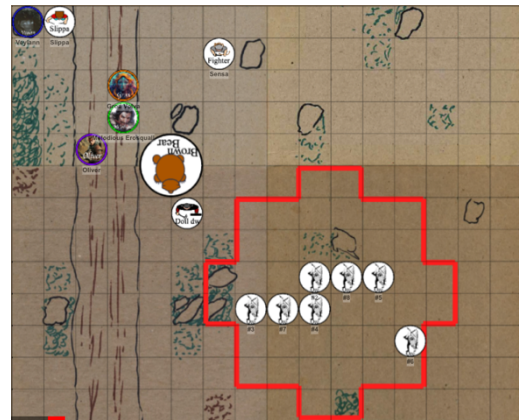
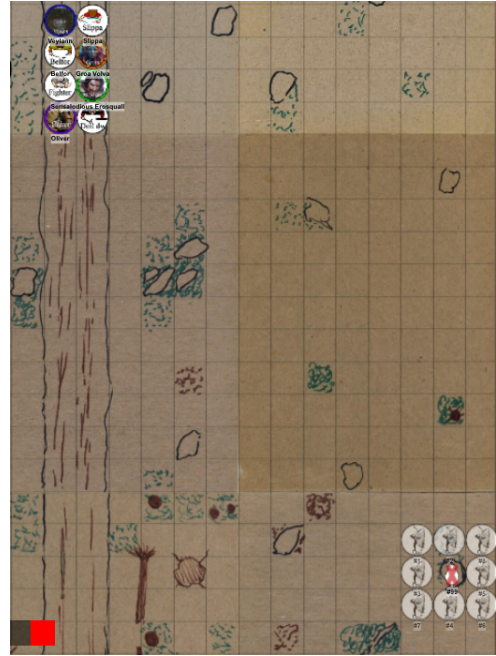


Episode 16½: To Guardraw

Sunday, March 19th: windy(from SE). **Travel to Guardraw.** (This stuff handled by chat/email)

1. The party departed Sundown on Sunday after having a Long Rest. (All assumed to stay in tavern bunkrooms at ½ gp. for the night each). The party was Oliver, Melodious, Groa, Veylann, Doil, Slippa and Belfor. As well as the party members, Sensa traveled with them too. She wanted to travel to Guardraw to celebrate the Equinox there rather than in Sundown. She is not, after all, a follower of the Sun cult, so she had no good reason to stay in Sundown for the ceremony and celebration there. (Slippa had invited her to travel with the party, and nobody objected.)
2. About five miles short of Guardraw, the party happened upon several orcs gathered ahead and to the left. This was along the long downslope from near Dragon View camp to Guardraw. The party was spotted by the orcs at about the same time the orcs were seen. It turned out to be a tough fight. The orcs were hard to hit, and they hit Oliver, Doil, Sensa, and Veylann before finally being downed. Oliver got hits with his crossbows, Sensa got some hits, and Groa managed to put three down with magic missiles. Belfor as a bear couldn't seem to hit but the spike growth spell did a lot of damage and slowed them down. The orc axes are not junk. You can likely sell them at 5 sp. each as scrap. The orcs have some coins, too: 63 Ducats (sp) and 20 Sovereigns (gp).



3. The party arrived in Guardraw late afternoon. It's getting dark. Party members stay at Guardraw Tavern (bunkroom assumed at .5gp/day)
Possible event? No. No event.
That evening, Veylann asks Groa if she will "go to the party with him." He is enthusiastic.

Monday Mar 20th: Light breeze

4. Fargo finds the party in Guardraw Tavern after breakfast. (Attitude d6=2). He asks the party to come to HQ and report. Not Sensa; he didn't hire her.



5. At Guard HQ, Fargo pays the seven party members 48 gp each for the last mission. The party makes a report. [Bonuses for extra on Sundown? That depends on the report. Someone needs to write down and send me what you as a party tell Fargo.] Fargo says that Divinations done in the past at the request of Mister Urtles have shown no reason to worry about that so-called “Portal to Hell” in Sundown. It doesn’t really go to Hell anyway. There have been no problems there for a couple of decades, and not now either.

6. Fargo says he has a mission for the party – to Topaltown. He tells the party to get going today. Report to Town Manager Wormgrad. (Or, if need be, to Mayor Pelligrew Woodpecker.)

Slippa says she intends staying in Guardraw. She’s really looking forward to the party. She bought a new dress and needs to pick it up today for the Equinox party tomorrow. She isn’t about to risk missing the party. She’s been to parties in places like Topaltown. Or Sundown. What good has that gotten her? (Persuasion attempt?) Veylann says he’ll stay too.

7. Fargo threatens the party’s continued employment if they does not take this immediate mission to Topaltown. To check for Orcs or Hobgoblins north of the town. You’ll need several days there to do this mission, he understands.

Slippa says again that she intends being in Guardraw.

Veylann points out that Topaltown isn’t even part of Lord Grantt’s domain; why should the party go there and do that, and why does it have to be right now?

Belfor says, “I thought there was an ‘understanding’ with the hobgoblins at Guardway.”

[Reactions needed from the player characters. Persuasion? Arguments? Questioning?]

[DM: I’ve been assuming that the characters decide to stay in Guardraw. If they do go off to Topaltown immediately, there’s no chance to sell stuff. It’s also possible that some of what is reported to Fargo will cause him to hold off on this.]

Needed: Report to Trudue (what you tell him, not details or word for word) Default below.

Report to Fargo (that can be handled next session or earlier if someone responds.)

Groa’s answer to Veylann (if she responds).

Responses to Fargo trying to give you a mission on the eve of the Equinox (or Ep. 17)

Re: Captain of the Guard Trudue – Based on what was done in Episode 16, I’m assuming Trudue was told about the Lurker, the vast pool cavern with the big doors, and the Lurker’s apparent desire to get out. Trudue also knows about the tablets, which he delivered to the priests of the Sun. He does not know the specifics of other treasure, or about the wrecked ships underwater, the iron doors into the hot caverns, or the pool from which the coins were retrieved.

Experience:	Oliver	Melodious	Groa	Veylann	Doil	Slippa	Belfor
8 orcs(800xp)(O(MGSDB(VS)))	+200	+100	+100	+50	+100	+50	+100
Previous totals:	6673*	6358	6044	3195*	3284*	3226*	3285*
Current totals:	6873*	6458	6144	3245*	3384*	3276*	3385*

*: indicates sufficient xp for next level (5th for Oliver, 4th for V,D,S,B) but still needing training. Oliver, Melodius, Groa all: 0(to 5th); Diol, Veylann 1 day, Slippa 5 days, Belfor 0 days((to 4th).

Re #5: Monday March 20: Report of the party to Fargo (in Guarddraw)

Oliver (to others in the party): Okay, so to fill everyone in on situation to full context, we want to release this Lurker under Sundown. Armitan believes that it could be "juvenile kraken", and it seems to want to get back to the ocean. The river flows south until it joins the Horsewater river, which flows southeast. It passes several towns before it finally does reach the ocean. If we tell Fargo what our goal is, then he is going to bring that to Urtles and potentially Lord Grantt, and who knows what they will decide. Maybe they would rather kill the thing, thus breaking our promise to it. Hopefully not, but who knows. Either way, we are going to need help to get those doors open with the mechanisms being in total disrepair. And opening that dock could help with trade and giving a safer route for trade goods. I think we are going to have to tell him and hope for the best. Especially since I think no one wants to go to topaltown and miss the equinox party

Melodious: Melodious wants us to keep our word with the Lurker, and is willing to try to persuade Fargo. If that doesn't work, he'll ask "would you mind if I played my fiddle while I try to think of an amicable solution?" in which he will attempt an enthralling performance

Groa: Groa wants to go to Equinox and support the kraken if both are possible. Other details don't matter.

So the party tells Fargo "The Whole Story" (as Oliver puts it) assumed to include:

- a. What happened in Dervish: searched the caverns without finding anything other than some ogres and a couple of orcs. No sign of a portal or the caverns being used by bandits.
- b. Based on stories of a portal in Sundown, searched areas connected to the Mayor's Mansion (with permission of Captain of the Guard Trudue). Found enormous underground pool or lake patrolled by ghouls and skeletons. Also inhabited by a giant sea monster with tentacles, called "The Lurker" by people in Sundown. Found two access doors to a hot, steamy cavern area in which defeated four "flamers", bronze using humanoids with formidable great-hammers and shields. When killed, the disintegrated into ash.
- c. When further exploring the pool cavern, found lots of ship fittings, bronze stock, but also four chests containing 73 ceramic tablets that seemed to have writing on them. Those were given by Trudue to the Sun clerics in Sundown. Also discovered the remains of two sunken ships and a pair of smaller boats. The southern end of the cavern has two enormous bronze doors, for which the mechanisms seem to be broken.
- d. While investigating a pool full of coins, Armitan wandered away and disappeared. (He, with Sensa, had joined to help.) When he reappeared, it seemed he had received telepathic visions from the sea monster, "The Lurker." It would seem that the Lurker is wanting the party to open the doors and let him out. There was a sense that the creature wanted to mate, breed, then die.
- e. The party went out to the side of the pool, and Melodious used the "Animal Friendship" spell to communicate with the lurker. It didn't use language, but projected visions and thoughts. It did seem to reply to Melodious's questions of it. He seemed to confirm the sense of the visions Armitan had received, and communicated that the party would try to help, but it might be a while.

Re #6: Fargo tells you briefly that he had that mission to Topaltown that needed action, but this matter with "The Lurker" needs to go up to Mister Triggerman. He tells you not to leave town, at least not until he tells you to go. (Tells Melodious to put away his fiddle.)

Fargo finds you again about two hours later. “You have to tell this to Mister Urtles,” he says. “You four – Sensa, you too, but I don’t need you all. Oliver, Melodious, and you, Groa. Follow me.”

Fargo takes you over to the Hold, where Urtles is waiting. You repeat the same things you told Fargo earlier.

“So, there’s a sea monster in that cave. I expect the same one as twenty years ago, if they live that long. Never heard of it communicating with anybody though. May not be just an ordinary sea monster. I understand you want to release it? Into the White River?”

“To wherever those big bronze doors go,” Sensa says. “If that’s not a portal too, they’d go out toward the river. Sundown Creek, actually. But, there’s no sign of them from the outside.” Sensa then says, “Armitan wondered if the thing is a juvenile form of kraken. Some sort of sea monster, I gather. Could be dangerous to release it into the river.”

Oliver mentions the difficulty in getting the doors open.

“Hmm, a sea monster. If it really goes out into the sea, rather than staying in the White River, no harm to us. That is, if it’s looking for deep water. Could give the Norse trouble. That would be a good thing. Could make sea travel more dangerous in general, and that helps the Circe Road. Of course, if it eats half the population of Rivendown on the way, that’s not good. If it really just wants to reach the ocean, mate, and die, then who cares? Letting it go wouldn’t hurt.”

Urtles ponders the matter for a few minutes, then says, “This needs investigation. We don’t know enough yet.”

Fargo speaks up. “I have instructions to send them to Topaltown. To assist Wurmgrad. The orc danger that Mayor Pelligrew wrote you about.”

“I’ll have Lieutenant Scabbard and the Grey Cloak Scouts, or maybe just a detachment of them, take care of that,” Urtles said. “I want these people here until I can organize a party to see about that Lurker or sea monster or kraken or whatever it is. Exzema needs to go, and Lady Kaykenyon is no doubt going to want to see those tablets. Maybe those have some clues. Does seem the simplest thing to do is let the monster stay right where he is. But, we need to know more. Fargo, I’ll let you know. I know even Lady Kaykenyon isn’t going to go immediately. She’s got to check books in her library. Exzema’s going to demand a Divination, as if that will help. So, have this crew of yours stand by, and be on call if needed.”

That ended the session. The party members were released. Fargo cautioned, “There’s going to be some Grey Cloak Scouts upset that they are going to be sent to Topaltown in your place.”

Re #7: Cancelled. The party isn’t being sent to Topaltown. Slippa is very pleased to hear that, and are some others.

8. Party reaction to NOT being sent to Topaltown, etc.

DM: It looks like what’s up is the Equinox party likely followed by a mission back to Sundown.

Oliver: I think this is perfect. This is have gone the party's way. At least as well as they could have under the circumstances.

Groa: Everything deserves a chance

Slippa offers to try to find a girl for Belfor to go with, and will try to set up Doil if she can. Veylann asks Groa again if she will go with him.

9. Selling stuff and treasure distribution (can be done now)

DM: Meanwhile: Since you are not leaving right away, you all have the opportunity to sell stuff and divide the treasure. There really is a big pile of stuff, and some needs to be divided by 7, some by 9, and the orc stuff by 8 (if you were to do equal shares).

Oliver: I think we need to sell everything, even the bronze weapons and shields, unless Urtles wants to hold on to any of them for evidence. It doesn't look like we're going to be making it to Selleze any time soon

Oliver also still owes money to Belfor for the MW heavy xbow.

DM: Urtles will pay "market value" for the bronze hammers and shields, and will retain them. I think that gives you 8 gp. total (1 gp. each)

You could distribute the KoS coins just as they are, with some value in between the 10 to 1 ratio here in Guardraw and the 20 to 30 to 1 you'd get in Selleze for shares that didn't come out even. The KoS coins are a good way to carry wealth - more compact for the value than Aarbat coins.

The "potion" turns out to be worthless - it's too old and whatever it was has gone bad. The ring may be magic; you can make intelligence/investigation checks on it if you wish. (Or pay 150 gp. at the Magic Shop to have it identified) The 12 vials of fluid will be identified as a sort of acid by Doil. Pretty strong. Eats silver even. You can get 10 gp. per vial. The empty vials are worth 1 gp. each. Figure everything else at the nominal listed values given. (Some might be more, others less, but it comes out that way.)

10. Run up to the Equinox:

Slippa wants to make sure everyone else has a good time, too. (Except Veylann maybe.) She's going with Oliver. She's going to see if she can find a female dwarf in town who will go with Doil, and someone for Belfor if she can, unless Groa wants to. Melodious? Oliver? Groa? She can try to help if you'd like. There should also be unattached girls, and men, at the party. Going with someone doesn't mean you leave with them. Sensa already has plans of her own.

Purchases?

(How many rooms should the party reserve? For after the party. Liquidity says that room prices are 5 gp. and up for the night of the Equinox, and 3 gp. the night before. "Can't help it. High demand, you can imagine.")

11. Training: For Monday, Wednesday credit for 1 day of training each:

Oliver, Melodius, Groa all: 2 (to 5th); Diol, Veylann 3 days, Slippa 7 days, Belfor 2 days((to 4th).

Note: Going to 5th level, each training day costs 30 xp (up from 20xp going to 4th).

(30 days needed to 5th, 24 days needed to 4th.)

DM note to players: I really had expected a slower pace of activity with abundant bad weather providing training day opportunities and the party being idle waiting for a mission a fair amount too. Starting with the party's liberation of the merchant and his daughter with that needing a trip to Selleze, the party has been traveling around at almost a hectic pace as they find stuff well before I had expected it. The Lurker business now preempts some activities around Topaltown that should have been when you were around 3rd level.

Tuesday, March 21* noon: Party is in the tavern for noon meal. Fargo just stopped by to say “Stay in town. I think you’ve got another trip to Sundown coming up. Maybe Thursday.”

Later Slippa turns to Belfor. “I have a girl for you. I think. She wants to meet you. Her name is Plentisha. She works as a seamstress at the dressmaker’s shop. Tomorrow morning, I’ll take you with me over there to meet her. She’s pretty, and very smart. She does a lot of designing. She looks a bit like a pixie! Small, but clever, too. You’ll like her.

Then Slippa turned to Doil. “I didn’t find a lady dwarf. But there’s a girl who said she’d be happy to “go” with you. She seems nice, and isn’t really expecting any romance, just a nice time together. I wouldn’t say she’s beautiful, but still nice. A cleric, in fact. I told her I’d let her know if you were interested. If yes, she’ll meet you at the tavern.”

“What’s her name?” Doil asked, apparently interested.

“Henna,” Slippa replied.

“Henna. Not dwarvish, of course. Is that ‘Sister Henna?’” he asked.

“No, I don’t think so. She didn’t call herself Sister Henna. Just Henna,” Slippa answered.

“Well, I’ll say yes,” Doil said. “Always nice to have someone to drink with.”

Slippa giggled. “She did seem to know dwarves like to drink,” she said.

The day of the Equinox party (preparation) – last minute shopping, etc. Stores close at noon.

So, you are just finishing breakfast, when in walks a female cleric looking for Doil. She gets to about ten feet inside the door and is looking around. A short girl with a long robe, for her height, and a face covering of some sort, a bit like a mask.

Slippa reacts immediately. “Henna!” she calls. Henna sees you and comes over.

Doil takes one look at her, and says, “Hello. I’m Doil. Somehow, you look familiar!”

“Well, I would hope so!” she says, then pulls down her face covering. She has a short beard! Why, she is, has to be, a dwarf!”

“Elsapheth! What on the surface of the earth are you doing here?” Doil asks, in a voice that shows his delight in unexpectedly meeting a friend.

“The same thing as you, of course. Living among all of these soil-dwellers. I heard there was a dwarf here. Looking for someone to go to the Equinox.”

They converse in Dwarvish for a few minutes. Then Doil realizes this is a bit impolite. He says, in common, “Elsapheth, I invite you to enjoy the celebration of the Equinox with me.”

“I gladly accept your invitation,” she replies.

Doil turns and tells you, “She really is a cleric!”

“Not exactly an acceptable cleric, though,” Elsapheth says in a lower voice. “I do have to be somewhat discrete.”

“Have you had something to eat?” Doil asks. “We can see to it. I guess we have some catching up to do. I have not seen you since, ... since you left the Hold.”

“Well, no,” she answers. “You are the first of the clan that I have encountered in the Wild. A happy encounter, I might add.”

Clearly Doil and Elsapheth want to talk, but don’t want to say too much in public.

Equinox Party: It turns out that there is a “door charge” of two Sovereigns for attending the party. Even though you are all already inside the door. That is to cover “extra expenses” including the food that would be served. Individuals would still need to pay for strong drink beyond the usual ale and the wine. So, all pony up the money. (Assumed) The common room is starting to fill up. The party has a table, but it might not be big enough for everybody at the

same time. Other tables are filling up too. Then Slippa comes in wearing a new very fine dress she had bought at the shop, which appeared to be more of a turquoise in the dimmer light of the tavern. Belfor rushes to the door to greet the girl he had met from the dress shop, and escorts her to the table. The barmaids are hustling to and from delivering drinks and food. Elsapheth comes in just after that, and was given a seat by Doil. She looks nice too, largely covered by her robe. The first performer on stage is Larkette. Without her flute. She plays a lyre, and sings. The tavern is noisy as people are mostly eating and drinking. It seems she is just there as background music. Nobody is paying much attention. Larkette goes through several songs before retiring to make way, after an interlude, for another singer named Telerey. Not bad. Larkette continued on stage, just with her lyre and sometimes her flute. There is a break for a while after the singer finished.

Finally, the main event. Telerey comes onto the stage. She looks wonderful, now in a black gown that clearly is designed to attract attention. A lyre player comes out with her. Things quiet down a little. Then Telerey starts singing. Something about a meadowlark. It doesn't make sense, but it sounds wonderful. The whole tavern goes quiet. There is enthusiastic applause after. Then, Telerey calls out, "How about something to dance to?" To encouraging calls, she begins singing a number "Let me call you Sweet, Tart." Something to do with cider. Again, it is great. Party members so inclined take to the floor and dance. Well, the party goes on from there. Dancing, Listening, Watching dancers, drinking, eating, more drinking and dancing.

Wednesday, March 22nd: rainy and windy Everybody needs a rest. But, maybe also some training. Getting ready to go back to Sundown.

Conclusion:

(This winds up "Session 16½." Next: Session 17 will resolve what happens at the party, and beyond. The party still needs to dispose of treasure. I don't think anyone is prepared to advance in level.)