

Questions for players

- Can I get the 3rd level character sheets?
- Steve: in contact with Jeff? Does he think Jeff will come back again in the new year?

Questions for characters

- Beowulf: over the years the Hobnails have occasionally come to the Winter Wolf saying they could provide protection. Does the Winter Wolf pay protection to the Hobnails?

Clean up from last time: treasure, etc.

Aria and Isra

At the end of the last game you took two swords from the portal guardians on Apogee:

- The first is named Aria, meaning “melody.” Aria has a shimmering white-silver blade. It’s long with a barely noticeable curve, and has a narrow groove along the blade’s length. It has a beautifully crafted handle shaped like a fish tail, again in shining white-silver.
- The second sword is named Isra, meaning “night journey.” Like Aria, Isra is a long sword with a groove along its length. But, Isra has a straight, rusted, and beaten-looking iron blade. The simple handle has a copper-colored finish, which has mostly worn off, exposing ebony underneath.

Both swords are +1. Roll arcana: A good arcana check reveals that Aria and Isra have some additional powers that you can’t discover -- maybe these powers don’t manifest themselves on Earth. Bad arcana: Swords with names might be more than just a +1 blade.

What abilities did Aeris learn from Haas, Meade Hospital, the Oracle?

I still haven’t done this...I’ll send a mail about it on Saturday.

Prosper

It seems that Prosper was kidnapped by the Volker brothers but that you can’t immediately help Prosper. But aside from that, are there any remaining questions, concerns, etc. about that thread?

Rumors

The day after Haas went to Hereward, you hear a rumor on the streets. There have always been a few hulks moored on the river in Braddock -- an asylum hulk called the Stiles and two prison hulks, the Mothernaked and the Pell-Mell. People on the street are saying that the Pell-Mell was torn loose from its moorings in the wild storm last night, and the river carried it away. No one knows where the Pell-Mell is.

Mr. Ruprecht, of Garlington, Helmin, and Gibb

The party is in Kasskar's room at the Mooncalf one night talking again about money and plans, when there's a knock on the door. There's a small, elderly, meticulously dressed man at the door, and he asks if you're Mr. Kasskar. Then straightening his glasses on his nose, he says:

"It's very nice to meet you and your associates, Mr. Kasskar. I'm Mr. Ruprecht, of the accounting firm Garlington, Helmin, and Gibb. You might know that Garlington, Helmin, and Gibb is a venerable firm, having served Hollin almost since the inception of the Anhalt Charter Company."

"One service we provide for our, shall we say, *financially secure* clients is automatic bill payment. Instead of our clients taking their precious time to pay their creditors in person each month, Garlington, Helmin, and Gibb pay the creditors from the client's account. It's a small courtesy, but it's a service that distinguishes our firm from many others in Hollin."

"For many, many years we've payed the Mooncalf each month for the rent of your neighbor one room over, Mr. Ishild. In fact, small talking a few days ago, my associates and I realized that we've been paying Mr. Ishild's rent as long as any of us had worked for the firm, which is a long time indeed. Curious, we looked through our records and found that Garlington, Helmin, and Gibb has been paying Mr. Ishild's rent to the Mooncalf for" -- here Mr. Ruprecht pauses to look at his paper work, then he continues, saying -- "four hundred thirteen years and four months. Gentlemen, you can imagine how embarrassed our firm is by the continuing oversight."

Then he smiles, saying "Correct me if I'm wrong, Mr. Kasskar, but I'm sure that you've probably never met or even seen a Mr. Ishild next door. Is that correct?"

"Well then, to the business at hand. Our records indicate that Garlington, Helmin, and Gibb is also the custodian of Mr. Ishild's estate. So, I've been asked to survey and reclaim any items at the Mooncalf that may have belonged to him. However, neither we nor the Mooncalf have a key to Mr. Ishild's room, and the gentleman tending the bar downstairs informs me that conveniently you are a -- shall we say -- lock-smith. Also, that you may be able to appraise items we find inside."

So, if Kasskar agrees, they go next door to try to open Mr. Ishild's door. On the way, Mr. Ruprecht seems to remember something, then also says, "By the way Mr. Kasskar, are you the Kasskar who's family was killed in the Shambles fire 6 years ago or so? You know our firm also insured some of the businesses that were destroyed in the fire and paid several claims because ultimately the fire was ruled...accidental." Mr. Ruprecht laughs grimly and makes air quotes, repeating, "accidental." If Kasskar presses, Mr. Reprecht tells him he believes the Shambles was burned because businesses there would not pay protection.

Kasskar succeeds in opening the door.

Mr. Ishild's room

When Kasskar and Mr. Ruprecht open the door, a cloud of dust comes out -- thick like the gray dust on the inside of a vacuum bag. From the light coming in from outside, you can see that the room is a small foyer, only about 5x5 feet, with a few delicate-looking pieces of furniture, and the furniture and floor are all covered with about an inch of the thick gray dust. It must have been a very long time since anyone came in here.

The door on the other side of the foyer is unlocked, but there's some object on the other side of it, and Mr. Ruprecht has to bash it a few times with the door to push it aside and get through. The light from outside doesn't reach into the next room. If you light a lantern or torch in there, the thick dust in the air keeps the light from extending very far to light the room. Further, the room has many linen shrouds hanging from the ceiling, that span the width of the room, which you have to push aside to get around.

As the party gets near the rear of the apartment, they think they see a dim light shining behind the several remaining shrouds....a shadowy figure passes in front of it, then the attack begins.

The Fight

Then, you here the door slam behind you and now you can see that the object that Mr. Ruprecht had to bash aside was a skeleton, which is now up and animated.

Ishild

Lich (Human Wizard)		Level 10 Controller
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 500
HP 81; Bloodied 40		Initiative +5
Regeneration 10 (if the lich takes radiant damage, regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)		Perception +5 Darkvision
AC 24; Fortitude 20; Reflex 24; Will 22		
Speed 6		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic		
Traits		
☠ Necrotic Aura (necrotic) • Aura 5		
Any living creature that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 5 necrotic damage.		
Indestructible		
When a lich is reduced to 0 hit points, its body and possessions crumble into dust, but it is not destroyed. It reappears (along with its possessions) in 1d10 days within 1 square of its phylactery, unless the phylactery is also found and destroyed.		
Standard Actions		
☞ Shadow Ray (necrotic) • At-Will		
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 20; +14 vs. Reflex		
<i>Hit:</i> 1d8 + 8 necrotic damage		
❄ Frostburn (cold, necrotic, zone) • Recharge ☒ ☐		
<i>Attack:</i> Area burst 2 within 20; +14 vs. Fortitude		
<i>Hit:</i> 2d8 + 7 cold and necrotic damage. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the lich's next turn. The zone is considered difficult terrain. Any creature that starts its turn within the zone takes 10 cold and necrotic damage. The lich can sustain or dismiss the zone as a minor action		
🌬 Second Wind (healing) • Encounter		
<i>Effect:</i> The lich spends a healing surge and heals 54 hit points. The lich gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of its next turn.		
Skills Arcana +15, History +15, Insight +10		
Str 9 (+4)	Dex 10 (+5)	Wis 11 (+5)
Con 12 (+6)	Int 20 (+10)	Cha 16 (+8)
Alignment evil		Languages Abyssal, Common
Monster Manual 1		See Compendium

Shrouds

The shrouds can grapple so that the other things can attack, and to keep the party from escaping.

Wight		Level 1 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 100
HP 28; Bloodied 14		Initiative +4
AC 15; Fortitude 14; Reflex 13; Will 12		Perception -3
Speed 7		Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic;		
Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Standard Actions		
① Claw (necrotic) • At-Will		
<i>Effect:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC		
<i>Hit:</i> 1d6 + 1 necrotic damage, and the target loses a healing surge.		
<i>Effect:</i> The wight shifts up to 3 squares.		
Skills		
Stealth +7		
Str 16 (+3)	Dex 14 (+2)	Wis 4 (-3)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 8 (-1)	Cha 13 (+1)
Alignment evil		Languages Common
Monster Manual 1		See Compendium

Skeletons

Skeleton		Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 150
HP 45; Bloodied 22		Initiative +6
AC 19; Fortitude 15; Reflex 16; Will 15		Perception +3
Speed 6		Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic;		
Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Traits		
Speed of the Dead		
The skeleton gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals 1d6 extra damage on opportunity attacks.		
Standard Actions		
① Longsword (weapon) • At-Will		
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC		
<i>Hit:</i> 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the skeleton's next turn.		
Str 15 (+3)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 3 (-3)	Cha 3 (-3)
Alignment unaligned		Languages —
Equipment longsword		
Monster Manual 1		See Compendium

After the fight

Looking around after the fight, the party finds a small table with a lit lamp on it -- the dim light they originally saw through the shrouds. They find some work papers on the table with elaborate math on them -- it seems that Ishild was working on math? Looking further they find that some of the walls are lined with bookshelves with about 100 crudely bound volumes of similar handwritten math in them.

Kasskar also notices that there's a safe with a niche door like the one he saw at the Oracle, only this one has three hand holes, not two. There are a few -- 2 -- gp on top of the safe. There's

also an upside-down glass -- the size and shape of a beer pint glass -- bouncing around a little like something's inside trying to get out. If the characters look more closely, they think they can make out a little being inside, frantically flying around trying to get their attention. If they free it, it takes off right away like an insect, flying out the door.

Mr. Ruprecht encourages Kasskar to try the safe -- after all, Mr. Ishild was very wealthy. If Kasskar opens the safe, he finds 1200 gp, a +1 AC silver ring and another bound volume -- maybe this one is special?

The +1 AC silver ring is actually Ishild's phylactery. If one of the characters takes it instead of destroying it, they'll be revisited by Ishild in 1d10 days. Or, maybe they can't destroy it.

Investigating the Shambles fire

Kasskar knows a few butchers who were in the Shambles that day, he can go around to them trying his Streetwise to try to get information or other relevant skill. Their names are Baynes, Geiss, and Urloch.

Who does Kasskar go to visit first? He can try his Streetwise or Diplomacy on each of them in turn.

It's been about six years since the fire in the Shambles, but after Kasskar reintroduces himself, X remembers him and seems happy to see someone from the past. X asks Kasskar what he's been up to: where is he living? what does he think of the Pell-Mell floating away?

When Kasskar mentions the Shambles fire, X kind of looks at the ground and says, "Well, Kasskar, the Shambles fire was an accident." But if Kasskar presses, he'll tell the real story.

He says the Coopers' Union had extorted protection money from businesses in the Shambles for a long time, when the Hobnails moved to take over the Shambles and started demanding that the stalls pay protection to them instead. The Hobnails said they were taking over the whole city. They said they were working to protect people like the Shambles businessmen from the press gangs and take Hollin back from the Admiralty, and businessmen supporting the Coopers' Union prevented the Hobnails from focusing on the press gangs. All of this was coming from a Hobnail at Hobnail prison, Horst.

The businesses didn't know what to do. Some started to pay the Hobnails, and others continued to pay the Coopers' Union. Of course, the Hobnails and the Coopers' Union were both unsatisfied, and they ratcheted up the pressure on the businessmen.

One night while this was happening, several of us were meeting at the room of one of the other butchers, Barlow, arguing about what to do. Actually Barlow's room was over at the Mooncalf. We were having a very heated conversation, when there was a knock at the door. It was Auld,

one of Horst's enforcers who'd be coming around to put the heat on Barlow.

Well, Auld looked formidable, like he didn't take shit from anyone. But as he and Barlow talked, the thought just kind of came into my head that I butcher animals bigger than this guy all the time. Taking him out could be just like working on an animal. As I was thinking this, my distracted gaze fell on the others, and it seemed like they were thinking the same thing.

So, we circled around him, but Auld stood tall and stiffened up to fight us all at the same time. A bull never fought me as hard as that guy fought us, but he was alone and there were five of us. We beat him unconscious, then took him outside through the crowded Mooncalf common room, and threw him the street.

The next day, I was in the Shambles working when the normal covered wagon from the renderers came to deliver oil and lard. As usual I climbed in to unload the oil. The inside of the wagon was filled with barrels of oil, but the inside of the canvas covering had also been slathered all over with lard, oil, and who knows what else. The smell of it was all in my nostrils when I turned around to go out, and there was this guy Auld -- throwing a lit torch into the wagon with me.

Well, the whole thing exploded. I was lucky to get away with kind of moderate burns, but it sparked the huge Shambles fire and a lot of people died.

After that, I realized that you couldn't just treat these guys like animals -- animals don't kill your family, they don't burn off your skin. So, I didn't tell anyone what had happened and started to pay the Hobnails. Around the same time the Coopers' Union stopped coming around also. Maybe they were beaten with similar attacks.

So, the fire was partially my fault, Kasskar. I'm really sorry about your family.

The Coopers' Union

The best place for Kasskar to go for information is probably the Coopers' Union, who has a vested interest in getting back at the Hobnails. Irmgard was a friend of the Godwin, the Coopers' Union boxer that Hobnails murdered. He can maybe find a Coopers' Union guy by asking the barkeep at the Mooncalf to keep an ear out for one...maybe the barkeep gets a whiff that the Coopers' Union is going to try to take out a press gang at the mooncalf one night and Kasskar can come down and get this guys' ear before the fight.

Irmgard tells Kasskar that Auld was notorious among the Coopers' Union members, and they all know that Auld has been serving time in Heath prison for about a year.

Heath Prison

Historically, guards in Heath prison had the right to charge prisoners for “services” like taking off or even putting on irons. Eventually, the prisoners got together and proposed instead a lump payment to the prison warden that they would govern themselves inside the walls. So, now the prison administration is on the first floor, and the prisoners run two basements. Visitors are allowed inside the prison area at their own risk.

The party goes through the prison, seeing the sights until they reach Auld. Things they see:

- Hallways and cells like the pictures.
- Restraints.
- “Lord of the Flies” things:
 - like prisoners harassing and taunting the weaker prisoners.
 - groups of prisoners fighting
 - running, howling
 - characters freaked out and wide eyed when they see the party
- Restraints around like manacles, chains.
- they go through a room with a gallows and a guillotine in it
- different types of solitary confinement

Maybe he’s been meditating in a solitaire confinement bin. He’s tattooing himself in there...it’s a big portrait of his Hobnail boss.

Auld

When they reach the end of the line, they reach the solitary confinement area. There’s solitary confinement with a few pathetic prisoners. But, there’s a separate solitary area where Auld is.

He comes out and he looks like the image. Except, he’s wearing just a short pair of shorts, like armor all shorts, and it looks like he’s tattooed everywhere he could draw a tattoo himself. There’s one of Horst; there’s one a leg of an octopus writhing around the leg; there are gang signs; women; and script writing.

After-game summary

The party discovers that Kasskar’s neighbor at the Mooncalf hostel, Ishild, is a five-hundred-year-old lich and mathematician, and destroys him. But, Beowulf takes Ishild’s ring, not realizing the ring is Ishild’s phylactery, and has to destroy Ishild again when he reappears to reclaim it. Kasskar discovers that the Shambles fire that killed his family was started by Auld, a Hobnails enforcer now in Heath Prison.