

The Barrowmaze

Session 81 16-10-25 Life in Ironguard Motte

Next Session 06-11-25 19.00

Friday the 1st day of Draconis, 19:00 Ironguard Motte

While Fenella attends her dinner with Beryl Pizzak at the renowned Jason's Arms, the rest of The Hammers enjoy a somewhat more modest repast which is nevertheless an excellent meal. As they are enjoying the food and drink in the pleasant ambience of The Golden Lion Inn, Luna notices, emerging from the background conversation from the other tables, a word or two of Thieves' Cant, the secret argot of organised Thievery. Recalling the layout and attendance at the dining room tables, Luna guesses the words emanate from a respectable family table of two adults and two older children, engaged in pleasant conversation over their dinner.

Tuning her attention into the intriguing conversation whilst skillfully maintaining her part of The Hammers' discussion, Luna is able to discern a message, artfully disguised as parts of an innocent conversation, using elements of Thieves' Cant and normal language to inform her that she has been noticed entering the city and to be advised that there is an established Thieves' Guild in Ironguard Motte. The message goes on to warn that any freelance Thievery in the city will not be tolerated, however if you are not freelance there is nothing to fear. The message is repeated a few times before the respectable family group pay and depart, leaving Luna to ponder her cunningly delivered message, with Gerald and Leo unaware of any of this.

Gerald goes to bed and Leo visits the horses in the stables across the road before turning in himself as Luna encounters a smiling Fenella returning from her evening out. The Druid remains taciturn and Luna doesn't enquire further, having her own thoughts to mull over. They all spend a peaceful night although Luna ruminates on the implications of her message before finally falling asleep.

Saturday the 2nd day of Draconis, 06:30 Ironguard Motte

Gerald springs out of bed, quickly performing his morning ablutions before hurrying off to the Temple of St Ygg. The dashing Captain Sind is unfortunately not in attendance but in her absence, Gerald is able to meet with Friar Fergus and inform him of their adventures, providing the temple with a comprehensive account of The Hammers' activities in advance of their report to Lord Ironguard.

Fergus sits in rapt attention, taking copious notes and asking for details and clarification. Gerald also explains about Semheis and Fergus confirms that they are providing a replacement cleric for Milborne and poor Semheis will be able to return to a cloistered environment to rest and hopefully recover. Gerald also informs him that Luna has now joined The Hammers, which the cleric notes without any real problem, adventuring thievery seemingly being tolerated within the remit of the anti-evil activities of which St Ygg approves.

With his duty to the temple concluded Gerald returns to the Golden Lion in time for the meeting with Secretary Dalen at 09:00. They convene over breakfast awaiting the arrival of Lord Ironguard's secretary. Fenella makes a 100 gp gift to Luna to allow her a bit of shopping money (in addition to the 119 gp she already has). Luna smiles nicely in thanks as she dexterously causes the coins to vanish.

Dalen bustles into the room in his usual frenzy of activity, papers flying and rapidly being recovered as speedy notes are scribbled. He orders strong coffee since he needs to perk up a little bit. Dalen asks Luna, most politely, as to her identity for the records and carefully notes; "Luna, member of The Hammers, hero." He sorts through a pile of lists and turns to Sir Leo, before announcing, "hmmm... insert name of leader here... Dear Sir Leo, you and your company are cordially invited to attend Lord Ironguard at the hour of 12:00 at Ironguard Castle for the purpose of discussion of affairs arising from the conclusion of your current operations."

As Dalen rapidly crosses t's and dots i's, preparing to scurry off, Gerald torments the twitchy little man by asking him to wait a minute while they dig out the copy of the transcription of their adventures that was made by Charleston in Thurmaster. After an eternity of waiting, around 30 seconds, Gerald provides the document which Dalen records receipt of before fleeing for the door in a caffeine-enhanced, berserk tornado of bureaucratic activity.

Gerald thinks he should have a bath before meeting Lord Ironguard while Leo deposits his fine plate armour at the front desk for a service by a reputable armoursmith.

A meeting with Lord Ironguard

At 12:00 they arrive at The Lord's Gate and are shown into a comfortable room around a roaring fire, just off the great hall. Soon after, Lord and Lady Ironguard enter in mid-conversation, both smiling as they share some amusement or other. The Hammers are quite sure that they haven't seen her Ladyship smile before so they take it as an auspicious sign. Sagrath the court magician joins them and all settle comfortably around the fire.

Lord Ironguard is very satisfied with their account of their adventures and thanks them for preparing it. He makes a brief summary, recalling their first trip where they toured Haranshire clearing up problem after problem across the entire district. Then on their second trip, they went straight to the heart of the matter and excised the evil cult that was behind several of the troubles ailing Haranshire.

As Leo chats pleasantly with his Lordship, Ironguard asks, "are you sure that you've fully taken out this cult of evil, you got everyone? Nobody got away?" Both Leo and Gerald reply that they are close to certain that the enemy was fully defeated, in particular Gerald thinks he has a feel for evil and he didn't notice anything after the battle was over, the cultists were killed or captured and the bandits were released on the condition of never being seen again in Haranshire. "Yes, you released a lot of bandits, that was lucky for them," notes Ironguard before going on to endorse Leo's decision to ally with the bandits under the circumstances.

Lord Ironguard asks to hear more about Jelenneth. Leo fills in the account, stressing how she lived in Haranshire for two years, fooling everyone, leeching and stealing from Tauster whilst gradually poisoning the aging Wizard by the use of strong alchemical concoctions to control him, incidentally, risking his life to a very serious extent.

Sagrath asks about her disappearance, specifically consulting Luna. "Would you say this was not a Thief disappearance, not a hide in shadows?" When Luna confirms this Sagrath informs them it was most likely the Dimension Door spell, so she is quite well experienced in her magecraft. Leo also points out that she cast a large Fireball and Sagrath wonders if she wasn't even more dangerous than the evil Priest. Anyway, he congratulates them on defeating the cult which could have manifested an undead army marching out of The Thornwood, Lord Ironguard adds his agreement, "very well done indeed, we are all grateful to you."

Sagrath brings them up to date on his diplomatic mission to the newly established Queendom of Shrieken Mire, which while "technically" Lord Ironguard's land... Ironguard sighs ruefully, we have in any event been able to reach a satisfactory accommodation, Queen Inzeldrin will not emerge to ravage our lands and she will provide a defended buffer to the southeastern quarter of Haranshire, all this achieved for the sake of a temporary deeding of piece of useless land and a few livestock animals left out at monthly intervals for her highness's delectation. Sagrath recommends a visit and conversation with the elderly Green Dragon, "for those of a lively intelligence, such as yourself, Fenella. It's like playing blindfolded chess with a dagger held to one's neck," he chuckles, only half joking.

The Hammers are shown out by Dalen, who awards them the payment of 600 gp per head, waving them off with a cheery, "all's well that ends well, eh."

With the winter months ahead, most of The Hammers will remain in the comfort of Ironguard Motte but Gerald, anxious to see his Bella again, heads off to Helix to spend the winter there.

Saturday the 2nd day of Draconis, 14:00 Ironguard Motte