

Episode 19 The Crag

Saturday, April 8th: breeze

1. The previous evening, Corven Tharros, a wizard, showed up at the camp site at The Crag in the evening about the same time the party got there. Also with him were Sensa, Sir Yuberry, Sir Yuberry's squire Wolfram, and three horses. (The third horse has been packing a couple of tents, among other things.) Sir Yuberry delivered a message from Fargo to Oliver directing him and his party to swing past Guardway Tower on the Old Circe Road on their way back south and check on orc activity - Rumor has it there are lots of orcs in the vicinity. "Be careful though."

(DM: Corven was there for the discussion about the challenges of climbing The Crag on the next day. I assume that might be him talking rather than Veylann.) Yuberry, Sensa and Wolfram spent the night (and kept watch too). In the morning, Corven was to go with the party. Sensa, Yuberry, Wolfram and the three horses are returned to Sundown, where they expected that Lady Kaykenyon had finished looking at those tablets from antiquity).

2. The party decided to try to scale The Crag at a point on the eastern side where the plain was at something of a high point, leaving a climb of 100 feet to a sort of shelf on the north side, and 100 feet further to the very top. The rise was still very challenging, up 100 feet within 30 to 50 feet horizontally. (In our day this would be considered a "technical" climb, normally requiring specialized equipment.) Doil, the strongest climber (+6 Athletics), was chosen to be the first to scale the cliff, with as much aid as he could be given. That aid included a "Guidance" casting by Brother Sheth to start with, and a "Bardic Inspiration" up about half way, the limit which Melodious could reach. Groa stood by ready to cast "Feather Fall" if Doil should happen to fall from a considerable height.

On the first attempt, Doil didn't get up but about 10 feet before he fell. He was somewhat injured (6 hp.), but shrugged it off. On his second attempt, he fell from 60 feet. Groa cast "Feather Fall" on him as he fell, so he landed gently without harm. On the third attempt, Doil was aided by Melodious using "Bardic Inspiration." He got about half way up when he was saved from falling by inspiration. Melodious gave him another, and with that he reached the top. [DM: Doil would roll "athletics" at +6 for each 15 feet (a minute of climbing) against DC15. A roll 11-14 meant no progress but not a fall. At 15 up he'd get up another 15 feet. That's ¼ normal movement speed (for difficult climb), per minute instead of each initiative segment (6 sec.), since there was no combat in progress, with DC20 reduced to DC15 for slow and careful. The climb process is adapted from 3E, and is described in the rules appendix for the Circe Road campaign.]

Once Doil was up, he secured a rope and knotted it. Then he attached two more ropes with some knotting, so that they could reach the ground. Veylann was the next to climb up, in his case quickly (now at DC10 using the rope). Slippa, Oliver, and Melodious followed. Belfor was chosen to stay with the horse Pacman, and Sheth decided he would too. He did contribute "Guidance" to the climbers. So also Elsapheth. Corvyn decided to go with the party up the rope. He fell from about 15 feet up, but was not hurt badly. On a second try he got higher and then fell, but was saved by Groa casting Feather Fall. A third attempt finally succeeded. Groa climbed up last of those making the ascent.

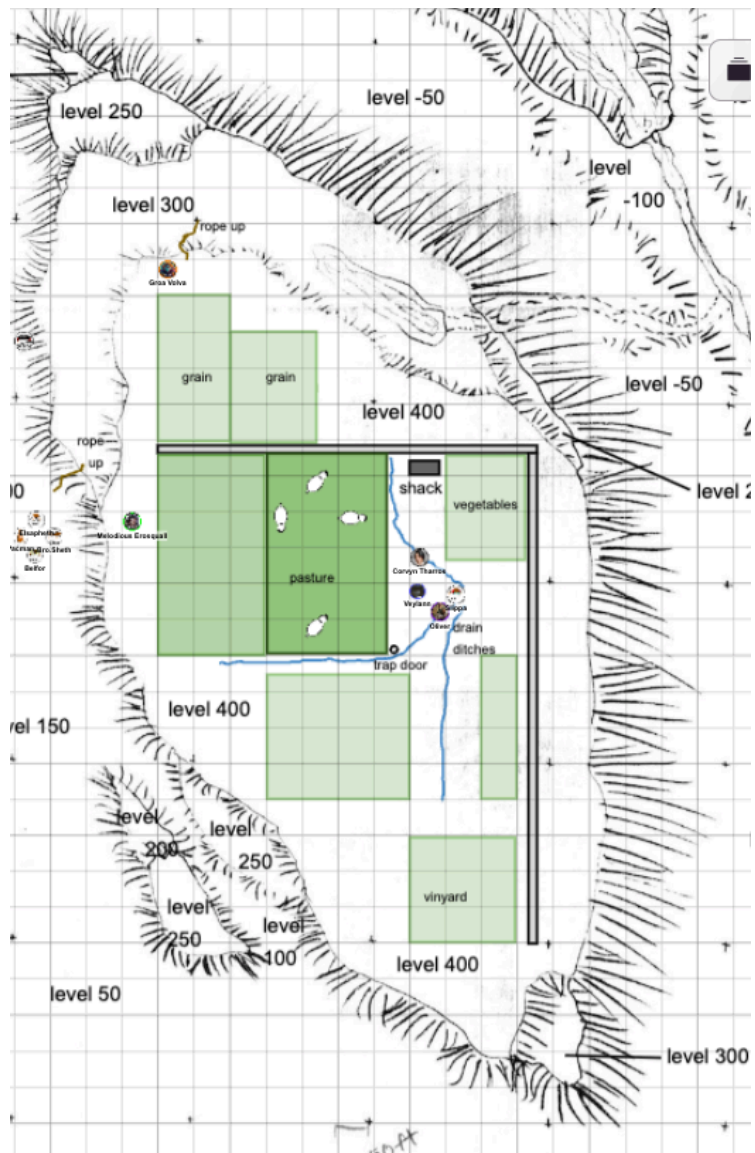
While all this climbing was going on, something flew out over the party. Only Groa and Slippa saw it, and neither got a good look. A dire bat maybe. It seemed to be of about that size, quite big. It then flew back over the edge and out of sight.

- Now that the party was up on the northern terrace, the top of The Crag was still yet another 100 feet up. Not only that, but someone seemed to have chiseled off all of the hand holds and foot holds. And, that wasn't all. In the places that remained almost climbable, someone had poured grease or animal fat down the slope to make it slick. The climb to the top was going to be even more difficult. As the party circled around the north shelf to where one could view to the east. At about the northernmost point there was a spot that Doil thought that, with luck, he might be able to climb. There was nobody to cast "Guidance," since both clerics remained below. Melodious could still cast Bardic Inspiration though (2 left). Doil had some difficulties, but did manage to get up the steep difficult cliff with a bit of inspiration being critical to avoid a long fall.

- As Doil climbed over the top, he exclaimed, "Why, there's a garden up here!" As he started to describe it, he stopped and yelled, "There's the Demon!"

The demon didn't attack, though. It quickly flew over to the eastern edge of The Crag's top and down over the edge, out of sight.

Doil related that back to the party below. Doil got another set of ropes in place and the others climbed up. Once all had ascended, this time with no falls, the party approached a shack about 20 by 40 feet in size. It was poorly built with stone walls and pillars. The shoddy roofing was made, it appeared, from wagon parts and random brushwood, all thatched over. Obviously leaking in places. The door was loose, easily opened. Inside were clay and ceramic containers, apparently of seed, and a variety of farming tools, all of a crude nature.



Nothing of any real value was seen. The surrounding plots included two fields of grain, a pasture in which 4 sheep grazed oblivious to the party, and some recently planted or unplanted fields, a vegetable plot east of the shack, and to the southern end of the plateau, a vineyard. A crude plow, likely hand dragged, was near the east edge. A path led across the plateau west to east, then south. Three drainage ditches converged on a particular low spot, all dry now, but they seemed to be there to collect water somewhere underground.

5. Groa set out to circle the top and take a look outward. After all, the mission was to look for orcs. Off several miles to the southeast was a herd of antelope. Off to the east eight or nine miles away there seemed to be a small tower or fort, but it was too far away for details, or to see any figures. (Nobody has a spyglass.) Off to the north was a pack of wolves beyond a creek that circled from just east of The Crag, and headed off toward Dervish and White River. The party noticed a variety of footprints, not boot prints, here and there. There may have been anywhere from several to maybe a dozen different ones, but none smaller than what you'd expect of a twelve year old. These were more clustered around the shack, but extended here and there elsewhere as well.
6. Melodious decided to interview one of the sheep. There was a ram and three ewes. This finally got the sheep to take notice. Melodious cast "Animal Friendship" on the ram, offering a bit of rations, which the ram decided held no interest. "What are you?" the ram asked, commenting, "No wings." Melodious asked about the sheep's master – wings? The ram didn't seem to quite get "master." Melodious asked him, the ram, how he got there. The rams said "When I was a wee lamb. He brought me up." But, the ram can't count beyond 5. He's been here for a while.

"Is it safe here?" Melodious asked.

"Maybe. The dragon hasn't eaten me when it flew over." That drew a question about how often, and the answer was "Maybe once every season."

Melodious asked about the creature with wings. "Which one?" the ram asked. Once it was clear that it was the one about the size of Melodious, the ram said, "He flies off and around from here often. He flies off, kills things, brings them back. They eat things."

"But not you," Melodious replied.

"Hadh't thought about it," the ram said, "But, yes."

Melodious asked what that flying creature looked like.

"Like you, but wings," the ram replied. "Most of the others are without wings."

Melodious asked how the ones without wings get up to the garden and back; over the east or the west side?

The ram didn't understand, but clarified, "Where the corner is." Ultimately Melodious was able to find that the entrance to what was below was near the SE corner of the pasture, and another one, more often used, to the east of the shack.

When Melodious offered some rations again, the sheep asked, "You got carrots?" He didn't. That ended the interview. Quite a lot was learned.
7. Veylann was able to find a secret trap door there near the corner of the pasture. Sure enough, it opened to a narrow passage heading downward and toward the east. Melodious went over to the western edge where he could call down to the party with the

horse at the bottom of the lower rope climb. He explained the situation of having discovered the garden, Doil encountering the demon, and having just found a passage into the interior of The Crag. This is where the adventure ended. With only 2 player characters of the four present (the other two carried as NPC's) it seemed best to wait for everybody to be available before descending that narrow passage. Would any of the lower party be called up? If all, what about the horse? There were issues to be decided.

Experience:

There were no battles, and the one encounter (with the demon) did not result in a fight; the demon withdrew. The biggest challenge was climbing the cliffs. Doil was the key contributor, with Melodious's "inspiration" and Groa's "Feather Fall" important to the success. Sheth's "Guidance" was a very minor contribution. Experience for discoveries will wait until next time. Belfor, Sheth, and Elsapheth get credit for maintaining a watch, guarding the horse.

Climb (2 difficult cliffs of 100'): (M,G,D(O,C)((V,S,S))((B,E)))=5 shares 200xp x 2 = 400xp
 Melodious,Groa,Doil +80; Oliver,Corvyn +40; Veylann,Slippa,Sheth +20; Belfor,Elsapheth +10
 (Corvyn as a newly joined player character is getting double normal share to help catch up.)

Experience:	Oliver	Melodious	Groa	Corvyn	Veylann	Doil	Slippa	Belfor	Elsapheth	Sheth
this episode	40	80	80	40	20	80	20	10	10	20
Previous	7349	6844	6699*	262	3671	3611	3596	3767	1178	228
Experience, after	7389	6924	6779*	302*	3691	3691	3616	3777	1188	248

- Indictes sufficient xp's for avancement, but waiting for training or long rest to advance.

Training: Same as last time:

Oliver, Melodious, Veylann, Doil, Slippa, Belfor: All 0 days toward next level
 Corvyn: 6 days (needs 6) so he's set to go up to 2nd level after next full long rest (at a base)
 Groa: 12 days (needing 24 to 5th), and doesn't yet have enough xp's to "buy" the needed 12 days.
 Elsapheth: 10 days (needing 18 to 4th), Sheth: 6 days (needs 6)

Status:

Groa used two 1st level spells (Feather Fall)
 Sheth used one 1st level spell (Healing Word)
 Melodious used one 2nd level spell (Speak to Animals), three "inspiration" uses
 Doil is at -6 hp. (has NOT used second wind); Corvyn is at -1 hp.
 6 ropes and 4 spikes have been used (are in place)