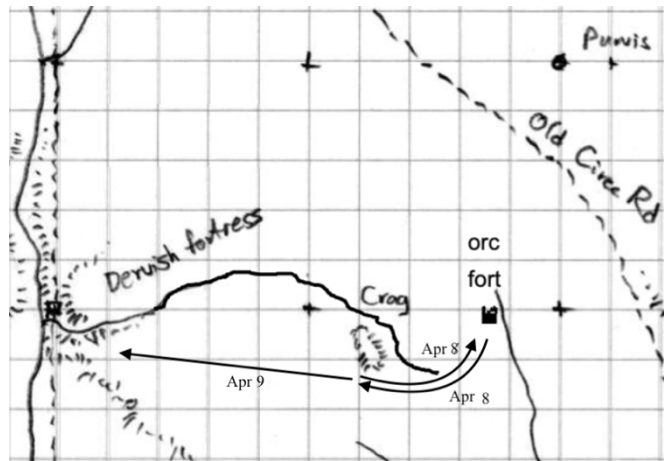


## Episode 21 The Orc Fort

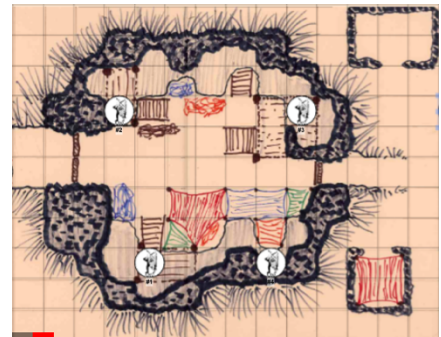
### Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup>: breeze

1. The party now consisted of Oliver, Melodious, Groa, Veylann, Doil, Slippa, Belfor and Corvyn, as well as the horse Pacman used to carry supplies. They had arranged to rendezvous with The Demon two miles southwest of the orc fort that had been seen from the top of The Crag. The easiest path there was around the south end, since Fortress Creek was somewhat of a barrier around to the north. On the way the party happened upon a patrol of three orcs off to the left, just 100 feet away. The orcs were neither hiding nor paying attention. All were killed quickly with Oliver, Veylann, Melodious, Groa, and Corvyn registering hits, and perhaps others. These orcs happened to be carrying 7 Sovereigns and 26 Ducats. Their axes were of the very poor quality pot metal type, not worth carrying off. The party continued on to the point where The demon would look for them.

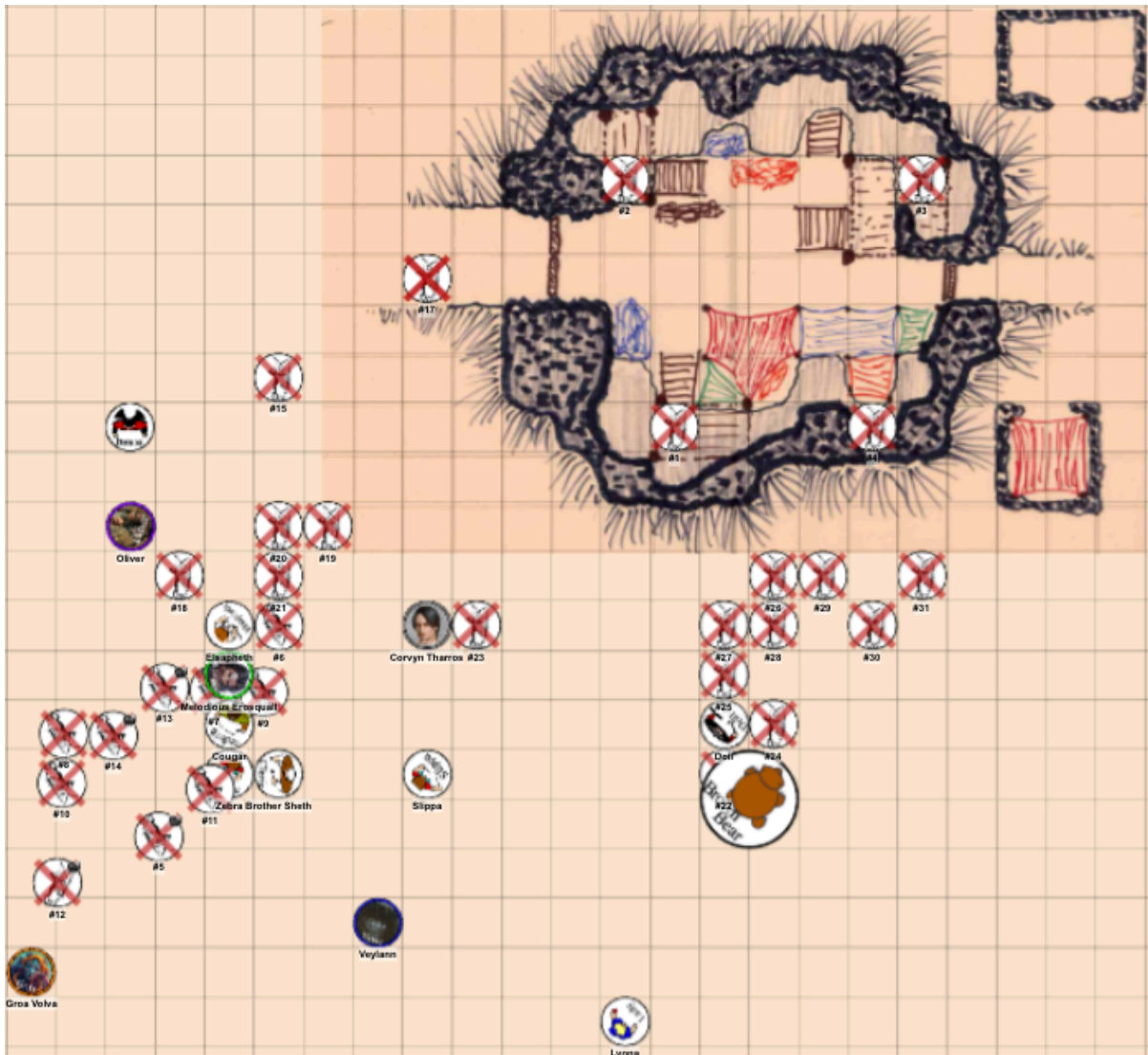
2. Indeed, coming up from the south, there was a low level flier, and yes, it was "The Demon." But, in company on the ground were three others. When they all came up, The Demon introduced them as Lyona, Cougar, and Zebra. Lyona looked a bit like The Demon herself, with red hair, black dyes clothing, leather armor, shortbow, and a pair of shortswords. But no visible wings or other unusual characteristics. Cougar (male) and Zebra (female) were both nomads in appearance. Their clothing showed features of nomad garb. Both looked younger than Lyona, and, for that matter, The Demon. Like Lyona, they wore leather armor and carried a shortbow and two shortswords. The three "walkers" were intending to support the party on the surface, while The Demon scouted ahead and would try to entice the orcs into moving out of their fort into the open. They followed the party at the rear.



3. When the fort came into sight, it was over 300 feet away directly ahead as the party was moving northeast over a rise. Four orcs manned watch-posts at, roughly, the corners of the fort. It was less a fort, and more a ring shaped heap of stones with some wooden platforms raised above. There were a couple of crude stone outbuildings to the east. The Demon started shooting from long range from up in the air, getting the attention of the orc guards. They started shooting crossbows at him, and he opened the range and flew north to distract their attention. Meanwhile the party came up to the rise and started shooting too, and registering hits. When Oliver hit the nearest, the orc at the SE corner laughed at him.



- Very quickly, even at long range, the party scored hits and put down all four of the orcs manning the watch-posts. They advanced in roughly line abreast towards the tower. Suddenly ten orcs burst forth out of a door on the west side of the tower, and the fight was on. Belfor transformed into a bear and attracted most of their attention while the party picked them off with missile weapons and spells. Belfor had to drop out of bear form to cast Thunderwave, then reverted to bear form. Fortunately for the party, only a couple more advanced out the door immediately afterward. But then a crowd of several more emerged, and about the same time, another ten came around out of the shelters on the east. One of those coming out the door was evidently an orc leader, wearing crude plate mail armor. He drew a lot of attention, especially from Oliver, magical spells, and Melodius cast "Heat Armor." The melee was on with Elsapheth attacked, and with Doil and Belfor the bear taking on others. Corvyn somehow got into the fight and was fortunate to be missed by a big axe swing. Elsapheth did get to do her "Radiance of the Dawn." Groa and Lyonna and Corvyn were casting spells. No way to keep up with it all, but at the end there were lots of dead orcs scattered about.



5. Investigating inside the fort, the party discovered three prisoners that the orcs had preserved, though left bound tightly and having been wounded with numerous small cuts. They were the son of Guildmaster Kryptorum of Selleze and two assistants, both women. The young man, Penniyink, was most upset about having been taken by orcs as they were traveling to Circe, north of Dervish. That was almost two weeks ago he supposes. The orcs had killed and eaten the driver and his escorting bodyguards. The orcs kept the three of them alive only in hopes that they were valuable, and might command a healthy ransom. He, that is, Penniyink, was in fact important. He is the only son of Guildmaster Kryptorum, the Kingdom's leading bookbinder. In fact, he was traveling to Circe to trade technical information, for a price of course, with scribes there. "Circe still uses scrolls mostly, because they have not mastered making satisfactory books! Unimaginable, but true." All of the cargo he was carrying, including quite a few precious books, were destroyed and burned.

The orc leader, Oruk, was getting frustrated, Penniyink said. Oruk complained that someone in Orc town would not pass on his ransom message without receiving a part of the payment, and that in advance. Oruk thought that greedy and unreasonable. It was he who had the goods, after all. One woman prisoner with him, Alphatoozey, is an expert bookbinder who was planning to remain in Circe. The other is a commoner. Her name was Papparra. She is also a bookbinder, but she was along more as a useful assistant. That was what Penniyink says. The orcs simply refused to understand that the three of them would be much more valuable unharmed, than if used for their amusement. Needless to say, all three are very glad to be freed, and did need quite a bit of healing.

6. The party did police up the battlefield of valuables, including the fort itself. There was found a small chest with pouch containing eleven gems (evaluated as about 50 gp. each) and six potions. Later when the party stopped for the night, Corvyn checked the potions and decided that five are probably potions of healing, and the last likely a potion of climbing. The orc leader was wearing crude plate mail armor and had a good quality greataxe. He had in his coin pouch 6 Sovereigns, 14 Ducats and 19 pennies. Everybody participated in looting the orc bodies quickly before the vultures made that more difficult. Another 76 Sovereigns, 165 Ducats, and 105 Pennies were found from the other 30 orc bodies, as well as the four light crossbows and a pile of 30 worthless greataxes and about 100 javelins.

7. Oliver was in favor of spending the night in the fort, then moving to Dervish to get the prisoners back to safety, then returning to report to Guarddraw rather than try to proceed to Guardway Tower, far off to the southeast several days. He planned to burn the fort, at least, the wood and fabric that remained there. Meanwhile, vultures continued to gather to enjoy the feast available outside the fort. This was the adventure session conclusion.

| <b>Experience:</b>       | Oliver      | Melodious   | Groa         | Corvyn      | Veylann     | Doil        | Slippa      | Belfor      | Elsapheth   | Sheth       |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 3 orcs (OMGC(V)((SBD))   | 56          | 56          | 56           | 56          | 27          | 14          | 14          | 14          | 14          | 14          |
| 30orc+1dr(OMGC(9others)) | 406         | 406         | 406          | 406         | 203         | 203         | 203         | 203         | 203         | 203         |
| Freed prisoners (above)  | 106         | 106         | 106          | 106         | 53          | 53          | 53          | 53          | 53          | 53          |
| Mission (destr. fort)    | 35          | 35          | 35           | 35          | 18          | 18          | 18          | 18          | 18          | 18          |
| <u>Prev. Experience</u>  | <u>7618</u> | <u>7153</u> | <u>6893*</u> | <u>416*</u> | <u>3805</u> | <u>3805</u> | <u>3730</u> | <u>3834</u> | <u>1245</u> | <u>305*</u> |
| Current total            | 8221        | 7756        | 7496*        | 1019**      | 4106        | 4093        | 4018        | 4122        | 1533        | 593*        |

There's some important follow-up to come, as Episode 21 1/2., to get party back to Guarddraw.