

DCC: World of Iriolis

Our Group

Player	Character	Description	Class
Bruce	Galfred 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

Tim is talking about how Wednesday was the roughest, but it's not totally clear to *Bruce* exactly what he was doing. The symptoms, however, do explain exactly what was rough. *Chris* understands everything, but he's not explaining, which is really to the satisfaction of everyone.

Patrick is so pleased that Austin has really good weather, at least for Texas. There aren't many hailstorms, no real flooding, and now that all the forests are cut down there's little risk of forest fire.

Ernest reminds Bruce, "Don't give her any power!" It's not obvious what he really means, and nobody wants to interrogate him on this. He also recommends *Fantastic Four* as being a legitimately good movie. *Paul* notes that while he avoids all zombie-related content on principle, *28 Years Later* was also quite worth watching.

Weebrook, Again

The characters have returned to Weebrook after killing off some ghouls doing a ritual along the road. And also executing a chimera doing another ritual. Apparently, now is the time for performing rituals. Also, the town of Weebrook is under informal siege by *Lady Skeme's* undead minions, enough that the *Bloody Arrow Inn* is mostly boarded up. On the plus side, *Joyce the Ardent* at the Temple of Jopha is still annoyingly doctrinaire.

Other folks the characters might want to talk to include:

- *Geoffrey* the aged elf;
- *Father Mystery*, priest of Aereril;
- *Elean*, the paranoid lady dwarf innkeep at the Bloody Arrow;
- *Aneth Knesor* is out at the Rangers Guildhall;
- *Duke Gilan* is in the Great Hall, but is also reported to be deeply unwell;
- *The Bounty Hunters* the characters asked to wait here;
- *The Dwarven Mercenaries* who operate out of the town; and
- *Ymae* the Mad Widow

The Ranger Guildhall

The characters, led by *Old Man Fish*, head over to the Ranger Guildhall.

Aneth Knesor is a halfling, and in addition to running the guildhall she also sells various goods of interest to those who intend to travel through the wilderness. Some characters think that she might also sell bait for fishermen.

She looks up when the characters enter. “Old Man Fish! You’re back! I’ll have to update my odds board.”

Aneth confirms many of the stories the characters have heard. She was a volunteer who went with the Duke to Fythorp and saw that the whole land is being infected by an undead miasma coming out of the town. Lady Skeme has converted the old temple of Alar

into a nexus for her undead powers. Bands of ghouls have been ranging across the countryside setting up roadside shrines and performing rituals, probably to extend Lady Skeme’s powers. She asks, “Are you planning on going out that way?”

Old Man Fish suggests, “We were thinking of doing some work to trim the ghouls’ numbers a bit.”

Aneth answers, “Whatever you want to do. After all, it’s not like we have an army that could stop Lady Skeme’s forces if she were to march upon us. But killing some ghouls is about like sticking your finger into a leak to stop a dike from exploding.”

Old Man Fish asks a number of questions, hoping to learn specifics about the local situation. She provides answers that suggest that yes, Weebrook is in poor shape and that whatever Lady Skeme is doing in Fythorp it revolves around the Sanctuary of Alar and the salt mines. A constant black cloud emanating from the Sanctuary covers the town, and reverse lightning flashes from the black cloud upwards to strike a location in the sky. She also confirms that Lady Skeme is some kind of wizard, and that there aren’t many living townspeople left in Fythorp. She suggests that if there are any survivors in Fythorp they are probably in the *Ogre’s Lair*, the local tavern. When she last visited the place, she was able to see that the building was boarded shut from the inside and had some signs of life including chimney smoke. She also saw a skeletal patrol avoid the building. In contrast, the old Town Hall is taken over: Lady Skeme has an undead judge presiding there, and she is using the place to convert the living into undead.



Old Man Fish thanks Aneth for her help.

Podrick wonders if it's okay to rub Aneth's head for luck.

The Mad Widow Makes a Deal

Gallfred suggests that the characters should speak to Ymae the Mad Widow. He says this on the basis that he got along really well with the *Marsh Witch* at Kingspire – and Ymae is surely drawn from the same wellspring. Surprisingly, the others mostly agree with him. Or they are curious to see what kind of trouble *Gallfred* can get himself into.

Ned Wimbley reminds *Gallfred*, “Don't call it a hovel unless she calls it that first. And remember, it's not a 'crack house', it's a 'crack home'.”

Gallfred knocks, then enters after an elderly voice invites him inside. The interior of the hovel seems larger than the outside. A lovely fire burns in a fire-pit at the center. And the widow spins the light of the fire into golden thread. He introduces himself as, “I don't remember who I am, but I seek to learn about the undead.”

“That's very honest for a young person. But I don't practice that kind of magic. My golden threads protect my home from their kind.”

“My companions seek to travel to Fythorp. Can you provide any assistance?”

“The hair of the dead and my threads can be made into a net that can capture the undead. And I can make such a net for you, if you agree to marry me upon your return.”

Gallfred is having a poor time of it with the *cloak of Cheret*: he certainly doesn't remember his own name, and barely remembers why he is even having this conversation. He agrees to marry her. She threatens him with the Black Death if he goes back upon his promise. And offers to make shackles that can bind any undead if the characters can provide her with the hair of a corpse. *Gallfred* knows that there are corpses by at the Byres. And he's not concerned about the fact that Ymae has (reputedly) been widowed many times.

Old Man Fish asks, “Old Widow, are there any undead in town?”

“It is well known that the walls of this village are patrolled by ghosts at night. They protect the walls, just as they did in life.”

Sign of the Three Rats

The characters' next stop is the *Sign of the Three Rats*, a rundown and dingy flophouse. They notice that the place strives for a measure of authenticity: there are actually three dead rats nailed to the sign. Five dwarves sit around a battered table in the common room. They're playing a dice game using severed fingers as stakes.

A voice calls from the back room, “Well then, the heroes return! Did you bring silver, or do you expect us to work for soup?”

Ned Wimbley answers, “Soup!” He recognizes the voice as that of *Ames the Elder*, the Chaos Mage he met some time ago. The other dwarves are:

- *Catkins*;
- *Wolf*;
- *Wee toes*;
- *Patkin*; and
- *Oleen The Imp*

Ned walks into the back room. He finds Ames is thin and jittery. His beard is wrapped around himself like a ragged scarf. “Are you here to pay us what we’re worth, or what you *think* we’re worth? I assume you’re here as Heroes of Weebrook, about to assault the gates of Fythorp, and you want our help. But we’re not going to do it for free.”

Ned suggests, “Would you do it for exposure?”

Ames doesn’t respond to that.

Old Man Fish suggests, “What’s our daily rate?”

“Fifty gold for each of my people, or cursed relics.”

Hemp the Weaver asks, “Who buys cursed relics?”

“Mostly Lady Skeme.”

He is skeptical, “If you kill her, the market for those is likely to collapse pretty quickly.” The characters agree that a fee of 50

gold per mercenary is a good starting point. They negotiate... no discount at all. Then agree to pay 250



Ironfall Company (Combat Support)

Wolf; 4 HD; AC 15; Greataxe +6 (1d12+2); Frenzies for +1d on crits

Catkins; 4 HD; AC 16; Hammer +5 (1d8+1); Has portable siege spikes

Oleen the Imp; 4 HD; AC 14; Crossbow +5 (1d6); Silent, good for stealth ops

Wee toes; 4 HD; AC 17; Sword +4 (1d8); Wears relic-shard armor (+1 AC)

Ames the Elder: See NPC Roleplay, does not fight unless

gold total (50 per character) for five 4HD dwarf mercenaries, plus Ames the Elder (who won't fight, but who will cast magic).

Security-Oriented Bounty Hunters

The characters find that the four bounty hunters have set themselves up in a dilapidated derelict building that is now pretty solidly fortified. The four of them are:

- *Sylvan Windrider*;
- *Gromm the Stout*;
- *Isolde the Whisper*; and
- *Lilith Blackthorn*

They let the characters in. Gromm the Stout is hammering a helmet back into shape with his fist. Isolde is fading back into the shadows. But everyone stands up when the characters arrive. They appear actually glad to see the group.



Sylvan Windrider Gromm the Stout Isolde the Whisper Lilith Blackthorn

Lilith Blackthorn warns the characters,

“We cannot speak too freely. Lady Skeme has not completed the lattice underneath Weebrook, but when it is done the undead can hear what we say. The lattice is key to her plan to resurrect an ancient death god and is being created within the salt mines of Fythorp.”

Apparently, everyone wants to resurrect ancient death gods – and this one isn't the same as the one scheduled to stand up in the mountains to the West.

Lilith continues on, “Lady Skeme needs one final piece for the lattice.” She gazes at Podrick, who wears the *helm of Chistu*, “And that piece is upon your head.”

The bounty hunters are happy to fight (or just to distract) undead so the characters can make it into the salt mines. The characters aren't entirely certain if they can trust them on the basis of having previously saved their lives, so Hemp sweetens the deal by pointing out that the characters have a gemstone worth 1000 gp that they would be happy to turn over to the bounty hunters once they finish with Lady Skeme.

An Aside: Collecting Corpse Hair

Gallfred Weasel goes off to do this as soon as the sun goes down. He is like a shadow. Shadows are notorious for not having much in the way of memory, so the resemblance is more than just skin-deep. He hands the hair over to the Mad Widow Ymae, who immediately devotes herself to making undead shackles.

The Only Elderly Elf

The characters (less Gallfred, who's off collecting corpse hair) go to visit the aged elf Geoffrey, who has the distinction of being one of only two elves the characters have ever met who are old enough to actually look elderly. The other, of course, is the Swamp Witch of Kingspire.

On the way, Hemp asks the others, "So, what should we plan for Gallfred's bachelor party? Can we swing a trip to Vegas, by which I mean Sewich?"

Ned Wimbley offers, "Traveling carnivals usually have dancing girls – we could look up one of those."

Geoffrey has a cluttered study over a tobacco shop. The scent of stale pipe smoke is ever-present. The effect of stepping into his room is that of entering an overstuffed pawnshop. "Come in! I assume you're here to waste my time or steal my secrets, probably both!"

Hemp leads, "Mordecai says hello, though he's not with us. I'm kind of hazy on what happened to him. What have you been up to? We have gripping stories of the Elder Kith to share."

"What would you know about that?"

"What wouldn't we know?" He tells Geoffrey about the characters' adventures in Kingspire. They have some artifacts from the place to sell, and Geoffrey is very interested in Elder Kith artifacts and curios.

After being plied with some artifacts, Geoffrey is willing to talk. He admits he knows little about Lady Skeme, but he did spend some time corresponding with a scholar who claimed interest in local history. He suspects now that the "scholar" was actually Lady Skeme using an alias and trying to pump him for information on cursed items in the area. She was particularly interested in the *helm of Chistu*, though all he knows is common knowledge. He doesn't know (for example) that it's now a part of Podrick's kit.

Geoffrey does know something about the death god *Chavinaugh* that Lady Skeme seeks to unseal, "The interesting thing about Chavinaugh is that he wasn't originally the god of Death. Originally, he was the god of Humanity, back when humans were immortal. The other gods brought him down for making humans too powerful, and then they had to give humans the ability to die." He is absolutely certain that bringing Chavinaugh back would be a terrible idea.



“You know, just a minute!” Geoffrey heads off to rustle through a stack of papers. He returns with a collection of his correspondence with Lady Skeme. He admits that he doesn’t know a lot about magical stuff but observes that Ned Wimbley might be able to understand more of what she is talking about. He gestures to the broken tablet he had been studying when the characters entered, “Also, this might be some of that cursed bullshit you were talking about. I’ll give it to you. It came to me from a country down South.”

Ned Wimbley examines it. He learns that it bears necrotic energy and is part of a larger piece. He tucks it away in his bag.

The Mysterious Priest of Aereril

The characters seek out *Father Mystery* to hear his advice, if they can understand it.

They find him in the Shrine of Aereril, hooded as always. “You are being watched, but not by me.” *Father Mystery* is the priest of Aereril the Scribe of Omens, and his personal idiom makes that very clear. He holds his giant chained volume., writing in it with ink that glows very faintly. “Something rides the wind between this town and the salt mines. It listens at the windows. It wants names. There is more danger in here than in the shadow.”

Podrick asks, “You’re not giving it names, are you Father?”



“The incense burns bitterly today. But there is no reason to run from the scent.”

The characters suspect that someone should be keeping an eye on Geoffrey. They decide to send Gallfred to the task once he gets back from canoodling with Mad Widow Ymae. Gallfred watches him all night but doesn’t see him do anything more interesting than going downstairs to get more tobacco. He also tells the characters that Ymae promises to have *Ymae’s undead shackles* available for pickup in the morning.

Father Mystery writes in his book. “Life is puzzles. Life is riddles. You will have to work harder to decode mine.”

“The iron fence at the mine entrance melts when touched at night.” – One scout left a glove behind at the salt mine outside Fythorp. His hand has since gone numb.

The Duke's Business

The characters ready their gear and their allies for travel, then stop by the Great Hall to talk to Duke Gilan.

The characters find the Duke sipping a battered goblet of spice wine. He hiccups, "You came back! Good! I hope you brought better luck than I did. I did as you asked: I gathered men and went to that cursed town of Fythorp. It is entirely occupied by undead, and the lake turned black three days ago."

"Tell us what you saw?"

"The salt mine glows at night. There are signs that something huge was dragged down there. Undead patrol the roads. And the sanctuary of Alar has been corrupted!" The Duke paints a thoroughly grim picture of the current state of Fythorp. He observes that the undead no longer make any pretense of concealing their activities. He and his men saw zombies, ghouls, undead miners, and cursed clerics. He saw the undead drag living prisoners to the Death Courts at the town hall and transform them into more undead. His expedition was not without cost: he lost some scouts to undead and death magic.

He gives the characters a useful item: a scroll marking down the undead patrol schedule. He also provides a recently-drawn map of Fythorp.

Hemp suggests that finding some *anti-paralysis* potions would be very helpful. The Duke provides a pendant that provides a +1 bonus to Will saves against fear. Unfortunately, the Mad Widow also doesn't make potions – she's more oriented towards the fiber arts.

The Lay Road

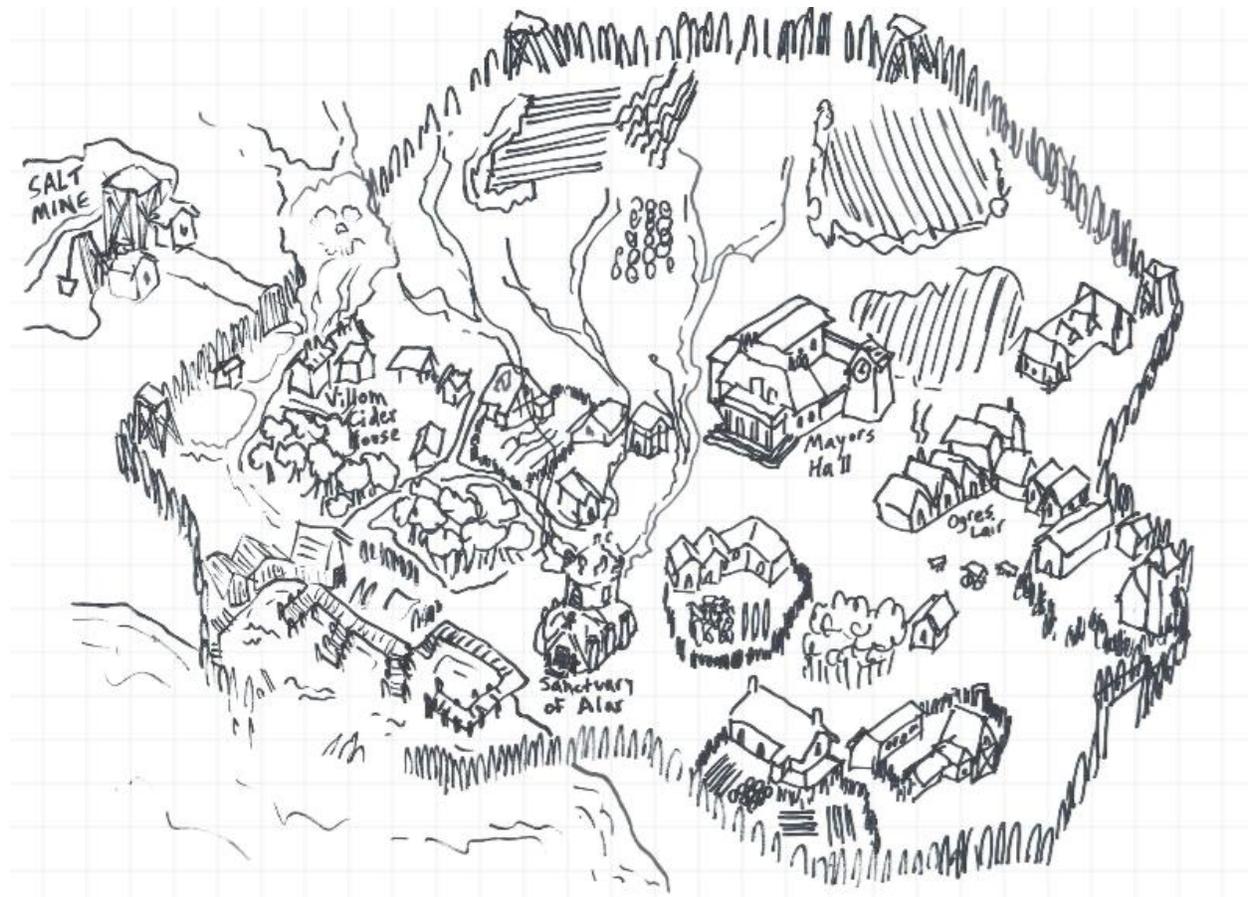
After speaking with the Duke, the characters (and their wagon, and their allies) head out along the Lay Road to Fythorp. They expect to be able to reach Fythorp in a day but aren't sure if they actually *want* to reach it that quickly – there have been stories of evil apple trees near the roads.

Fythorp is famous for apple trees, and as the characters get closer to the town they can see the effects of the corruption. The trees are plagued with fungus and nasty-looking wasps. The fruit is covered in flies and emits a foul smell. The ghouls have placed roadside shrines at regular intervals along the road, and it is apparent that the shrines are transmitting necrotic power.

The town is still surrounded by a palisade wall, now with several watchtowers around the perimeter. The original system of gates and locks to protect the harbor is broken, with bits of gate still poking up



above the surface of the lake. Skeletal archers man the watchtowers. Gallfred is pleased to note that the entire town is covered by a black cloud that makes it dark as night (enough that the *cloak of Cheret the Lost* works no matter what time it is).



The characters decide to set their tent up to the North of the city so they have a (relatively) secure base to retreat to after they have been thoroughly tromped over by the locals.

Within the Ogre's Lair

Hemp the Weaver and Ned Wimbley write an eloquent letter describing how the characters are here to end Lady Skeme, in the same way they previously rescued the Duke's daughter. They hand the letter to Gallfred, who sneaks into town right past a squad of eight zombified apple-pickers (former Fythorp constabulary) and heads to the *Ogre's Lair*. The market square in front of the inn is deserted, with abandoned stalls lying in disarray. The Inn's stone walls are blackened and the windows are blocked from inside with furniture and scraps. There is still a trickle of smoke coming from the chimney. The sign is broken and hanging askew.

There is no sign of undead patrols anywhere nearby.

Gallfred tries flinging pebbles at a window. This has no effect. Then he approaches the front door and slides the letter underneath. A gruff voice challenges him, "If you're not dead, answer me the ogre's last ale."

Gallfred manages to remember enough of the menu to convince the people inside that he's human. They unbarricade the door.

The main hall of the *Ogre's Lair* is dusty and cold and smells of roasted rat. *Alabaster Beerbristle* is there, but instead of speaking in a booming voice he's whispering so the undead don't hear. He is also armed with a crossbow. The priest of Alar, *Atta Paseka*, is there as well, and also much quieter than Gallfred remembers. Behind them there are several other members of the local resistance.

Atta Paseka explains that the storm magic of the Sanctuary has been corrupted and reversed. "Alar's voice is gone from that place." He explains that Lady Skeme's power is focused through the Sanctuary, and if the characters were able to eliminate the cloud then many of her more powerful followers would be unable to operate in the sunlight. He doesn't know how to destroy it, but he does know that there is a tunnel from a dead tree beyond the palisade into the back of the building that would provide an easier way to enter. He draws a map showing the entrance to the tunnel and the interior of the temple.

He goes on to explain that while there are old smuggler's tunnels in the town, the one leading into the *Ogre's Lair* doesn't go beyond the palisade. The priest has mostly been able to keep the undead away with his staff.

The folk in the tavern don't know what is happening in the salt mine, but Alabaster thinks that there are smuggler's tunnels into the mine, perhaps starting at the Cider House.

"And the Cider House? What of the innocent monks there?"

"They have been turned to work for Lady Skeme and her lieutenants, producing substances to aid her rituals in the mines." The undead lieutenant at the Cider Mill was once Alabaster's brother, and he wants it destroyed so his brother's soul can rest.

Gallfred slips away from the town, Cape Fear-style: he clings to the back of a zombie and leaves unnoticed.

Ending Charmaine

The four bounty hunters set a trap – they send a message into the town to indicate that they have the *helm of Chistu* and want to meet with a representative of Lady Skeme. Then the characters set up an ambush site to do away with whoever gets sent.

The bounty hunters stand in position, near a large rock. The rest of the group are hiding in spider holes dug by the dwarf mercenaries. The characters see the woman *Charmeine* fly in, clad in a sea-silk cloak. When they last saw her, she was an Alar worshipper singing at a festival. Now, she is some kind of banshee.

She approaches the rock where the bounty hunters are waiting. Gallfred steps out and tries to bind her with the dead hair. She senses the attack and pulls away, the bindings snapping on air.

Ned Wimbley resorts to *magic missile*. He spears her with a single powerful missile that leaves her deeply injured.

Sylvan demonstrates that he knows *phantom step*. He evaporates into the bushes.

Then Charmeine unleashes a *banshee's wail*. Gromm, Isolde, and Old Man Fish all take a -1 die size penalty due to horrible fear. She blasts the bounty hunters with a shriek that inflicts modest damage, then tries to fly away – but not fast enough! Gallfred snaps the dead hair restraint upon her, ensuring that she cannot fly nor can she teleport. Then Podrick stabs her through with *ulftheonar's wolf-spear*, destroying her instantly.

The characters find out that Charmeine actually brought 5000 gold along with her, because that was the bounty hunters demanded. They bury her in a spider hole. Hemp the Weaver hands the bounty hunters the 1000 gold he promised them, with his thanks for helping in destroying one of Lady Skeme's lieutenants. And then everyone leaves the area, because there's no telling if anyone (or anything) heard the banshee wails.

The End of the Session

The session ends with the characters victorious over one of Lady Skeme's lieutenants and ready to attack the Sanctuary of Alar. Each character gains 4 EXP. Hemp the Weaver goes to 5th level and gains 10 HP!

Side Note: Gallfred is wearing the charm loaned to the group by Duke Gilan. For now he has +1 to Will saves.