Hey.”

The youngest of the witches (reeds woven into her robes and frogs living in her sleeves) seems actually quite taken by the stranger Ned. His half-earthworm nature doesn’t stop her at all and may even draw her in deeper. “Did you know you have a ghost tail? Let’s go to my tent alone and explore it.” Ned isn’t entirely convinced that she intends to tell him about his links to a greater destiny. And he is fond of her as well.

*Aunty Droga* spits out some red bark juice, “Augh! This one stinks of that city magic! Not the right kind of magic at all!” Ned tells her about *Palymbidis*, and claims that he lives not in a city but deep underground. She doesn’t buy this explanation at all.

*Mother Nissel* approaches Hemp the Weaver. “The bog spirits favor you for helping us! Would you like your fortune cast? Or maybe you would like a water-breathing charm?”

Hemp knows he’s going to a coastal cave and thinks that water breathing is the way to go. It is a fetish armed from a drowned noble’s finger bone. Snapped, it grants water breathing for an hour. Hemp learns that the witches live in the

Drowned Fen to the southwest. She and her sisters are fond of the banjo, but they prefer to sing. She and her sisters demonstrate, with a done that is completely unforgettable.

Nobody is paying attention to Gallfred as he harvests a sticky sac of centipede venom. Used to coat a weapon, it provides +1 damage and increases the save DC of any *other* poison by +1. It lasts for an entire fight. Gallfred is very pleased.

### Giant River Centipede

Init +2; Atk bite +5 melee (1d8 + poison); AC 14; HD 4d8+4; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP poison bite (DC 13 Fort or 1d4 STR dmg); multi-legged charge (can move and bite in same round); clings to walls/trees/witches; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; AL N.

## The Festival of Drowned Moons

*Crenna of the Reeds* (the youngest of the witches) invites Ned to attend the upcoming two-day *Festival of Drowned Moons*. She is saddened when he explains that his Lawful companion things he’s on a strict timetable and won’t be able to join her and her companions.

## Moth-Monsters at the Secret Cave

The characters manage to find the Secret Cave by the end of the next day. Along the way, Hemp manages to sprain his ankle while dismounting from his horse (-1 AGI damage). Curiously, his horse also sprains his ankle. Nobody understands how this happens.

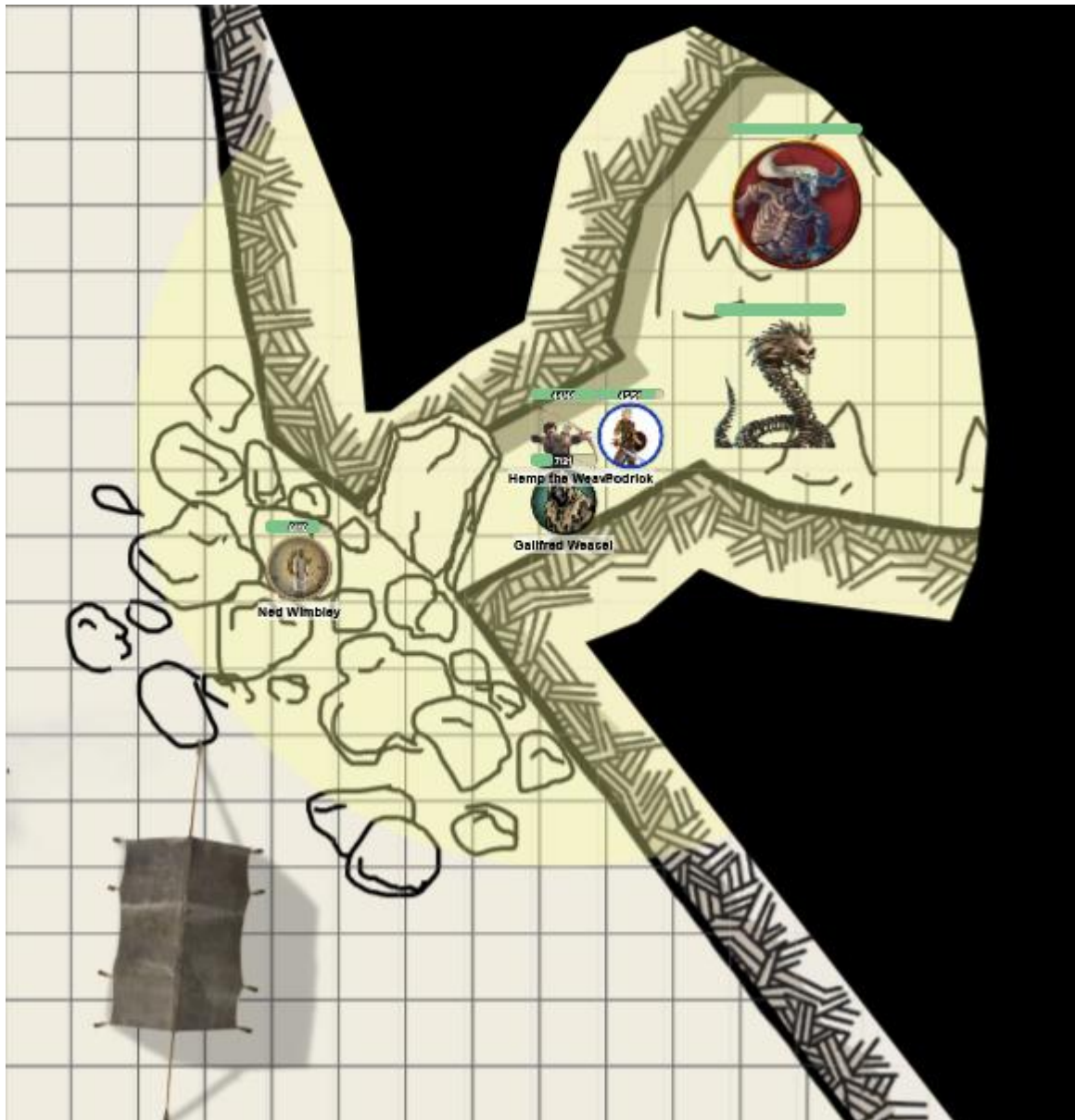
The characters set camp to rest through the evening. They trust Ned Wimbley to pick the campsite, which works out well for a change. And then they choose Gallfred to stand watch, which works out less well. Later in the night, an eerie sensation starts to spread through the darkness. Strange deaths-heads loom overhead in the night sky. In response to this otherworldly occurrence, those moths that have been drawn to the characters’ fire undergo a horrible transformation into batlike creatures with red-glowing eyes and glinting fangs. They are *vampire moth-bats*!

Podrick wakes up to the sound of Gallfred screaming. He watches as five moth-bats swarm the thief. Ned makes a lot less noise because he’s sleeping as a moth-bat latches on to him. He gestures, and *Luigithon* squashes the bat with the *coprolite club*. A *magic missile* erases the one attached to Hemp.

Gallfred uses *shadeslayer* to cut one of the moth-bats attached to him in half. Now he only has one moth-bat drinking his blood!

Podrick uses his dagger to fling the moth-bat attached to him into the fire. The creature lands in the flames already dead. The impact causes the flames to flare up, burning another of the moth-bats. This has the paradoxical effect of forcing all four to attack him, and one of those manages to latch on to him.

Hemp decides that this is the time to show off his archery skills. He shoots three of them with a single arrow, which is pretty impressive. Gallfred is pleased to have only one moth-bat still attached to him, a number that drops to zero when Luigiphon clubs it to death.



In the

morning light, the characters are able to see that the Secret Cave is a lonely hillock, mottled with yellowed coastal grass. Piles of weathered stones left over from an old landslide lie around the hillslope. The landslide also exposed a cave entrance, which has since been reinforced with a primitive mortar of gravel and clay, then blocked with a giant stone slab. Opening it up requires an hour of hard labor... from Luigiphon, who excavates as the characters watch from their camp.

## The Barrow Bones

Once the door is cleared, Podrick wrenches the slab aside to reveal an upward-sloping tunnel. Gallfred creeps into the darkness. He cannot see much until a polearm made of bone emerges and clobbers him.

Podrick hears Gallfred scream, which was the agreed-upon sign. He moves forward and pulls Gallfred back behind him. Two shapes come into view. One is a skeletal monstrosity with four arms and a horned head, the other is a human skull mounted upon an extended spine with a poisonous stinger at the end that moves with snaky unpredictability.

Hemp takes aim at the four-armed monster and shoots, inflicting some damage. The creature responds by stepping forward and unleashing a *bone blast* at the group.

Gallfred decides he's had enough of this and withdraws, just in time to watch Ned misfire a *magic missile*. The resulting magical blast does another point of damage to him. And to Ned, though that's less interesting to Gallfred.

Podrick decides that now is the time to call upon the spirit of the *Bethunes* to turn the monsters. They are not impressed. The ox barrow bones claws him for his trouble. Ned casts *mirror image* on Podrick, filling the corridor with false Podricks.

Gallfred has no interest in moving closer to the barrow bones, so he shoots the snaky one with his sling. He gets a very solid hit, leaving the thing disoriented. He shoots it again and delivers another solid hit. Then Luigiphon crushes the creature into fragments.

Hemp shoots the ox barrow bones through an eyesocket with the *blazefire bow*, giving it a penalty to its next attacks... all of which go against images. Gallfred takes advantage of its focus upon the images and plinks it with another sling bullet.

Podrick stabs the bull barrow bones with *ulftheonar's wolf-spear*. He gets a solid hit but is disappointed to discover that his piercing weapon actually only does as much damage as Gallfred's sling.

The barrow bones responds with another *bone blast* that leaves Podrick, Hemp, and Ned wounded. Then Gallfred hits it with a sling bullet in the center of its ox skull. The skull shatters and the creature falls.

Gallfred is utterly stunned by the effectiveness of his sling.

The characters look around the chamber. Much to Gallfred's dismay, the barrow bones were not carrying any treasure. None at all. Not even a single copper minim.

Half of the characters are beaten pretty badly, and *Old Man Fish* isn't available to pump out hit points like a bellows, so they elect to rest for a day. Hemp is the least-wounded character so he takes first watch. They sleep through the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> and wake on the morning of 21<sup>st</sup> Umbro.

## The Flower Cairn

A narrow corridor leads away and down from the initial chamber, ending in a chamber 15' across with a cairn in the center. Dried, dead flowers decorate the cairn. As the characters approach, a young person's voice calls out in their heads, "Why did he stop believing?"

Podrick steps forward and asks, "Who is he? Who stopped believing?"

Hemp knows that 330 years ago there was some brother-on-brother violence. Both were followers of Aphiel, but one lost faith and then the two of them fell to fighting.

Podrick is able to see a faint figure ahead. The figure mourns for *Boak* and gives its own name as *Tammun*. "You blame my father, but I want you to forgive him!"

Hemp tries to untangle the threads, "Did your father, or your other uncle, kill someone?"

"He and *Uncle Zugun* fought in the Star Room."

"Are either of them still there?"

"Only echoes. Uncle Zugun hovers between life and death. If you can find him, he must forgive my father."

Hemp offers, "Well, that makes sense. Aphiel preaches victory but if you lose a battle you can't obsess about it for hundreds of years like a bitch."

Tammun remembers his father and his uncle crying over his body after he died of a fever. And this was presumably when his father Boak lost his faith.

Hemp is reassuring, "It's not your fault. Rest easy, and we can set things right between your father and your uncle."

"Thank you for saying so. Take this!" A river stone marked with a child-sized fingerprint floats up from the cairn. Hemp accepts this gift and urges Tammun to go safely to Aphiel's fiery halls.

### Tammun's Token

A spectral river-stone marked with a child's fingerprint). Once per adventure, the bearer may reroll a failed saving throw. After use, the token turns to dust.

## The Star Chamber

The corridor ends in a large square chamber. A giant obsidian table decorated with glimmering quartz bits dominates the center of the chamber. The floor around the table is scorched and blackened. Shattered columns lie around the edges. On the far edge, a stone coffin lies partially buried under the wreckage. It is aged and lacks any obvious markers.

Clutching the evil dagger *abathon* (which lets him *see invisible* and speak Infernal, among other things), Gallfred moves close to the coffin. He sees that the coffin was assembled hastily and without care.



Everything about it makes him think that it is a trap. He moves back to warn the others, and mutters to himself in Infernal.



Suddenly, the moonstone fragments on the table erupt in moonlight (which isn't, granted, super bright). In the light, two figures appear locked in combat. One of them is dressed as a war cleric, the other carries a twisted staff and has a bestial limb. The characters watch the last moments of the fight between Zugun and Boak. At the end, the Wizard Zugun has Boak defeated and offers him mercy – but Zugun betrays his brother and strikes him down.

None of the characters knows nearly enough about astrology or the celestial spheres to recognize anything about the pattern of moonstone on the table.

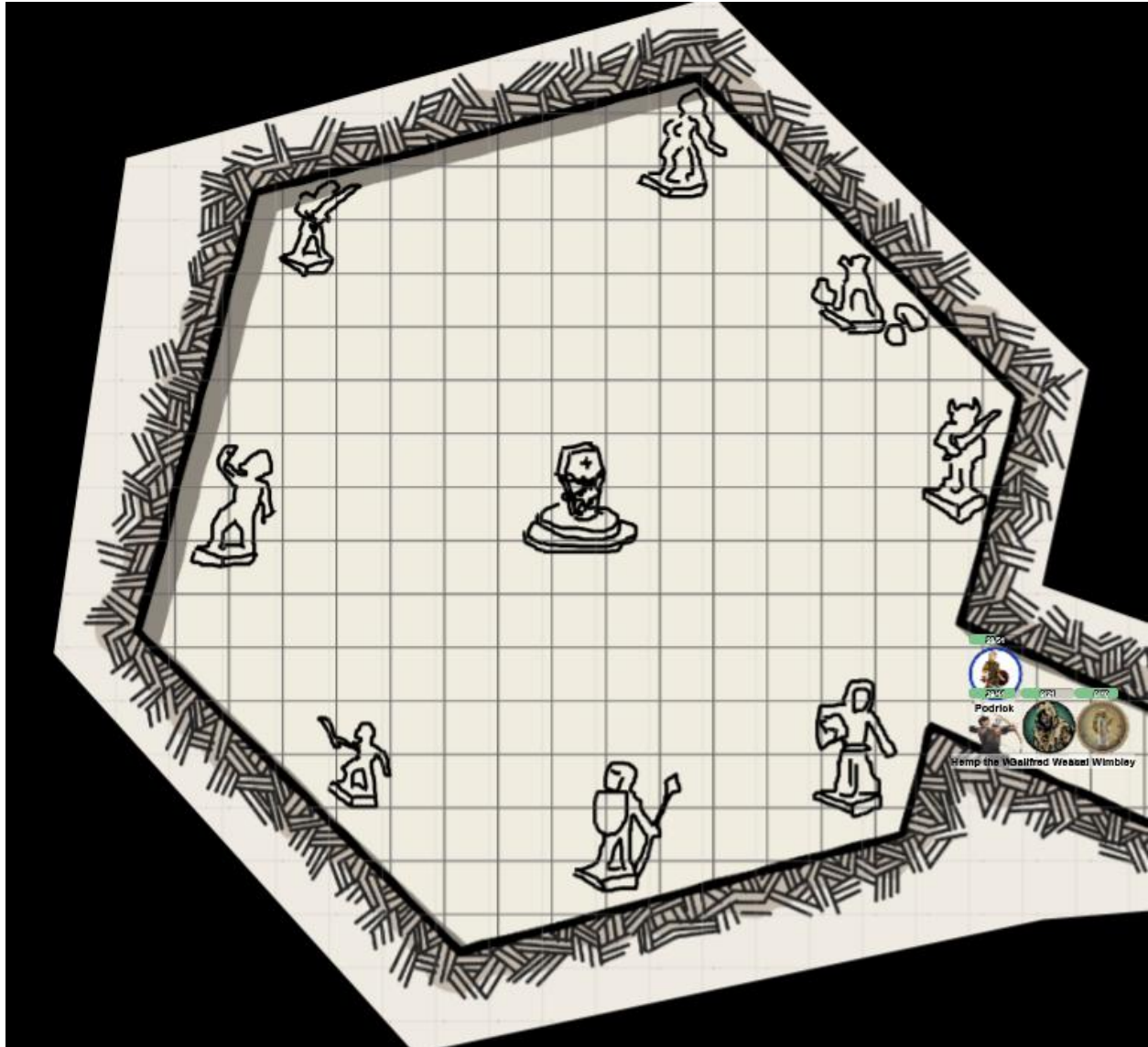
Hemp decides to summon his (Aphiel-oriented) spectral demon. The demon explains that the moonstones show the constellations from 333 years ago, the last known astral convergence tied to a divine transfiguration. The next will happen in 20 days. At that point, someone with the correct rituals, power, and knowledge could be transported into the heavens

as a demigod.

Hemp speculates on whether he has what it takes to become a demigod. Even the shadow demon is pretty skeptical. He also guesses that Boak might have been trying to complete the ritual 333 years ago.

While everyone was distracted by the shadow demon, Gallfred picks 5 moonstones (5 gp each) out of the edges of the table. Nobody notices.

## The Chamber of Confinement



The final chamber is a giant hexagonal chamber. At the center, a giant chained coffin floats in the air. It practically crackles with divine promise. Seven statues line the walls – all of them are half-melted, as though they had been burned with divine fire. According to the legends, Zugun is trapped in the coffin and Boak is highly likely to manifest as the characters get closer to the coffin.

Hemp cuts himself and bleeds a hit point of blood onto his *zeth-gorak demon idol*, which allows him to cast *bane* on an enemy. Ned starts casting *enlarge* on people, which prompts Hemp to step into the



chamber. The instant he does, portals open and the twisted remains of failed champions emerge, one on either side of the chamber.

Podrick and Hemp move in to the attack. Hemp shoots one wraith with the *blazefire bow*, stating his intentions to free Zugun. As he does so, he can hear banging noises from the coffin and can almost hear words. He is inspired, and his arrow tears apart the wraith, sending it back to the lower planes.

Ned hardly wants to be upstaged. He blasts the second specter with a single powerful *magic missile*. There is nothing left.

Gallfred takes a look at the chains on the coffin. His hope is that he can pick the lock, but he doesn't see any locks. He can guess what happens next, so he just fades into the darkness. And his caution is rewarded, because a moment later more foes appear. A construct hound made of bones, bronze helmets, and weapons steps out of the portal.

Podrick charges the hound, but things go deeply wrong. Everyone else is grateful that none of his allies are within his strike zone. Ned decides that the metal hound has to go, and casts a *magic missile* that blasts it into pieces all at once.

Gallfred looks at the shield on one of the melted statues. He realizes that it is an actual, separable, magical shield. He claims himself a *+1 shield*. Specifically, the *shattered shield of krel-ta*.

#### Shattered Shield of Krel-Ta (statue debris)

Counts as +1 shield, grants immunity to fear once per adventure when raised in war cry.

Then more monsters show up, one of them right next to Gallfred: there are three more wraiths. Podrick makes quick work of one of them. Ned obliterates one more with *magic missiles*, but the third survives his strike long enough to miss him. Then Gallfred comes out of nowhere to destroy it. Ned is amazed by the fact that Gallfred is now carrying a cracked and broken shield.

"Nice shield, dude!"

"Thanks!"

Hemp moves up to the coffin. A ritual starts. He hears the words of Zugun, and he is completely occupied by the conduct of the ritual for the next five rounds (or, really, until he makes 5 Will saves). Zugun intones, "I burn! Let the war be won! Let the god be fed!"

A couple of stronger wraiths show up. Ned floods the zone with *mirror images* to keep them occupied, and away from Hemp. One of them gets through and gets cut up (but not quite killed) by Gallfred for its trouble.

Podrick takes a hit on the head that leaves him ringing like a bell. And deaf for a little while. He responds by destroying a wraith, then moving to intercept another one.

Ned notices that things are getting a little bit out of hand – the wraiths are showing up faster than the characters are able to dispose of them. He drops a huge amount of spellburn into a deeply unimpressive *magic missile* that is still strong enough to destroy the wraith Gallfred stabbed. And Luigiphon is definitely strong enough to eliminate the other wounded wraith. He leaves Gallfred to tank the remaining wraith, a role that Gallfred is singularly poorly-equipped to manage.

And then two more lesser wraiths show up. Will these things never end?

## The Ritual Is Complete!

Finally, Hemp concludes the ritual! Aphiel manifests above him as a blazing helm of blue fire! Hemp immediately gains a patron bond with Aphiel, regains 5 HP, and gains the *blessing of war eternal*: once per day, he may reroll a missed attack. The patron bond gives him a prominent Mark of Aphiel on hand or face (specifically, he has a blazing shield upon the back of his hand), he gains +1 on the next action he takes that honors his patron, once per month he can make a LUCK check to request a minor boon from Aphiel, and he gains some followers – the three prisoners Hemp freed all become first level Warriors and followers of Aphiel. He can gain additional patron bonuses for every 10 additional worshippers he brings to Aphiel.

Also, the wraiths all vanish.

The orichalcum casket starts to thrum with resonance. The voice of Zugun issues forth. “At last, steel and will find me! Champions walk under the fire of victory again!” He goes on like this for quite some time and is sufficiently pleased to welcome Hemp into the fold. However, he does point out that his brother Boak fell to the blandishments of the sorceress goddess *Camue* and her Green Eye. But now, the wheel turns again and Boak moves towards godhood – and he must be stopped. Until that happens, Zugun must remain trapped and watchful.

“A ruin from the time before men. A stellar forge meant to read the death of Luhsaal, a moon that bled flame. The sages failed to see its curse. But Boak... he would drink from its corpse-light to become more than mortal.”

Hemp, “Where is the Luhsaal Wheel?”

"In the Deep Hollows of the Shudder Mountains. Where shadow drinks sun and memory coils like roots. Locals shun the place, for its valleys echo with ancient howls. That is where we go."

The Shudder Mountains are far to the West, and to the south of the grand city of Sewich. Getting there within 20 days would be a trick. Also, Zugun wants the characters to haul him around with them on the way.

## The End of the Session

The session ends with the characters planning out their trip to the Shudder Mountains. Each characters gains 8 EXP, and Hemp gains +1 LUCK.