



a 5th Edition D&D campaign

SESSION #4

Terror at Lance Rock

Last Session...



Brey the elf druid/ranger/thief died at the hands of the Bringers of Woe beneath **Berthunder's** Warehouse in the Tomb of the Delvers. The masked Black Earth priest **Larrakh** escaped, along with another Woebringer crony, and their current whereabouts are unknown.

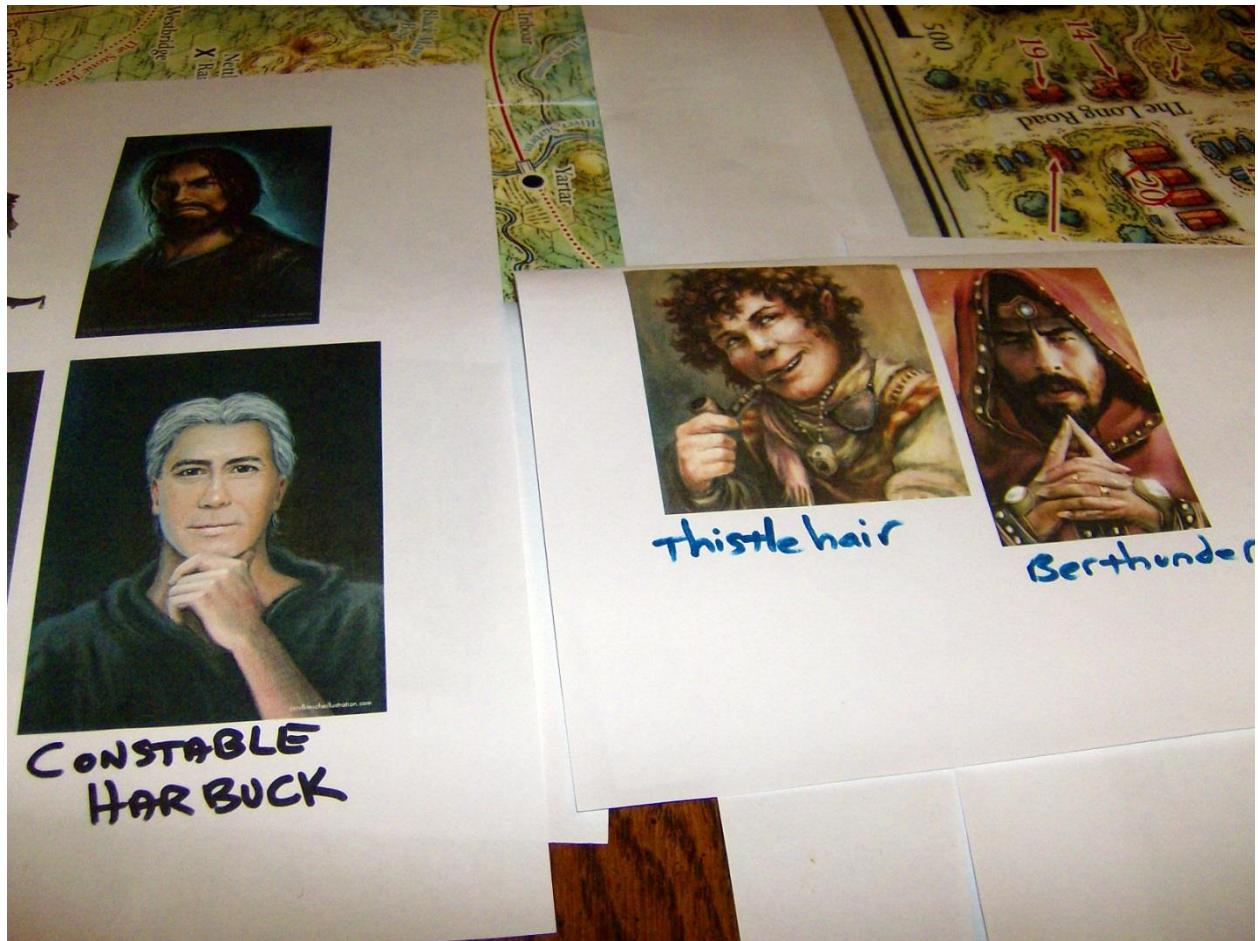
Brey was taken by Hadrian and Serena to the Allfaith's Shrine where Lady Ghaele and Sir Rel reside, and by the luck of Tymora, Sir Rel did have a scroll of Raise Dead, but coerced Hadrian the Paladin to join the Order of the Gauntlet in exchange for using its powerful magic to revive Brey.

Coughing, sputtering and sitting up weakly, they watch his wounds heal and scab over and the elf slowly swings his legs over the bed, still aching and weak, but alive. It will take him several days to recover from the traumatic ordeal.



After that battle in the tomb they all need a good, long rest, so they retire to the inn and sleep late, and then decide to make contact with **Constable Harbuck** and **Leeyla** of the Emerald Enclave and tell them about the Believers and the Black Earth priests involved in some secret cult in a chamber beneath Red Larch.

Now the boy **Mickey**, the one trapped under the rocks and the son of Berthunder, had spouted off numerous names of townsfolk as part of the inner Circle of Believers, namely **Mellhiko** of the Stoneworks, his father **Berthunder** of the Warehouse, **Wally Waelvur** of the Wagonworks, **Ulhro** the Tanner, and **Doren Finestone**, the latter three they've not met. There might be more secret members of the Believers but Mickey didn't say who. There was also **Grund** the half-orc guard down in the tomb, and some old man named **Barnabas** who seemed harmless enough and was the local carpenter.

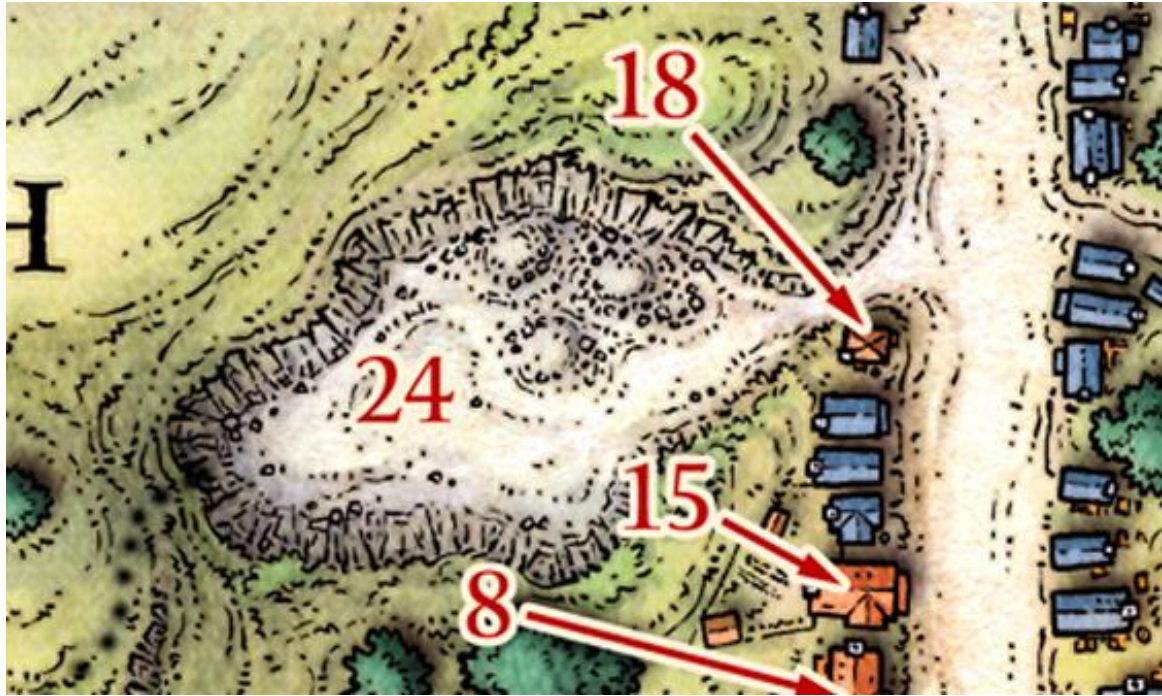


Constable Harbuck is found at the Butcher where he lives and works with **Jalessa**. Hadrian the paladin tells Harbuck everything that happened last night – the townsfolk Believers, the boy Mickey under the rocks, the traps and the Black Earth priests and how their friend Brey died (but he's okay now!).

Speaking of Brey, he and Serena the wild mage went to talk to their Enclave contact Leeya at the Bathhouse, and she confirms that some suspicious persons had been seen in town and that she's heard rumors of a Black Earth cult, but nothing substantial had evolved from it yet. She suggests keeping their eyes open and lips sealed and be very careful who they talk to. She will keep them informed as she learns more herself.



Well the bathhouse is so nice and hospitable and Brey the elf is aching and tired, he decides to just stay here and recuperate rather than going back to the inn. There's no way he's going to risk getting into a conflict until he's better rested.



Constable Harbuck wants to get to the bottom of this and he has Hadrian and Serena lead him to the quarry where they claim there is a secret entrance. Mellhiko is out smoking on the porch when she arrives and steps close to intervene.

“G’day, Constable. What are you doing with these riffraff?”



Harbuck is gentle enough with his response, but comes out and says that Hadrian and the others claim that something very odd has happened beneath Red Larch, some people have been killed and some of the townsfolk are implicated. It's his sworn duty to get to the bottom of it. Mellhiko is both furious and offended and tries to drive them off, but Harbuck is persistent and the old woman is last seen exiting the quarry, throwing worried looks behind her and running down the main street.

Hadrian finds the concealed cleft of rock and they soon shimmy through and are angling back down toward the Tomb of the Moving Stones. The chamber is just as they left it the night before, including four dead Bringers of Woe.

Constable Harbuck looks all around, bewildered. “What IS this place? This has been under Red Larch all this time?”

Serena goes to grab the coins and gems scattered at the base of the stone dwarf statue, but someone has already snagged it. Furthermore, Barnabas, Grund and Mickey are all gone. They lead the Constable through the short tunnels, showing him the floating stone and the sacrificed victims with the Earth symbol in their forehead, and finally they reach the ladder to the whiskey keg in Berthunder’s warehouse, but it is has been locked from above.



Constable Harbuck is very discouraged to see all of this, particularly the implications that trusted town members have been keeping it a secret, although he doesn’t understand if it is “evil” or just “weird”. He has some questions for some people, and he thanks Serena and Hadrian for bringing it to his attention.

Harbuck says he might have some more questions for the heroes later, but for now, he wants to gather some of his trusted advisors and confront Wally, Bert, Mellhiko and the others alone and see what they have to say.

Well, with Harbuck taking care of the Believers for right now, Hadrian and Serena turn their attention to the other problems at hand. There are still two missing blond girls, and there's a Black Earth priest out there somewhere, and he's dangerous as hell. Brey is too injured to do anything, so they'll need to recruit someone else if they plan to do any reconnaissance.



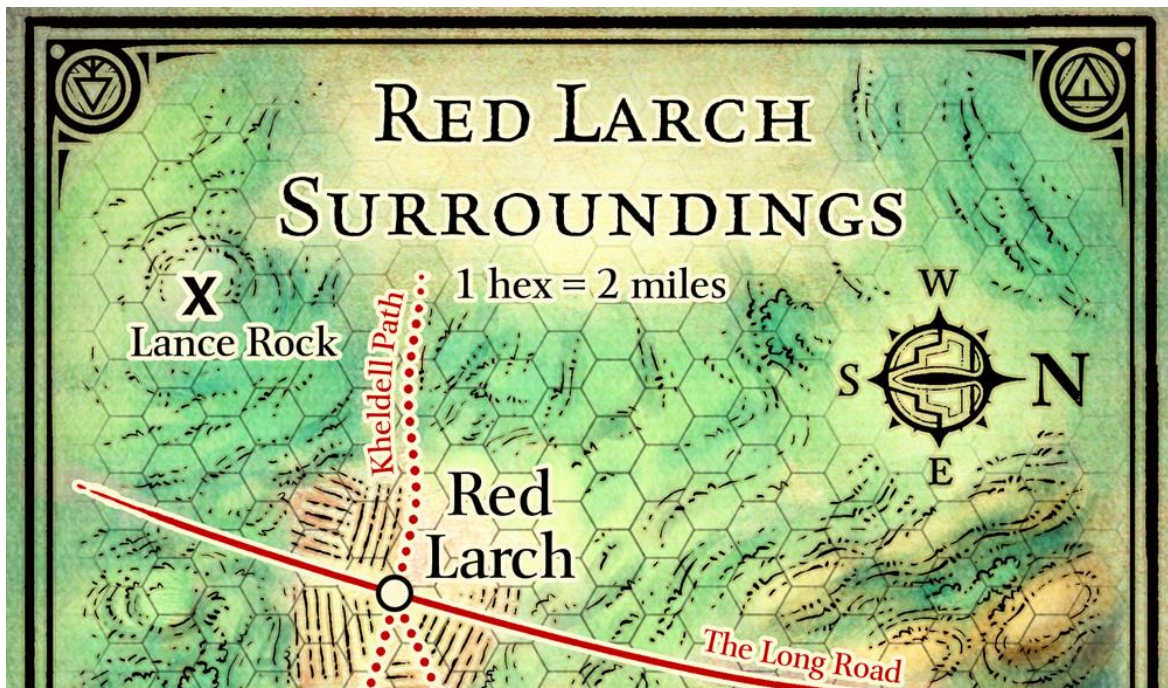
Sir Rel
of
Tempus

“You want me to do WHAT?” asks Sir Rel.

“Brey is recovering from the scroll you used on him. We’re still looking for the lost sisters, and the only clue we have left is some place called Lance Rock. Berthunder mentioned it to me when I first met him, he said there were suspicious folks out that way. Come with us, please.”

“Well, I don’t know about any of that,” says Sir Rel, stroking his moustache.

“Oh please please please please please!” beg the others (well, not really), but since Jeff didn’t have a character to play, we snagged a Priest NPC from the Monster Manual and rolled outta Red Larch.



Hadrian doesn't expect to find much there, and according to Constable Harbuck, only some crazy old hermit has been said to live in the vicinity. Sir Rel knows the history of the Lance, how two warring dragon fought in the skies, and one impaled the other with a shaft of rock from another place. The bones are long since disintegrated, but the spear of stone remains pierced in the rock.

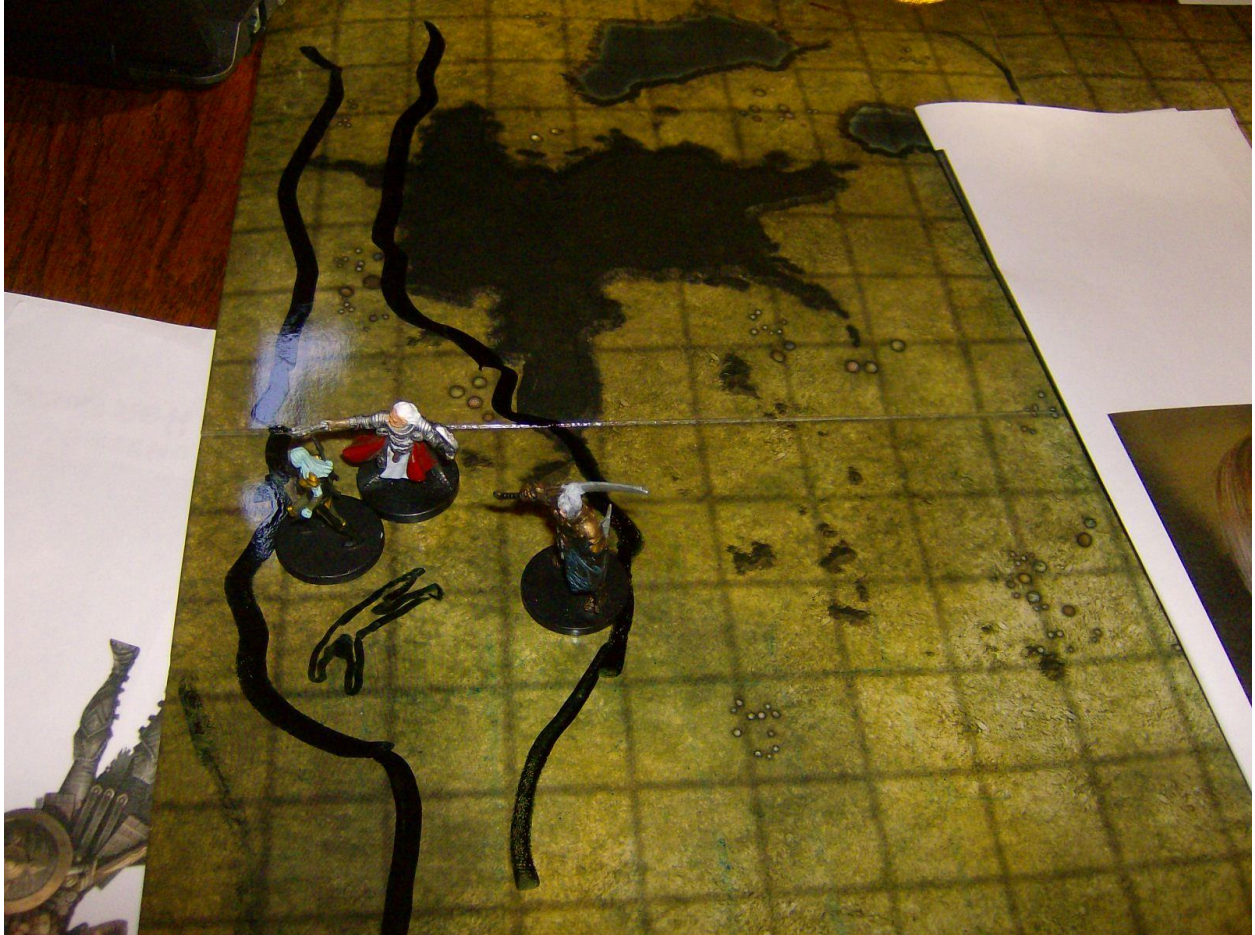


It takes them over an hour to hike out to Lance Rock but they finally see it jutting up in the distance, a lonely pinnacle with wind whistling around it. They see no movement. There is a dark cave entrance on the south side and they immediately catch the whiff of sweet decay wafting from the entrance. Hadrian extends his divine senses and immediately detects....UNDEAD.

He throws a lighted stone into the recesses and they immediately see a small girl hunched over a prone corpse on the floor. She slowly turns and faces them.



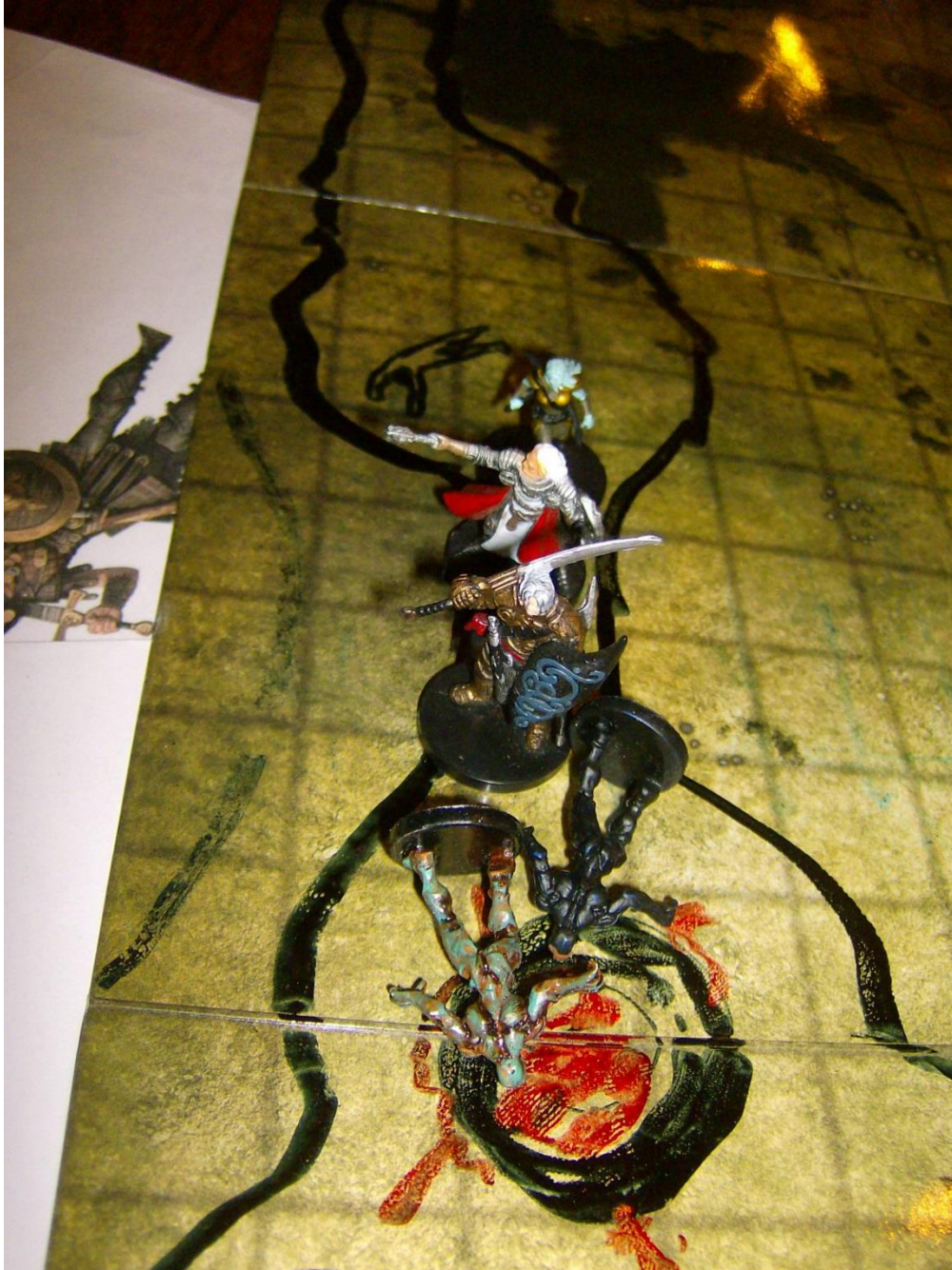
It's got to be one of the missing blond sisters, and she ain't looking too well. In fact, she's quite dead, and she starts lumbering toward Hadrian, blood staining her mouth from where she was feasting on the man on the floor. A quick blow to the head sends the little girl reeling into a second death and she collapses over the corpse. The PCs look at the man closer and recognize him as one of the Woebringers who escaped with Larrakh!!!



He has been partially devoured by the little girl who they suspect is one of the two missing sisters, and now they have little hope that the other one has fared any better. But how did the Woebringer end up in this cave at Lance Rock and get eaten by a zombie girl?

Hadrian advances first into the next dim chamber, tossing the lighted rock ahead because it is otherwise pitch black. There is a desecrated altar of sorts in here, a circular stone slab slathered with dark stains. He steps into the room but is immediately struck in the head by a box of rocks! Moaning

zombies suddenly stumble over a ledge above him and land at the paladin's feet, their diseased claws reaching out to grab him.



They aren't particularly difficult foes and he pushes them back with his shield before crushing their skulls. There are two exits from this chamber, and first one he investigates is horrifying...the chamber is stacked with corpses, not

undead ones, but dead bodies both male and female in various stages of decomposition, like a closet of reserved bodies just waiting to be reanimated or experimented upon.

The next star-shaped room is even weirder, and the paladin's divine senses detect more undead before they see them. Three corpses shuffle in a slow circle, but they are gaudily dressed, one as a BEAR, one as a woman in a skirt and wig and makeup, the last as a JESTER with tinkling bells on his sleeves and shoes.

The PCs don't waste any time annihilating them.

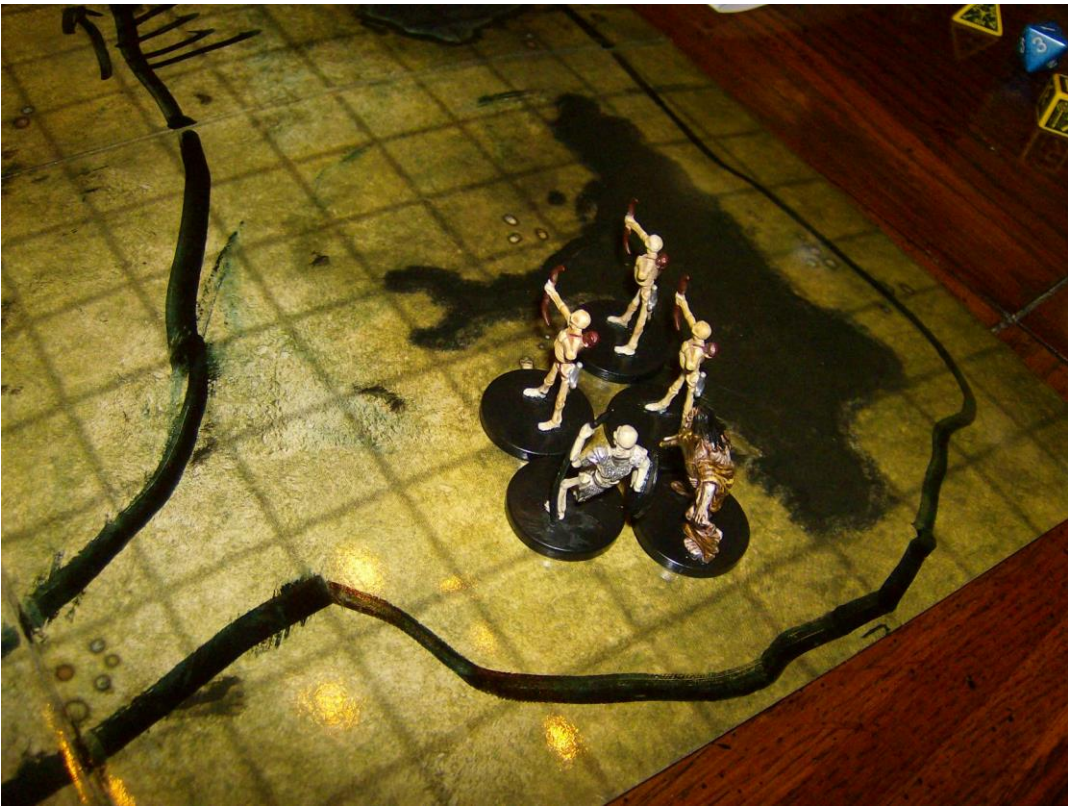




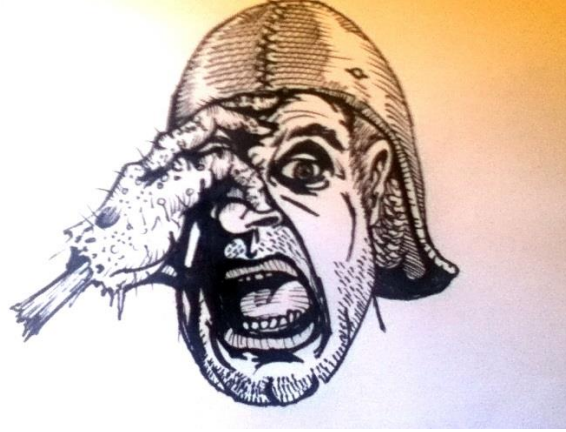
There are two exits from this oddly shaped star chamber, and the south one has flickering light so the group heads that way into a very large, long natural chamber of roughhewn stone with a forty foot high ceiling.

Stone slabs are covered in body parts and blood, and wicker baskets are full of severed hands and feet. A lone figure stands with its back to the entrance, and on the far side of the room there are four skeletal archers and someone lurking behind them for cover.

“CAN YOU SEE THE EYE?” the man shouts. “THE EVIL EYE SEES ALL!”



But those baskets of hands and feet are inanimate! Crawling claws suddenly tip the containers over and come scrambling at Hadrian, attempting to trip and tear and trouble the paladin.



Serena slams two daggers into two hands, killing them instantly, and Hadrian moves up to confront another zombie, but this puts him unfortunately dead in the sights of the skeleton archers, and as luck would have, they roll TWO CRITICAL HITS.

Hadrian is dropped, just like last session, but Sir Rel is quick to revive him with a healing spell.

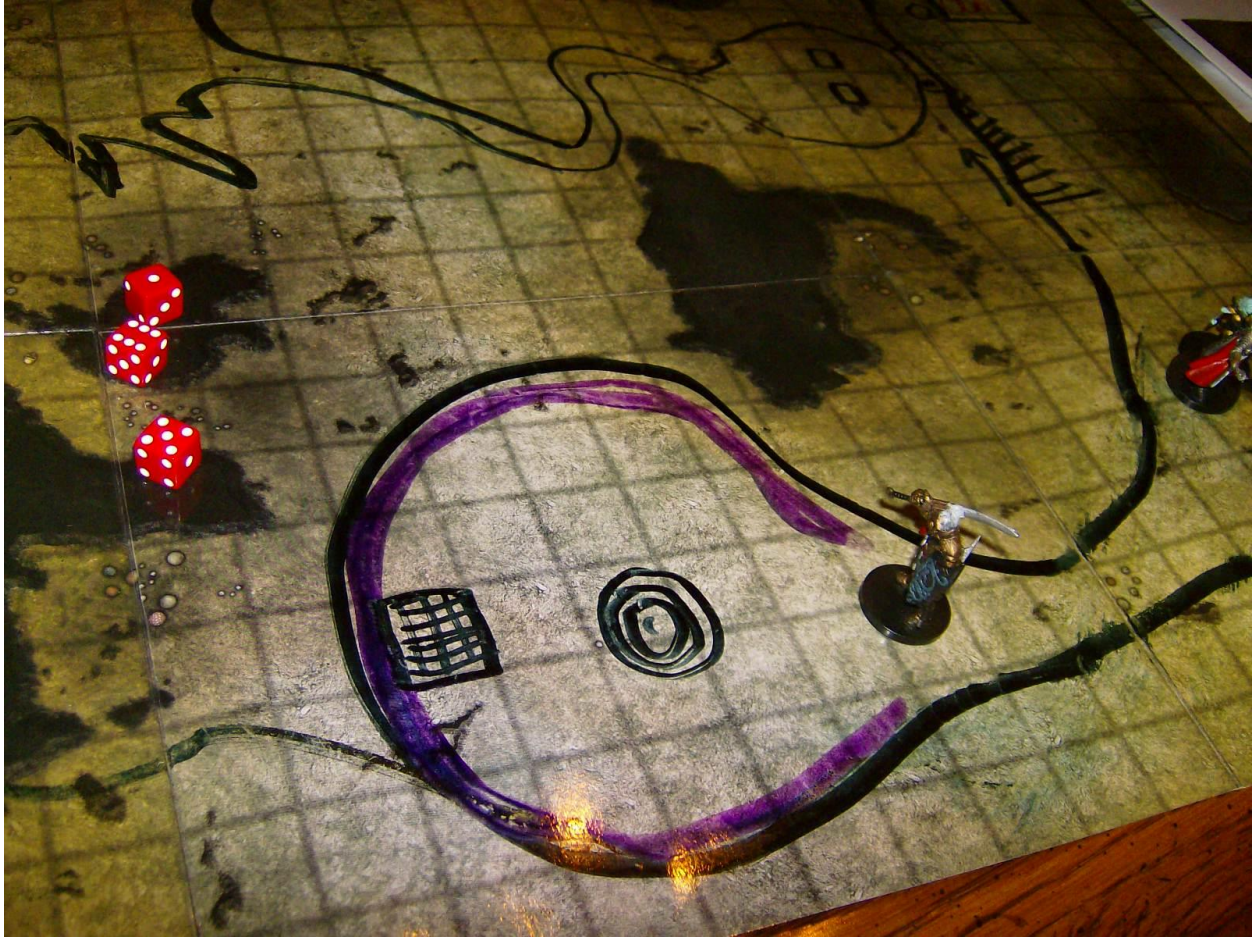
“DO YOU SEE THE EYE? THE EYE KNOWS ALL! **IT KNOWS AAAALLLLL!**” cackles the madman behind the skeletons, and then he flees down another passage.

The enemies are soon dispatched, their dry bones shattered, and the group decides to investigate another passage but they find a dead end room with two metal chests on the floor and a peephole. Eventually they find that a lever releases a rock trap and would have crushed anyone in the room.

They finally follow the necromancer’s exit and reach a room that is covered with rich purple tapestries around the walls. A little blond girl, a LIVING blond girl, is trapped in a cage dangling from the ceiling, but the most curious object are the intertwined stone arms and a gently rotating mystical eye above it.

“FEAR THE EVIL EYE...” whispers the madman somewhere in the room, but he’s concealed behind the curtains. But then they spot something else on the floor...the same stone mask that Larrakh the Black Earth priest had been wearing.





“FEAR THE EYE!” screeches the madman and he suddenly whips out from behind the purple curtains, a wand in hand, and bolts of energy fire into the paladin who had fortunately healed himself up since the skeletons.



Hadrian brings his weapon down hard and crushes the man's skull. He drops, gurgling, but then suddenly BLAZES with purple fire, a dying shriek filling the chamber, and all that is left is charred ash and the *wand of magic missiles*.

They recognize some tattoos on the man, symbols that relate to ancient elemental forces, but a fifth one, the Elder Eye, they are not very familiar with. Upon the death of the necromancer, the floating Evil Eye quietly fades and vanishes from the pedestal.

The little girl is released from the cage, sobbing, and she is comforted and offered some food and water. All of the purple tapestries are stripped down to reveal small cubbies and meager living arrangements. They ask the girl where the man with the mask is, and she said she thinks he and the crazy man had a fight, like the masked man was trying to bully his way in and take over. Now the PCs think that the remains of Larrakh are back in the other room on the table, maybe even his hands and feet were in the baskets.

They take the stone mask as proof, grab anything of value in the chamber and then head back out into the sunlight, being careful to not let the child see her dead sister, whom they also carefully wrap up and remove from the cave.



Once outside the sky is bright and blue and clear, piercing in its intensity after the gloomy cave, but they immediately hear a sharp cry above them and a wide shadow flies overhead, soon followed by two more.

These are giant birds of some kind, and they're being ridden by mounted men and heading straight toward Red Larch at high speed.

“What is that?” they ask Sir Rel, who has been in Red Larch longer.

“The Feathergale Knights,” he says. “Waterdhavian nobles. They fly by from time to time, they have a citadel out in the Sumber Hills.”

And that triggers a memory in Serena, just the day before at the tavern where she was playing the flute, a man calling himself Selko had approached her and said he was a member of the Wyndwyrds musical troupe, and he would love for her to accompany them to a place called Feathergale Spire where the nobles are paying them to play. Selko never mentioned that these nobles flew on strange steeds!



But for now they must return to Red Larch with one living girl and one dead one, and bring the good and bad news to the grieving family. But now they know what happened to Larrakh the Black Earth priest, but there are more questions they need answered, and the growing sense of unease that all is not well in the Dessairn Valley, and it might get much worse before it gets better.

The party levels to 4th for next session.