

Session/Game: ACKS/Gatavia III #39

Date: April 12, 2015

Episode 39: The Ruins of Rathrig

Campaign Date: December 15th – December 31st, 1431 AY

Characters:

Rinaldo of Saturn, human, cleric-8, neutral (Robert Swan)
Decius, human, explorer-7, neutral (henchman)
Mighty Beavis, gnome titan-7, neutral (henchman)
Manfred, human, mage-7, neutral (henchman)
Deadeye Hayes, human, bladedancer-6, neutral (henchman)
Murderface Jack, dwarf, fury-9 neutral (Jason Liebert)
Fancy Jill, dwarf, craftpriest-6, neutral (henchman)
Mighty Jack, dwarf fury-5, neutral (henchman)
Swagger Jack, dwarf fury-5, neutral (henchman)
Whispy Nuggets, elf enchanter-5, neutral (henchman)
Gorna, human, shaman-9, neutral (Bob LaForge)
Bobbie the Broken Bard, human bard-4 neutral (henchman)
Tiberio, human, mage-8, neutral (Tim Moyer)
Helpful Bill, fighter-6, neutral (henchman)
Muttering Osborn, shaman-6, neutral (henchman)
The Masked Archer of the Apocalypse, assassin-9, neutral (Dave Nelson)
Trusty Nixon, human, lackey-6, neutral (henchman)
Hackamore, human, thief-7, neutral (henchman)
Split Tongue, elf, enchanter-7, neutral (Marlon Kirton)
Sigwulf, human, fighter-4, neutral (henchman)
Bosco Puddin', halfling burglar-3, neutral (henchman)
Flamer, 5 HD Reincarnated Ape, neutral (henchman)
Zaphandle, human warlock-1, chaotic (henchman)
Strumming Steve, human bard-1, neutral (henchman)

Judge: Andrew Smith

December 14th-21st

The Skull Collectors return from Seatun to celebrate Amicus' nuptials and make arrangements before setting out for the Rathrig. Nixon holds an impressive bachelor party in the Beer Garden of the Gods held for Amicus. No women guests are invited. It starts off with a Halfling epic dance. Bobby the Broken Bard provides the music. It is followed by a turnip and radish pie eating contest. Amicus presents each of his friends with a fancy chalice to remember the event. There is a knife throwing contest involving gnomes holding targets. Amicus eventually passes out in the garden, muttering about how he was not ready for the crab-person exotic dancers. The next day, Murderface presides over a brief and uneventful marriage ceremony in which he presents the newlyweds with a philter of love which they share.

Split-Tongue recruits in Yoesville and Hod. Tiberio takes the week to make some changes to his spellbook. Beavis recruits in Yoesville. Wang recruits three new henchmen, Rhadymanthus, Amazing Steve, and "The Other Decius".

December 22nd

The Skull Collectors travel to the Ruins of Rathrig. Rathrig was a city of Westerlings nestled between five hills and a mountain made of a single spire of solid rock. It is located south of the domain of the Catiurges. The roads of the city radiated toward the East from a colossal door in the side of the rocky mountain. There, a stone sentinel carved in the shape of a gigantic dwarven warrior sits on a raised shelf by the door.

December 23rd

The Skull Collectors take the Drake – the flying ship they recovered from Admiral Rigelius' tomb – and hover over the ruins of Rathrig. They see nothing happening, just an ancient city of the Westerlings being reclaimed by nature. Many of the buildings lay in ruins and thorny vines hiding menacing rats have taken over. Tiberio dispatches one of his summoned berserkers to explore. At first, the berserker seems safe, but after disappearing into a building he does not appear. Gorna leaves his body behind and starts to explore the city with just his consciousness. He is confronted by a legion of ghostly moaning dwarves, and he quickly returns to his body.

Tiberio takes the Drake down toward the colossal door. It appears to be of pre-Ardean dwarven manufacture. Murderface and his henchmen disembark as they approach. The colossal dwarven statue is in fact an automaton, and it lurches into action to attack the Skull Collectors. A titanic battle ensues, with the Drake lifting off to get out of the reach of the animated automaton and the golem trading blows with the dwarves in the party. Eventually, the golem is destroyed. It begins to spew a thick, purple smoke that blocks the ship's view of the fighters on the ground. Fearing that the gas is poisonous, Tiberio steers the Drake away from the door at his best speed.

Meanwhile, on the ground Murderface and his henchmen joined by Mighty Beavis and Flamer the Ape are attacked by a group of spectral dwarven warriors. The very same ones that confronted Gorna in his spirit form, now embodied and ready to harm the Skull Collectors. A massive battle ensues, which goes against Murderface particularly as he is unable to make a strike on the screaming dwarven banshees.

Eventually, the Drake hears the battle and turns around. More dwarven banshees arrive to attack the ship, and one of Murderface's henchmen is slain. Tiberio summons a hydra to take out many of the screaming undead. However, eventually the dwarven ghosts are all eventually sent back from where they came from.

The Skull Collectors open the colossal doors with a knock spell. There they find a bridge over a colossal pit leading to a group of galleries. They notice that many of these galleries have lizardfolk in them, and using the hydra they realize that crossing the bridge will require them to go through more of the dwarven banshees.

The party spends some time weighing their options. Using a combination of divine inspiration from Grampius, as well as some location magic, the Skull Collectors decide the best course of action is to fly the Drake into the door and then drive it down into the pit to find the source of the undead's power.



Tiberio skillfully drives the flying boat through the colossal doors. The lizardmen attack, but are driven off by Split-Tongue's magic as they descend into the darkness. They see an altar littered with bodies and treasure that powers the sinkhole of evil that fuels the power of the undead dwarves. A reptile mage – a race of legless reptilian beings who unleashed demon magic on the world – commands a squad of lizardfolk along with a grey, rocky elemental demon that can only be described as an Earth Efreeti.

The ship drops toward the floor, and Split-Tongue jumps off and launches a fireball at the lizardfolk and reptiles that defend the altar. The reptile mage launches a fireball back at the Drake, prompting Tiberio to bring the ship right above the altar to use its hull as a defense against further offensive magic.

The Earth Efreeti calls to the living rock of the pit and has it reach up and trap the Drake in place right above the altar, as well as build steps for the lizardfolk to climb up to attack the vessel. Murderface launches himself from the side of the boat and crushes the skull-shaped altar, untethering the dwarven banshees from the mortal plane forever.

Tiberio uses a summoned purple worm to swallow up several of the lizard folk. The Masked Archer's poisoned arrows didn't find many targets. He lept from the trapped boat leaving Hackamore all alone with an onslaught of cold-blooded lizards causing much consternation from the thief hireling. Gorna spends some time invisibly casting healing spells and running interference for the group. Split-Tongue continues to rain more damaging spells on the enemies.

Finally, a strange dwarf appears. He is beardless, and has a rictus skull mask on his face along with a whip. He is the master of the fallen domain and he calls himself Void Jack. He uses the whip to launch a fireball at Split-Tongue. A few attacks on him are negated by a mirror image spell, but he is quickly taken down by numerous attacks from another summoned hydra. Void Jack is hammered, and falls into a pile of ash since he himself was a member of the undead.

Strumming Steve and Zaphandle the warlock both lay dead after being incinerated by the reptile mage's fireball. Bosco Pudding is raised from the dead, but is blind in the daytime so he is dismissed by Split-Tongue.

December 24-25th

The Skull Collectors spend another two days in Rathrig collecting treasure and exploring the ruins. They learn that a community that once included Westerlings and dwarves living in harmony slowly devolved over time. It was founded by the legendary heroes Brom and Dulac, and welcomed a population of dwarven settlers soon after Rathrig was initiated. The Skull Collectors find many mass graves of Westerlings as the dwarves of Rathrig systematically oppressed, enslaved, and then ultimately murdered their human citizenry. A population that once grew in the memory of the mighty heroes Brom and Dulac turned on itself leaving an empty shell. There are few clues as to why.

December 26th-December 31st

The Skull Collectors return to the Badlands. Winter starts to take hold and the heroes arrive in Yoesville in a light snowfall. The Skull Collectors take the festival week off and celebrate the New Year.