

Session/Game: ACKS/Gatavia III #36

Date: February 15, 2015

Episode 36: "Who is Going to Ride the Worm?"

Campaign Date: October 19th – October 24th, 1431 AY

Characters

Exorcist Rinaldo, human, cleric-8, neutral (Robert Swan)

Mighty Beavis, gnome titan-6, neutral (henchman)

Manfred, human, mage-6, neutral (henchman)

Decius, human, explorer-6, neutral (henchman)

Sindrain, elf, ranger-6, neutral (henchman)

Deadeye Hayes, human, bladedancer-5, neutral (henchman)

Murderface Jack, dwarf, fury-8 neutral (Jason Liebert)

Fancy Jill, dwarf, craft priest-5, neutral (henchman)

Swagger Jack, dwarf, fury-4, neutral (henchman)

Mighty Jack, dwarf, fury-4, neutral (henchman)

Whispy Nuggets, elf, enchanter-4, neutral (henchman)

Tiberio, human, mage-8, neutral (Tim Moyer)

Helpful Bill, fighter-6 neutral (henchman)

Muttering Osborn, shaman-5, neutral (henchman)

Masked Archer of the Apocalypse, assassin-8, neutral (Dave Nelson)

Trusty Nixon, human, lackey-6, neutral (henchman)

Hackamore, human, thief-7, neutral (henchman)

Judge: Andrew Smith

October 19th

The Masked Archer pays off his henchmen and divests himself of all his wealth. He spends a ton on fancy foods and kumiss and piles it in the center of the Beer Garden of the Gods, inviting all the Therks who still dare to visit Yoesville to join him. After giving them all a taste of the goods he has purchased, he destroys it all in a spectacular conflagration. He shouts after the Therks, "I have nothing left to lose! There is no more! You can't take anything else away from me!" The completely creeped-out Therks make their way back South to Pulchester to spread the news that The Masked Archer hates Therks and he is completely insane.

October 20th

News comes from Fort Hydra that the Wormcult bugbears are on the move. Murderface and the fan club join up with The Masked Archer and Rinaldo to help Tiberio turn aside the attack. The Skull Collectors easily fight off the main force of bugbears, with few casualties.

As the bugbears break, the Skull Collectors realize that the main force was just a ruse to allow a separate elite force get access to Fort Hydra and make mischief. They race to stop the elite force and arrive just in time.

Two purple worms emerge, attacking Helpful Bill and Murderface while a bugbear chief and his shaman lead a group of elite bugbears. A stone giant backs up the force, and two troll bodyguards along with four ogre retainers fight alongside the Wormcult.

Tiberio throws up a wall of flame just in time to keep the bulk of the bugbears from sacking Fort Hydra. The bugbear witchdoctor holds Mighty Jack and Hackamore, but is in turn held by Fancy Jill. Rinaldo blinds the bugbear leader and his ogre bodyguards, slaying them with the help of Beavis and Deadeye. The Masked Archer shoots many bugbears dead with poisoned arrows, and manages to pick off stragglers as they happen by. Whispy Nuggets is flattened by a giant rock hurled by a stone giant. The force manages to slay them all after a prolonged struggle.

October 21st

The Skull Collectors rest for a day to allow Whispy Nuggets and Helpful Bill to heal up a bit.

October 22nd

The Skull Collectors mount up and march toward the Anthill of Doom, the beastman settlement at the center of the Wormcult. As they exit the Elfwood, they are attacked by a group of giant bounty-hunters bolstered by another purple worm and two manticore abominations. The two stone giants leading the ambush are poisoned by the Masked Archer, while the worm is beaten senseless by a group of Skull Collectors. The manticore abominations are entranced by Whispy Nuggets, and slain with no loss of life.

The Skull Collectors learn that there is another, larger bugbear force already marching toward Fort Hydra. They decide to push on toward the Anthill of Doom, secure the Wormcult's domain, and put an end to it immediately the same night.

The Skull Collectors approach the giant anthill, newly fortified and now including some red fire-breathing ants. Manfred casts polymorph on one of the ants from the safety of Tiberio's carpet, turning it into a weak chimera. The ants swarm the polymorphed monster, but not before drawing the attention of a purple worm patrolling the area. Immediately, Manfred polymorphs the worm into a carnivorous sheep that takes on the ants, and largely wins. When the polymorphed worm is slain, it retakes the form of the worm. The remaining ants, now all in a bunch are killed by a fireball.

The Skull Collectors scout out the anthill using Muttering Osborn's raven. They learn that half way down the shaft is a series of demons waiting to strike. A newly enlarged lower chamber holds Griggle the Wormpriest and an armored Cyclops waiting to ambush the Skull Collectors. From this intelligence, the Skull Collectors begin to form a most cunning plan.

The Masked Archer commands Nixon to clean out the guts of the slain purple worm. Nixon is immediately defensive, but he eventually acquiesces to his patron's wishes. The massive beast has a huge array of corrosive giblets, but as a high-level lackey Nixon is up to the task. He relies on some help from summoned barbarians. Nixon manages to hollow out room in the worm's gut for about eight men, but he stripped off the tail trying to harvest poison, so the back end is open to the air. He builds some handholds and cuts sections of worm that could easily break away for folks to exit from the sides.

Next, Tiberio animates the worm as an undead monster. The Skull Collectors climb aboard the worm and they dig down in a slow corkscrew into the floor of the Wormpriest's lair. They emerge right below the Wormpriest, nearly swallowing him in the dead worm's maw. The Skull Collectors have clearly surprised the Wormcult and pile out of the undead worm.

The Masked Archer fires a poisoned arrow at the Cyclops, hitting him right above his one eye. The poison immediately reaches his brain and he falls dead. The archers unleash a barrage on the Wormpriest followed by basic attack spells. All fall harmless from the Wormpriest's mirror image and sphere of protection spells. Griggle calls three more purple worms to himself and casts haste on them. They swallow Tiberio, Swagger Jack, and Deadeye Hayes whole, and begin to digest them – slaying Tiberio. Whispy Nuggets charms two of the three worms using his hypnotic pattern spell. Rinaldo dispels all the defensive magic on the wormpriest, and he goes down in a flurry of blows. The demons, now without a master return to the pits of hell before even engaging.

Murderface pulls all his swallowed comrades from the worms' gullets. The Skull Collectors emerge from the pit and claim the settlement formerly known as the Anthill of Doom as a domain of the Skull Collectors. Tiberio takes on the mantle of rulership and it is renamed [Valdar](#)

October 23rd – October 24th

The Skull Collectors return to their domains. Tiberio makes preparations to take control of Valdar. All taint of the Wormcult is purged from the leadership and the former armies of the goblins and bugbears are invited to serve the Skull Collectors or face death. Most of the elite units choose to disband or become independent mercenaries, but the bulk of the force made up of hobgoblins and goblins choose to stay and serve a new master.

Mayor Clovis of Yoesville receives a message from the guards at Village Primal. The Clockwork Horrors have cleared and flattened out an area 100 yards from the border and laid spikes in the clearing. The only way in or out that doesn't go through these spikes is through an entrance by the flag of truce. Any animals that enter the territory are immediately slain, and the horrors have even taken to chasing after insects with tiny nets. Guards report occasionally hearing roars followed by earth-shaking explosions and crashing sounds. Recently, a fellow riding a wyvern believed to be a former representative of the wormcult flew into the territory only to be gunned down by the horrors, decapitated, and dragged off into the center of the territory. Now, the Clockwork Horrors have recently offered Clovis 5000gp in gems for each live troll brought to the border. Mayor Clovis chooses not to try and fulfill the horrors' request, instead sending word back to the horrors that the Skull Collectors have slain all trolls in the entire province.