

# 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* calls to report both highs and lows. He is almost finished with *Sailor on the Seas of Fate*, one of the early Elric stories. But his cat threw up on his chair blanket – so, it needs to be replaced. *Paul* agrees that it is easier to wash a blanket than a chair. Especially his very fancy Secret Labs chair – it is so expensive that it includes actual customer service, delivered by real people. *Bruce* is only barely paying attention, because he’s obsessed with adjusting his keyboard.

*Ernest* joins in about when *Tim* is describing how (formerly) terminally-ill children in superhuman synth bodies aren’t nearly as concerned about alien xenomorphs as human soldiers. The conversation migrates quickly to the virtues of recent Godzilla movies. *Chris* contributes that when something with nuclear breath shows up, that’s how you know things have gotten real.

## Fythorp and the Sanctuary of Alar

The characters need to find a way into the Sanctuary of Alar, and specifically to the dead tree just outside the palisade of Fythorp where there is a secret tunnel entrance. They suggest swimming underwater, which prompts *Sylvan Windrider* to point out that there is something large and toothy swimming in the lake waters near to Fythorp. So, a land approach it will be.



As a reminder, the characters have two groups of allies:

- **The Bounty Hunters:** *Sylvan Windrider*; *Gromm the Stout*; *Isolde the Whisper*; and *Lilith Blackthorn*
- **The Ironfall Company:** *Wolf*; *Catkins*; *Oleen the Imp*; *Wee toes*; and *Ames the Elder*

These folks are good for diversions, for holding ground, and for (limited) independent operations – but not really as an accompaniment to the characters’ group. In this case, the characters ask the bounty hunters to arrange a distraction at the gate, ideally something involving a donkey, a wagon, and fire. The goal is to draw the undead archers’ attention so the characters and the dwarf mercenaries can reach the tunnel mouth. The mercenaries’ job will be to serve as a tunnel rear-guard, and to do any reinforcement work needed on the tunnel.

## The Dead Tree

Finding the dead apple tree would be very difficult if *Galfred Weasel* hadn't already got the exact location from some of the survivors inside the town. The roots conceal a narrow crawlway. Some excavation is needed to actually open the way. Fortunately, the characters have four dwarfs with them who can do the job quietly in about ten minutes.

### Amathies

Init +4; Atk claw +6 melee (1d6+6) or bite +4 melee (1d5 plus poison); AC 20; HD 6d12; hp 36; MV 35' or slither 40'; Act 2d20; SP poisonous bite, detect good (+8 spell check), half damage from non-magical weapons, fire and lightning; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +8; AL L. Characters bitten by the lamia must succeed on DC 15 Will saves or suffer -1d to their actions for the next hour. Characters reduced to 1d5 action die or lower fall into a coma, and can only be revived by the command (or death) of the lamia.

The characters move in, reinforced with three berserker bodyguards *Grond Halftusk*, *Varka the Blacksmith*, and *Scarn Two-Scars*, and a ferret that *Ned Wimbley* summons up. The lamia *Amathies* accompanies them as well.

The first 20' of the passageway is only about 3' high. The dwarves enlarge the way to allow easier movement. Ned sends out the ferret first. Galfred tries to follow, silently. This is complicated by the fact that he keeps on stepping on the ferret. The passage eventually moves to being stone-lined. The threshold stone is decorated with defaced symbols of Alar and phrases in Old Dwarvish that the characters' mercenary companions mostly cannot read – but the chaos wizard *Amos the Elder* can, and Galfred can puzzle them out to get the gist:

“Only in darkness does the unstruck flame endure.”

It reads a lot like *The Canterbury Tales*, in a class of bored high school students.

## The Narrow Corridor

The characters move through the outer tunnel in single-file. The way widens out into a chamber with about 6 inches of water over the floor. The water doesn't look very healthful. The characters can see an alcove halfway across the chamber.

*Old Man Fish* moves across the chamber. He finds that the alcove includes a low bench for kneeling during prayer, a broken offering bowl, and a wraithlike undead creature that initially looked like a pile of trash. It's just standing before the bowl, not even facing to the characters.

Old Man Fish pulls out some silver and tosses them into the bowl. This prompts the *Restless Confessor* to start moving. Then *Hemp* shoots a magical arrow straight into its chest, disintegrating it instantly.

Old Man Fish searches the alcove and finds a ring, which he puts on. It is the *Storm-etched Relic ring*. The others move through the tunnel.

- **Storm-etched Relic Ring:** Grants +1 to Will saves vs undead effects once per day. Provides more benefits to a priest of Alar.

One of the barbarians starts to develop a hacking cough, probably from exposure to the water. Just as a side note, Gallfred Weasel has the *magical amulet* giving him +1 to Will saves.

## Within the Sanctuary

The characters emerge into the nave of the Sanctuary of Alar behind the altar. The air smells of ash and spoiled incense. Many of the pews have been smashed and partially burned. And there are three bodies lying in front of the altar. The bodies are hooded and motionless, and held upright in a kneeling position by some horrible mechanism. Thin silver wires run up their bodies and up to run along the walls of the nave and to the altar. The phrase, “Only the Dead May Pray” is written on blood upon the walls – so cheerful!

Ned thinks that the bodies are those of former priests of Alar, now mummified and set up to transmit energy through the necrotic wires. Cutting the wires might provoke a backlash. All of the characters can feel the charge in the air – their armor is practically vibrating, and thunder regularly rolls from the skies.

The characters fan out through the sanctuary. Gallfred hides in ambush at the front door. Hemp and his barbarians go up to the second floor. Upstairs, he finds six busts of people (presumably) notable to the cult of Alar, each of them defiled. He also sees a staff possibly sacred Alar staff resting in an alcove – that might also be electrically resistant. The sounds upstairs seem wrong. He sees the stairs up to the bell tower, and holds in place there.

Gallfred finds that the main door of the Sanctuary is sealed and barred with iron. He finds some cubbies for worshippers to store their shoes and umbrellas, but nothing of real value.

## The Restless Echo Arrives on Scene

Hemp sends Gallfred into the second-floor balcony. The trap there is the entire area – he starts to hear his own voice telling him that his companions are going to betray him. Fortunately, his own sense of paranoia is so high that this doesn’t change his behavior at all. He examines the staff and sees nothing trapped that he can see, but he’s pretty sure that it was intentionally placed there as a temptation. Unfortunately, he is avaricious so he takes it anyway. Which triggers some traps. First is a storm-pulse right around Gallfred. He sees the electrical blast coming and dodges as the staff explodes. Gallfred is outraged! The staff is no longer valuable!

Then the *restless echo* shows up.

Hemp tries to repeat his earlier feat of destroying the undead in a single shot. He doesn’t quite manage that, but he does hurt it pretty badly. *Luigirot* flies up and takes a swing at the thing with the *coprolite club*. It is too quick for that and dodges away.

The barbarian Grond Halftusk rushes onto the balcony and swings at the restless echo... missing. The restless echo responds with a *withered chant* that degrades Gallfred's clerical casting. It also withers him, which rather upsets him. Gallfred also notes that the creature's touch carries an electric charge. He avoids that because he's faster than electricity.

And, finally, Hemp destroys the thing with a burning arrow. All that is left after it disintegrates are a few scorched bones.

## Sacrifice Play to End the Undead Electrical Channels

Ned summons up an incredibly unhealthy *dire wolf* (with 2 HP). His plan is to send it and the ferret to deal with the kneeling bodies and the silver wires. Everyone else hides behind the pews, expecting that both creatures are going to explode so badly that others might get hit by the fragments. The ferret is killed instantly by psychic feedback, *Scanners*-style. The wolf (amazingly) survives severing one set of wires, only to perish in similar fashion while severing the last set of wires.

With the psychic circuit interrupted, the echo trap on the balcony is weakened. Awesome. Everyone who hasn't already dealt with it gets a +2 bonus to their Will save. Unfortunately, Skarn Two-Scar becomes afflicted by evil echoes. He's convinced that Amathies the lamia will betray him tonight. He turns to her, "You! You've been waiting to betray us all along! But I figured it out! You're working for Lady Skeme!"

Hemp and the other two barbarians swiftly grab Skarn, allowing Gallfred to pour some *lamprey milk* down his throat. Skarn falls asleep for the next 21 hours.

## The Stormlight Chamber

The room above has scorched floors. Five obelisks of copper and bone stand through the room, linked by lightning discharges. The mummified remains of dead Alar storm priests float in the air, suspended by electricity and magic.

A ghostly female figure with blackened pits for eyes stalks the room. She is *Sister Veedra*. She intones, "Alar's Will is not here anymore, but his heart still beats for me!"

Amathies ignores the wraith. She strikes down one of the suspended storm priests, interrupting part of the network.

Ned casts *magic shield* on Gallfred, giving him +4 AC and immunity to *magic missile* for the next 20 minutes. Varka the Blacksmith and Grond Halftusk run right past him to assault Sister Veedra. Amazingly, both of them inflict critical hits. She suffers catastrophic damage and would have had her weapon knocked away if she were actually using one.

Sister Veedra is none too happy with the situation. She strikes both barbarians with *chain lightning*. She flings regular *lightning* at Amathies (who dodges out of the way). She finds that none of these activities have improved her mood at all.

Then Hemp skewers her with an arrow. She explodes in a burst of electricity. One bolt reaches out to zap Hemp in retribution. The rest of it grounds out in Varka and Grond. Varka is sustained only by the extra hit points from his *battle madness*. Old Man Fish is ready with healing blessings, and both of them are back up in a moment.

Ned notices that the copper-and-bone pylons are entering some kind of a feedback loop without Sister Veedra to stabilize them. He calls out, "Break the pylons! Tear down the corpses!"

The characters destroy the pylons and tear down the dead priests. The situation is stabilized.

Sister Veedra did have two *electric arc rods*. They are used together as a single melee weapon. They count as a +1 weapon inflicting d6 damage. On a successful strike, the rods create an arc to a second opponent to inflict the same amount of damage (1d6), DC12 reflex for half. One of the barbarians takes them.

## The Stormheart Engine

It is still dark outside, and Amathies finds a trap door leading up to the

The Storm Heart Engine, a spinning orb the size of a cartwheel suspended upon three silver supports. At the center a fragment of the altar of Alar floats. Three bronze rings carved with symbols of storm, wind, and sea around the edges. Someone was standing on each of these once, but all that is left of them now are their boots and some ash.

Gallfred free-climbs up to the belfry to look at it. He thinks that the engine might be vulnerable. But it's the wizards who were thinking about how to shut it down, so he goes back to fetch Ned.

Ned suggests that there are three choices:

- Brute force. There might be a backlash.
- Ritual shutdown. This would require a spell check.
- Attune. Three people would be needed, and there would be PER and WIL checks involved. Failure is likely to result in a quick conversion into boots and ash.

Ned works a ritual to shut the engine down. *Lady Skeme* immediately notices as the sky brightens and her undead are weakened. Hemp and several others head down to the Sanctuary door to ensure nobody breaks through. Meanwhile, Gallfred borrows the *useful dagger* back from Old Man Fish and uses it to carve 20 gp worth of silver chains from the Stormheart Engine.

## Onward! To the Court!

The characters take advantage of the confusion among the undead to rush the courthouse and stage a rescue attempt. They break into the building to find that it is populated by an entire staff of undead, including:

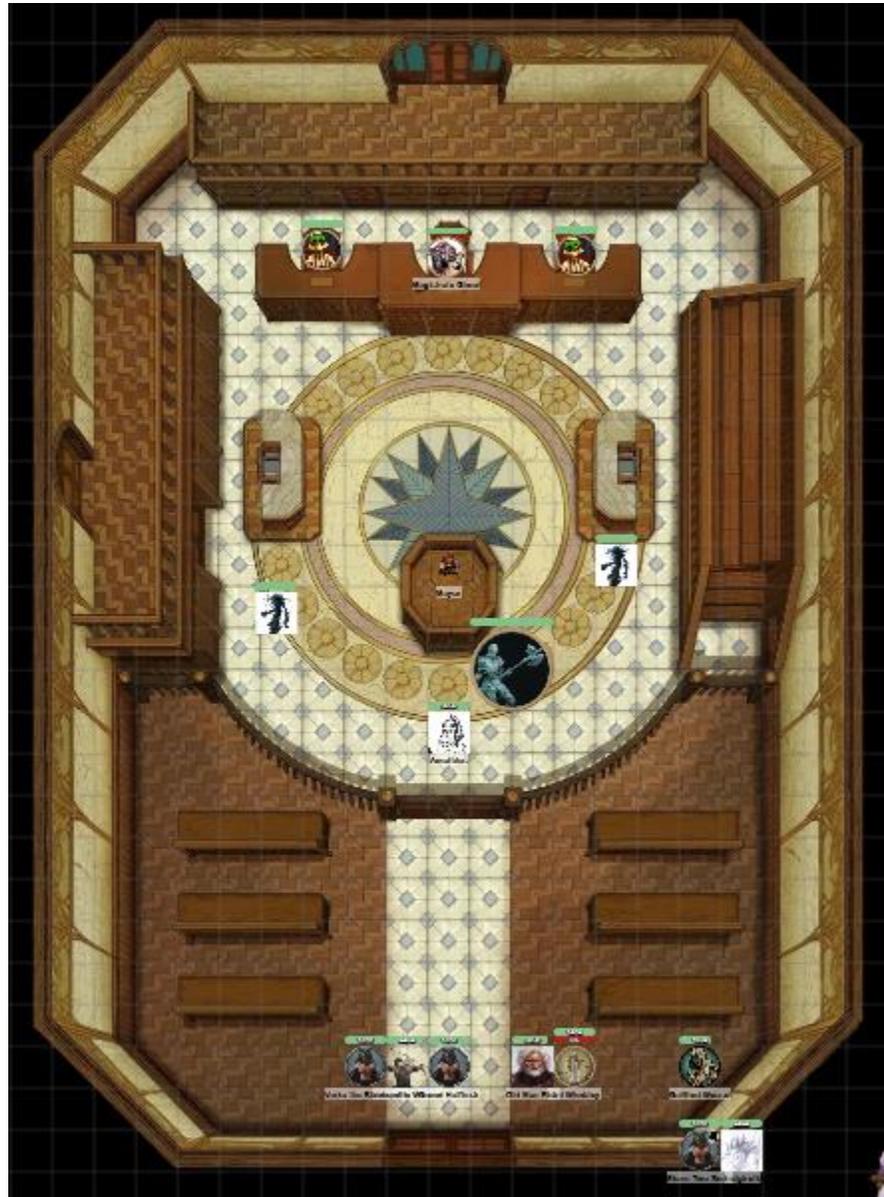
- Magistrate Ghool, his robes still pressed but his jaw hanging free

- Two Skull Clerks
- The Pale Bailiff
- A bushel of Witness Wraiths

There are also several human prisoners. As the characters bust in the undead officials have the Mayor on trial for the crime of being unlawfully living. *Magistrate Ghool* intones the verdict, "You have been found guilty of the charges! Your sentence is immediate transformation! Bailiff, carry out the will of the court!"

Gallfred stealthily moves towards the bench. Amathies has no patience for that kind of activity – she just charges.

Magistrate Ghool intones, "You were not given permission for this display!" He casts *word of binding*. She ignores the spell. Then the Pale Bailiff approaches with his big halberd. He has the *slam sentence* and *executioner's bell* abilities and really wants to use them.



Hemp fires upon the Pale Bailiff with the *blazefire bow*, deeply injuring him.

Two Witness Wraiths approach quickly, both of them still weeping from the stress of testifying against the living. They strike Hemp and afflict him with *grief* and with unnatural boils that cause him ongoing damage any time he engages in vigorous activity. Grond Halftusk runs up and destroys one of the Witness Wraiths. The creature utters a deafening death-scream, deafening Varka.

Old Man Fish shoots an arrow through the window behind Magistrate Ghool, breaking it. The sunlight pours in.

Ned Wimbley zaps Magistrate Ghool with a tiny *magic missile*. Hemp follows up with an arrow right into the Magistrate's "tongue-box," which impedes his magical tricks.

Amathies continues to claw away at the Pale Bailiff with great abandon. The creature shudders under the impact of her strikes. It returns with a halberd strike that is slowed by sunlight, allowing her to evade. Her evasions distract the creature enough that it doesn't even see Old Man Fish's incoming arrow. But then the two Skull Clerks float down from their seats to box in the lamia.

Ned Wimbley decides to try another *magic missile*. He gets a giant powerful missile, that he uses to transfix Magistrate Ghool. The Magistrate collapses with one final statement, "Order is Eternal. Life is not."

Gallfred comes out of nowhere to backstab a Skull Clerk, leaving him wounded and slowed.

Amathies destroys the Pale Bailiff, then attempts to attack a Skull Clerk and finds that they are immune to nonmagical attacks.

Hemp destroys both Skull Clerks with the *blazefire bow*. He finds himself short of legalistic one-liners, so he goes with, "The defense rests!" Then he calls out for Old Man Fish to cure his magical boils. Old Man Fish obliges.

The Mayor runs to the characters. Amathies stops him, "Nobody gave you permission to approach!"

Ned asks, "Are there other prisoners?"

There are six other people awaiting sentencing and transformation.

Old Man Fish loots the Pale Bailiff's body. He picks up:

- Pale Bailiff's Halberd
- Spectral shackles

Gallfred looks for anything left behind by the condemned living. He picks up:

- Magistrate Ghool's gavel
- The Skull Clerk's ledger

## The Crusaders Arrive

When the characters leave the Mayor's Hall they see *Joyce the Ardent* and a procession of villagers she brought from Weebrook. They fought their way through the weak undead at the gates after the sunlight forced the more powerful undead to withdraw. They are charging the steps of the Mayor's Hall, singing hymns to Jopha the Healer.

Hemp congratulates them on their victory, hands over the prisoners, and suggests that now is the time to bail.

“My prayers are answered! Now is the time to advance!”

Ned points at another building and tries to convince them, “There are still undead in that building! Your god is with you! Your victory is assured!” Sadly, too many insects crawl from his mouth to prompt either Joyce or her followers to believe him.

The characters ultimately fail to persuade Joyce and her people to leave the town before nightfall. They prefer to occupy the Mayor’s Hall instead. The characters’ alternate approach is to send the dwarf mercenaries to escort the Mayor, the rescued prisoners, and the people in the Ogre’s Lair, out of the town (possibly except for the priest of Alar, whom the characters really want to have available as a backup).

## Clearing the Cider House

The group approaches the Vilom Cider House. The apple orchards around the building are growing in strange star-shaped patterns. Bloated, red-eyed wasps patrol among the trees. Fallen fruit oozes horrible liquids. And the stone chimney of the cider house belches black smoke. The area smells not of cider, but of alkali, fermenting rot, and blood vinegar – the scent of a poison lab!

Gallfred knows that there are multiple traps inside the building, and that evading them requires speaking a false prayer to Vilom:

“Sweet rot to me, and may thy breath never cure”

The whole area looks very dangerous to approach. Old Man Fish leads the way, trying to find a safe path through the trees and the wasps. He stares at the orchards and tells the others, “My woodcraft is no good here. This place is twisted by evil.”

Ned, the former beekeeper, examines the orchards. He’s got nothing. Except that he has a magic dagger that can cast *choking cloud*. He uses the clouds to cover the characters as they run through the bitter orchard. On the way in, Hemp suffers a vicious scratch from a surprisingly-sharp tree branch. The two berserkers also suffer scratches and STA loss due to noxious spoiled fruit.

At the door, Gallfred intones the appropriate prayer and picks the lock. Everyone enters into the Press Hall. Among the presses are tables covered with vials and tools – the instruments for poison manufacture. Gallfred sees some vials of *rotknot paste*:

**Rotknot Paste:** Contact or blade. DC 12 Fort or target’s muscles lock for 1 > round; on a failed save by 5+, they drop whatever they’re > holding. Fails on constructs.

He pockets four of them. He’s pretty sure that the presses can be leveraged as traps, but he doesn’t know exactly how that would be done beyond the obvious.

The characters move through the Pressing Hall. There is a small courtyard beyond, and two other buildings. Gallfred climbs to the roof of the larger building and peers inside by removing slate shingles. He sees the main laboratory, apparently unoccupied. The smaller building is an office area and is more

secure. *Brother Sarvo* and an undead dwarf creature with vials of poison fused into its bones, full of a sludgy gray liquid. They appear to be reviewing production numbers and orders from Lady Skeme. She needs a large amount of gray orchard venom.

Gallfred returns to the others to report on his findings. Hemp, Gallfred, and Old Man Fish all drink from the *horn of kings* to get +4 on Fort saves against poison. Ned casts an incredibly effective *magic shield* giving himself and all his allies +6 AC, immune to *magic missile*, 20 resistance to mundane missiles, for the next 3 hours.

The characters go with the frontal attack plan. Gallfred picks the lock on the office, then steps back as Old Man Fish and Hemp storm through. Old Man Fish engages the Undead Overseer while Hemp slashes Brother Sarvo through the spine, killing him instantly.

The Undead Overseer summons the golem! They have an Apple-born Golem! Then he strikes at Old Man Fish ineffectually, thanks to the *magic shield*.

Something very strong hammers against the concealed hatch that Hemp is trying to hold closed. It is *very* strong. Hemp goes flying as the Apple-Blight Golem stomps upwards. The thing is made from cursed trees and human organs. Maybe including Christina Applegate. Varka Halftusk hits the Apple-born Golem with the *electric arc rods*, breaking the creature's femur and inflicting a modest amount of damage. And Luigiroth crushes the creature with the *coprolite club*.

Amathies moves in, gets a couple of solid hits on the Undead Overseer, and gets poisoned for her trouble. Then Gallfred finishes him off.

The characters investigate the documents on the desk. They find that the Undead Overseer was keeping records for Brother Sarvo because he ended up in possession of a cursed artifact that left him blind for 16 months or until someone called Ned Wimbley dies. They also find a note in the Overseer's pocket reading, "Aby – know that I never served her willingly." The Undead Overseer was clearly once *Alabaster Beerbristle's* brother: the keeper of the Ogre's Lair had indicated that his brother was captured by Lady Skeme and transformed into an undead monster.

## The End of the Session

The session ends with the characters in command of the above ground parts of the Vilom Cider House. Each character gains +10 EXP.