

Log: Baylor the Bloody

8/17/04

The day after the celebration, most of the team is sleeping off the ale but three members - the Halfling, the Sorcerer and the Cleric -- are up early enough to encounter Osgood in town. He offers them a tour of the Castle and they accept.

Marcellus Gore's castle was built by Artemis Tavor and a group of very special craftsmen he was training. They were the first of what would become a special NPC character class, the Arcane Artisans. Arcane Artisans use a combination of arcane magic and physical skill to build structures and artworks with magical properties. There are many examples of Tavor's vision in the castle. Some examples are:

- The castle walls sparkle in the sunlight and are exceptionally smooth (read: impossible to climb without a rope or other device hooked to the top).

- The kitchen area contains a Cabinet of Cold Storage (wardrobe-sized cabinet with a permanent Wall of Ice in the back; one keeps food frozen, another is slightly warmer and will keep food at a cold but not freezing temperature) and a fireless stove/fireplace that expels smoke directly to the Elemental Plane of Fire. Anything thrown into the round wastebasket is automatically disintegrated, and above the sink is a Basin of Endless Water that provides an unlimited supply of fresh, clean water.

- A similar Basin exists in the bath area, but the water it produces is hot and suitable for bathing.

- A laundry room contains two magical cauldrons. When items made of cloth are placed in either cauldron, it fills with hot water and a water weird agitates the items. The water then evaporates out and leaves the clothes clean and dry.

- Throughout the upper floors are what appear to be windows large enough for a man to stand in. On closer inspection, these "windows" are not actually openings in the wall but sections of the wall that have been rendered permanently invisible, allowing the passage of light and a view but shielding the inside from attack or weather.

The main floor of the house is taken up with living space. The kitchen and grand dining room are a large part of that, along with a great entrance hall, a sitting room, and a more private receiving room/library. These were all checked for secret doors and none were found.

A stairway leads down to the basement, which in Marcellus' and Marius' day housed the domestic staff. There are 10 bedrooms in the basement -- 4 private ones and 6 dual-occupancy -- along with a bathing room and laundry room. A lounge area offers comfortable seating and a table big enough to seat 8-10 people.

On the second floor are the bedroom suites designed for family. There are four suites. Each has a luxurious double canopy bed, dresser, vanity, chamber pot, and a sitting area

with sofa and padded chairs. Two have fireplaces (again, no chimney -- the smoke and ash are disposed of magically). Water basins and wash stands are in each closet.

The third floor is only accessible by a stairway that runs directly from the main floor up to the third, and is made up entirely of Marcellus Gore's master suite. The stairway leads up to a sitting area with fireplace, luxurious leather-upholstered chairs, and a handwoven rug. Behind that is a trophy room containing various items Marcellus acquired in his adventuring days: weapons, finery, rings, pieces of art, etc. The centerpiece is a brilliant, gleaming set of full plate armor and a two-handed sword that belonged to Marcellus himself -- the armor and weapon he favored when fighting or adventuring. Practically everything radiates some kind of magic. Osgood reminded them that per Simon, Marcellus' things are not to be touched or used by anyone. They are family heirlooms and artifacts of a legendary hero.

The group found a secret door in Marcellus' office. It led to a narrow cavity filled with valuables: gold, gems, jewelry, etc. Osgood was surprised to see it and offered an opinion that Simon doesn't know about the stash either (which makes sense, because he would have had the money to pay Rook or could have offered you gold instead of residency to save Charlotte). The cleric stated an intention to inform Simon at the first opportunity. They closed the secret area and left it unmolested.

On their way to the guest house, the Sorcerer's elven eye spotted an irregularity in the outer wall next to the house. They searched around and discovered a secret door built into the outer wall. The wall, at least at this point, is hollow and contains a staircase that leads downward. Osgood had no idea about this secret, either.

Partway down the stairway turns west, toward the sea. At the beginning of this turn the group found another secret door set into the wall. Behind that door was a large, empty room with five circles on the floor. The circles each bore a series of runes. One the cleric recognized as referencing Farlanghn, the god of travellers. Others looked to the sorcerer as if they related to teleportation. The layout of the circles, they realized, strongly resembles the positions of Gore's Cliff, Bainard's Keep, Crossroads, Tiburon, and Tavor relative to each other. They opted to close the room and leave it be for now.

At the bottom of the stairs they found one last secret door that opened onto a flat ledge inside a cave. The cave was open to the sea, the ledge forming a small private dock. They spotted a man-made opening coming off the same ledge and, tied off in front of that opening, a ship. As they watched, a rough-looking man emerged from the ship carrying a heavy sack and trudged into the tunnel.

The group sent Osgood back to the surface and checked out the ship. It was a fast cruiser, 20x60, capable of carrying a crew of 10-12 with reasonable space for cargo. It bore a black flag with a red skull on it, which none of the group recognized. The cargo area was full of bags and crates bearing the markings of several different ships.

As they disembarked from the ship, three unwashed men came out of the tunnel and

attacked them immediately. They rushed at the cleric and sorcerer and, for reasons that never became clear, failed to notice the halfling between them. That was a fatal mistake. The halfling stepped around behind the men and embedded his dagger into the rump of the middle one, doing grievous damage. The cleric and sorcerer also hit for damage. The halfling's enemy, now aware of the small rogue's position, turned to attack. The rogue feinted, confusing his enemy, and then struck the man a fatal blow to the manhood.

At this point a burst of flame issued forth from the tunnel opening. The players were able to avoid serious damage, but another of their opponents was felled. The cleric finished off the third man while the sorcerer found the source of the flame: a gnome, standing in the tunnel entrance and now brandishing a wand.

At the start of the next round the group was alarmed to behold a massive, rubbery figure emerging from the tunnel: a troll. It closed on them menacingly as the sorcerer unleashed a fire-based attack on it. The troll ignored the attack, suffering little or no damage from it. At the same time, another human appeared throwing daggers from the tunnel. He challenged them: "How dare you invade the lair of Baylor the Bloody?"

Baylor drew his sword and charged the group. The troll clawed at them, missing but making its presence felt. The gnome stayed back, watching the scene and waving his wand. The cleric summoned a celestial eagle to their aid and had it attack the troll, but with little success.

Then the group noticed something: when the rogue hit the troll with a sling bullet, the bullet appeared to go through the creature without leaving a mark, only to then have a wound appear a half-second or so later. They recalled that the troll, while menacing, had so far failed to hit anyone for damage. The sorcerer remembered the nature of gnomes and, surmising that the troll was only an illusion, aimed a scorching ray at the gnome.

As he cast the spell, though, the gnome shimmered and blurred and no less than four gnomes appeared, all identical. The sorcerer's ray went through one and did no apparent damage at all. Irritated, he stepped directly through the troll and readied another attack. The gnomes cursed and the troll image vanished.

Meanwhile, the cleric's eagle changed its target to Baylor the Bloody. It damaged his head and face with claw attacks while the cleric pounded Baylor with his morningstar. Baylor cried out in rage and hurled a dagger at the celestial eagle, impaling the creature and killing it in one blow. His triumphant cackle turned into a scream of agony, however, as the halfling buried one of his daggers into The Bloody's backside. The cleric followed with a blow to the head and Baylor fell, giving his honorific a whole new meaning.

At Baylor's death, the gnome dispelled the illusionary copies of himself and begged for his life. He gave his name as Levian Silverbane and said he was a captive of Baylor and his crew. He is from Tiburon and was captured at sea when Baylor attacked the ship he was travelling in. Baylor threatened to kill the gnome if he didn't use his magic to help

Baylor take more ships, so the gnome complied out of fear. He was quick to point out that the troll hadn't hurt anyone and the burning hands spell had done more damage to Baylor's men than to the group. Levian seemed genuinely impressed with the group's ability, especially upon learning that they had dispatched Silas Rook.

Under questioning, Levian said that he had not heard of anyone called the Dark One, but the description matched rumors he'd heard at home of a dark figure travelling alone frequently between Tavor, Tiburon, Crossroads, and the Tanglewood Forest area. A tall figure in black has been seen frequently, almost always at night and alone. Locals figure he's either so powerful he doesn't need bodyguards or so insane that nobody dares mess with him; nobody has ever tried to find out more about him that Levian knows of. Levian had no knowledge of Velana and, having been Baylor's captive for four months, no recent information about Rook's activities or happenings in the Flats. All he wants is to go home to Tiburon, and the cleric said the group would escort him there soon.

So there you have it. The kids discovered a secret room with what appears to be a network of teleporters in it. They also discovered a secret cave complex that Baylor had been using for his base, and a hidden cove (the entrance, per Levian, is covered with an illusion making it appear to be a solid cliff).

You are now the proud owners of a ship. Baylor's ship is built for speed rather than capacity, but it's in pretty good shape and can handle sea voyages of a week or less in duration once you guys learn how to sail the thing. It takes three people to operate the ship -- one at the rudder, one manning the rigging, and one on lookout in the crow's nest - - so unless you plan to hire a crew at least six of you will need to learn seamanship. Simon can hook you up with a local fishing crew who will teach you what you need to know.

Baylor wasn't much of a pirate, but he had accumulated a reasonable amount of treasure and goodies that now belong to you. I'll total that up for you before the next game session.

Which leads more or less directly to the question: when do you want to get together again? Labor Day weekend is looking good from here unless people are leaving town. I'm open to suggestions.

<MR>

PS: ERRATA -- In the email about the various towns, I told you that the fishermen and blue-collar types in Gore's Cliff worship Obad-Hai. Wrong. They worship Njord, god of the sea. Njord is NG, so you can assume his clerics will tend to be friendly toward you and truthful. I pulled Njord from the Forgotten Realms pantheon because he's more directly appropriate than Obad-Hai for the fishing town.