

Episode 21½ The Orc Fort Follow-up

Saturday, April 8th: breeze, afternoon

1. After the battle with the orcs at the crude fort east of The Crag, the party had liberated the prisoners and given them some help. They also collected the coins that the orcs were carrying, and had salvaged the crude plate armor and taken the good greataxe of the orc leader. The gems and potions from the box found inside the fort had been taken. Oliver was inclined toward staying overnight there at the fort. Then, burning everything that could be destroyed and leaving the next morning. However, the thirty some dead orcs were attracting attention. Vultures had spotted the feast below and were converging, picking on the orc bodies furthest from party members first. Belfor pointed out that the meat would be attracting ground scavengers as well. This might not be the best place to camp despite the protection of the walls. [Treasure: 3 orcs 7 gp. and 26 sp.; leader crude platemail, greataxe, 6gp., 14 sp., 19 cp.; other orcs 76gp, 165 sp., 109 cp., 4 lt. xbow. From box, 11xgem(50 gp), 6 potions (5xhealing, 1x climb probably)]

2. Leona seems to be the leader of the four from The Crag (She, The Demon, Cougar, and Zebra). Leona thinks they deserve a share of the treasure. She'd also like to salvage the three big wooden doors (about 100 lb. apiece) and as many javelins and great-axe handles as can be carried back to The Crag. Also, any of the fabric that's worth taking (about half of it). She asks assistance from the party in getting all of that back to The Crag. (The doors are about 300 lb. total, and very awkward to carry. One hundred javelins is 200 lb. 30 axe handles: call it another 100 lb. The worthwhile fabric maybe 50 lb. more. The four of them can probably carry off just the javelins, fabric and axe handles heavily loaded, or most of them, but not the doors. Your horse could probably carry two doors, one on each side. The doors are valuable as intact (for the most part) planks. Wood is a scarce commodity for The Crag people. They need to set out soon to avoid traveling at night. (The moon being nearly full may help.)
(With heavy loading it's slower going on the return to The Crag if you do so tonight, as The Crag people would prefer. You can make it back to The Crag before it becomes very dark. The Crag people are leaving to get back to the Crag one way or the other, rather than stay in the fort overnight. The liberated prisoners need healing to travel. Consider them to be at 0 hp. but stable. If you spend the night in the fort, it's going to take 2 days to Dervish. If you go to The Crag for tonight you'll get to Dervish a day earlier.)
So, a party decision is needed: Stay put at the fort, or travel back to The Crag? If the latter, help with carrying stuff (doors etc.)? As to healing, fighters in the battle that were hit can do "Second Wind." Sheth can't do healing (used up his spells) but Elsapheth can; I don't know if she used any spells or not. Don't recall any. She can probably heal several people enough for needed travel. Melodious and Belfor may be able to do some healing if needed. I have from my notes: Oliver -7, Veylann -7, Corvyn -6, Doil -25. (Leona -12?)

3. The party decides to help the three people from The Crag carry off as much wood (axe handles, javelins, doors) as could be managed. Gathering and preparing to carry all that

takes a while, and it's approaching nightfall by the time you all get to The Crag. The Crag people are back inside or on top by the time you get there. They will use ropes to drag the doors and other wood (in bundles) up to the "North porch" of The Crag (where the pool and secret entrance are). They use the same spot that the party did for their first ascent. You will see that in addition to the four who joined you in the attack on the orc fort, there are maybe three four other adults (up on the "porch"), and another, smaller "demon" with bat wings who seems to be a girl of about 12 in other respects. Lyona finally gives thanks to all of you for your help in eliminating that orc menace. She asks that you not tell others about them and their Hold here at The Crag.

4. The party, including now the rescued Pennyink, Alphatoozey and Papparra, settle in for the night. Having seen The Demon himself now, Sheth has to admit he's very demon-like in appearance, but not in behavior. As a matter of fact, he thinks Leona looks pretty demon-like herself, and does seem to have a commanding presence. They didn't double cross the party. Disregarding appearance, they seem pretty cooperative and seem to have operated in good faith. So, he really doesn't know what to think at this point.

Sunday, April 9th: breeze NW – shifted around to NW during the night (trouble coming)

5. The party travels to Dervish Fortress, approaching from SW, with help from The Demon scouting ahead for you part of the way. He points out a small pack of 9 wolves ahead to your left before you see them, but they are not a danger to your party, and run away.
6. At Dervish, Pennyink manages to secure a loan from Captain Wishook that will see him and his traveling companions reach Selleze. Unfortunately, Wishook has no spare horses or even mules that could be borrowed to speed up the journey. Pennyink rents one of the rooms in the tavern and rents another for the two women, Alphatoozey and Papparra. He expects to travel south with the party for protection to Guardraw. (I'm assuming the party is willing to have him along. With the money borrowed he outfits himself and the two women for travel.) The party camps in the courtyard without incident.

Monday, April 10th: storm from the North.

7. Pennyink does not want to travel in this mess. I'm going to assume that the Party doesn't either. They do have three tents for camping. There are two still-vacant rooms for rent at 5gp per night each (with double bed, but tavern-master can put in two cots for each), so a total of 4 per room almost accommodates everyone. Brother Sheth says he will see if he can be accommodated at the Church. He comes back to tell you that they are reluctant, but he can sleep there on the floor, and will. It turns out that the two women with Pennyink would welcome Groa and Slippa to share the room with them, so two cots are crowded into there, and the remainder of the party is 3 per room plus Sheth at the Church. (Who is in what room can be worked out by the party. It doesn't really matter.)

During the day the party talks about tactics, maybe does a little sword practice in the tavern between meals when nobody else is there, and gets credit for a day of training.

Tuesday, April 11th: light breeze, pt. cloudy.

8. The party with Pennyink and companions in company travels south to Gold Mine Camp. You pass a northbound convoy of 6 wagons headed for Orctown. As you approach Gold Mine Camp you see a small pack of nine wolves. They see you too. They keep their distance, finally turning away to the east. The night at Gold Mine Camp passes without any attacks. You note that Pennyink's party must have bought a tent with money loaned. One of them is up for each of your watch sections, while the other two share the tent.

Wednesday: April 12: breeze, pt. cloudy:

9. Your party travels from Gold Mine Camp to Sundown without any encounters. Upon arriving in Sundown, you find that the townspeople are all angry and disturbed. Not at you, particularly. The story comes out that last night Lady Aliathah, Mister Triggerman, Captain Heinrich, Father Rupert, and a host of others including the Grey Cloak Scouts company and several other hangers-on of Lord Grantt's had paid an unwelcome visit. It was Lady Kaykenyon who put them up to this. She, with the weight of all of those others behind her, insisted on seizing the ancient records, the Tablets of Sundown, which were being held in the Temple of the Sun. She and other backers including Heinrich, Triggerman, the wizard Exzema, the priest Rupert and others had forced their way into the Temple of the Sun, into the very sacred room of the High Priestess, and seized the tablets as well as the High Priestess Vega herself, who opposed them. Nobody dared stop them, not even Captain of the Guard Trudue. This morning they took them all back to Guardraw, including a wagon and horses belonging to the town of Sundown. With the High Priestess in chains, for having defied Lord Grantt's authority.

So, yes, the people of Sundown are angry. Even many of those of the Way of the Cross who don't worship according to the Old Way. There's a lot of talk in the tavern of how the whole town should have stood up for High Priestess Vega. But, there are others saying, "That's a battle we couldn't have won."

You do find lodging for the night in the tavern. You might be working for Lord Grantt, but nobody is blaming you for this fiasco. But, still, people are not eager to talk.

Thursday, April 13: light breeze, cloudy, rain

10. It's raining but not all that hard. It's fairly warm, and you really don't want to hang around all day in Sundown with everybody angry and irritated. Pennyink agrees. He knows Lady Kaykenyon personally. Not well, perhaps, but through business. She has published a number of books and manuscripts that his father's establishment has handled. He finds the stories being told in Sundown remarkable and out of character for her. So, yes, he is willing to get wet to clear out of Sundown. So, rain or not, you set out.
11. On the way there is some conversation. It's a long hike, and you have to hustle to get to Guardraw in one day, needing some Forced Marching beyond 8 hours to make the trip. During brief rests there's some talk. Slippa says she talked to some of her friends in Sundown, and believes the accounts as told. She blames the situation on High Priestess Vega, who was stubborn in holding onto those tablets despite orders from Guardraw to give them over. Vega hasn't been in Sundown all that long, having come from the Kingdom of the Sun to lead worship in the proper manner at the temple. So, she really didn't understand what the true situation was. That's how Slippa sees it, but she is sympathetic. Mister Triggerman, she had heard, can be quite overbearing, not to say

Lady Aliathah herself. Slippa wouldn't want to get in the way of either of them. She is surprised that this matter would get the attention of such important people.

12. You do get to Guarddraw and go to the tavern. It would seem Mister Fargo had someone keeping an eye out for you, because you have not had a chance to dry out yet when he appears and orders you all over to Guard HQ to make a report. (What do you tell him?)

Fargo tells you, "You did the right thing by bringing Pennyink and the other two here instead of going to check Guardway as I had ordered. Pennyink isn't one of the most important people around, but his father has more influence in Selleze than you'd expect. So, I'm giving you a bonus for the rescue of 10 Sovereigns extra each. I believe I owe you 10 days' worth of pay and I'll cover expenses. (Fargo seems to forget that he wasn't going to pay for Elsapeth.) He pays each 20 gp, plus the 10 gp bonus = 30 gp. (Sovereigns) each. (And, he's covered expenses for rations and lodging, even at Dervish, so that won't show up in the accounting.)

Fargo then says, "I still need you to check out Guardway Tower. That's the fortress on the Old Circe Road where it passes north of Topaltown. Something seems to be happening there, and there's reports of orcs coming from all over the place, especially Topaltown. They are worried. Why Lord Grantt needs to be concerned with the defense of Topaltown, I don't know. Mayor Pettigrew Woodpecker is under the Earl's authority, not Lord Grantt's. But, those are the orders I've been given for you. Do be careful. Could be a hundred orcs at that damned place. Or more. There's lots and lots off to the northeast a ways, especially beyond the river. I want you to go tomorrow, and I don't care that means you have to miss the party here in Guarddraw tomorrow night, or if you have to go through the rain to get to Topaltown. We need to know what's going on at Guardway as soon as we can.

13. A treasure summary and division's going to be needed. I'll get money caught up in Guarddraw. I still need to make a list of treasure and get an xp. totals taking into account whatever you tell Fargo. (The more useful info you give him, the more "mission" xp's.) Some issues:

- a. Do you tell Fargo about the "demon" and The Crag?
- b. Did you share any treasure beyond the wooden objects with The Crag people?
- c. Did you carry off the heavy crude plate armor that the orc leader was wearing?
- d. Does the 5 gp. left for The Crag people on the table get repaid from party treasure?
- e. Did any make contributions to the Church for the curse removal earlier (Ep. 17.5)?

Friday, April 14: calm, clear

14. You travel to Topaltown without any problems. At the mayor's place (actually the warehouse and outbuildings for the Mayor's furniture shop) you are referred to the Town Manager, Mister Wormgrad, who tells you that it's high time that he got some help on this matter. Orcs have been showing up to the north, and a couple of woodcutters have disappeared, probably killed by orcs. He suggests you start by checking out the road up Gapgully Run, and that goes to an abandoned manor house and some old caves in which, long ago, there was an orc habitation or such. It's supposed to be abandoned, but with all these orcs about, who knows? (He doesn't even mention Guardway Tower. His concerns seem more local and immediate. Obviously there's a discrepancy between what Fargo said your mission was, and what Wormgrad is expecting.)

Treasure: Episode 18:

8 orcs: 2 poor greataxes (5 sp each), 16cp, 47 sp, 28 gp	5.31
From cleric: studded(10), mace(2), shld(4), xbow(10), s cross*, 15 gp.	41
From ½ orc: chainmail(35), lsword(7), shld(5), 5 gp.	52
From orc body at spider: 16 cp., 18 sp., 13 gp.	<u>14.77</u>
Total (note: reflects 11-1 exchange rate for c->s and s->g)	113.08

*: silver cross to be donated to the Church in memory of Sister Ordinal

Episode 21:

Chest in orc fort: eleven gems (50 gp. each) (and six potions: 5 healing, 1 climb).	550
Also within fort: 4 good light crossbows (@12)	48
Orc leader: crude platem armor(60), good greataxe(15), 6 gp, 14 sp, 19 cp	82.43
Other orcs: 76 Sovereigns, 165 Ducats, and 105 Pennies	<u>91.87</u>
Total (reflects 11-1 c->s, s->g exchange rates)	772.3

(The six potions are not included in the total)

Mission totals later (reporting on orc fort, but nothing said about The Crag):

Experience:	Oliver	Melodious	Groa	Corvyn	Veylann	Doil	Slippa	Belfor	Elsapheth	Sheth
Current total	8221	7756	7496*	1019**	4106	4093	4018	4122	1533	593*
Mission(report to F*)600	86	86	86	86	43	43	43	43	43	43
Current total	8307	7842	7582*	1125**	4149	4136	4061	4165	1576	636*
			-330							
			7252@5 ^a	2250*@2 ^a						636@2 ^a

Training: Same as last time, +1 day each (in Dervish):

Oliver, Melodious, Veylann, Doil, Slippa, Belfor: All 1 day toward next level

Corvyn: 6 days (needs 6) so he's set to go up to 2^a level after next full long rest (at a base)
+1 day towards 3d

Groa: 13 days (needing 24 to 5^a), and doesn't yet have enough xp's to "buy" the needed 12 days.

Elsapheth: 11 days (needing 18 to 4^a), Sheth: 6 days (needs 6) +1 day toward 2^a

Groa can pay 30xp's per missed day of training to make 5^a level =330 xp. So, 7252 xp's at 5^a
Corvyn, Sheth both advance to 2^a level.

Corvyn actually has 2250xp's since he is a Player Character "catching up" by getting double normal experience points until he gets to the same character level as one of the other players, then he will revert to the normal process. He has enough xp's to go on to 3^a level, but I'd like to see him play an adventure at 2^a level first (rather than purchase training days with the bonus xp's). He'll likely come away from the next adventure with enough xp's for 4^a, but will play at 3^a for an adventure. Then 4^a. It will take a while to get to 5^a where other characters are right now.