

Session/Game: ACKS/Gatavia III #45

Date: July 12th, 2015

Episode 45: Archbishop Wardrick's Last Stand

Campaign Date: April 10th- April 25th, 1432 AY

Characters:

The Masked Archer of the Apocalypse, assassin-9, neutral (Dave Nelson)

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

Hacka Ma'am, human, thief-8, neutral (henchman)

Mysterious Clive, mage-4, neutral (henchman)

Rodney O'Toole, human, bard-4, neutral (henchman)

Murderface Jack, dwarf, fury-9 neutral (Jason Liebert)

Fancy Jill, dwarf, craftpriest-7, neutral (henchman)

One-Axe Jack (formerly Mighty Jack), dwarf fury-6, neutral (henchman)

Two-Axe Jack (formerly Swagger Jack) dwarf fury-6, neutral (henchman)

Whispy Nuggets, elf enchanter-6, neutral (henchman)

Rinaldo of Saturn, human, cleric-10, neutral (Robert Swan)

Decius, human, explorer-7, neutral (henchman)

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

Manfred, human, mage-7, neutral (henchman)

Deadeye Hayes, human, bladedancer-7, neutral (henchman)

Leroy the Assistant, orkin, thug-8, neutral (charmed henchman)

Spite Tongue, elf, enchanter-7, neutral (Marlon Kirton)

Whang, human, fighter-7, neutral (henchman)

Holy Jack, dwarf, craftpriest-3, neutral (sub-henchman of Whang's)

Sigwulf, human, fighter-6, neutral (henchman)

Flamer, 5 HD Reincarnated Ape, neutral (henchman)

Yengemel, human, mage-5, neutral (henchman)

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

Judge: Andrew Smith

April 10th-April 24th, 1432

After the attack from the host of lawful angels, the Skull Collectors vowed to put a stop to the meddling of the lawful church and begin preparations for an assault on Bishop Wardrick's Retreat in the heart of Portchester. Several divinations are made by Gorna to determine the best time and approach for the assault. King Amicus, newly scarred from the confrontation with the host of angels, gives his blessing to the retaliation but says that he cannot join the attack for personal reasons. After everyone has healed sufficiently from the angelic attack, the Skull Collectors set out to do the dirty deed.

April 25th, 1432

The Skull Collectors are dropped off at the Portchester docks. Tiberio is charged with staying with the Drake – the Skull Collector's flying boat – just in case they need to make a hasty getaway. Using helpful disguises created by The Masked Archer himself, the assault group walks right into the Archbishop's fortress home. The first few guards are dispatched with no threats, and it is only once the group starts down the stairs to the dungeon level that the assault begins in earnest.

This complex appears to have been built by dwarves. Perhaps the same dwarven workmen who labored to build the once-mighty Rathrig. Murderface realizes that some of the dwarves of the city might have escaped that bloodbath after all.

Something within the complex radiates the power of law, not unlike some of the pits of chaos you have felt. All turning attempts were at a disadvantage because of an altar or artifact of law that interferes with non-lawful magic.

The assault initially is held up by five heavily armed knights who attack with unusually powerful strikes. The group stacks up on the stairs down while the Masked Archer, Mighty Beavis, and Leroy push forward to attack the clerics and fighters backing up the knights. After finally beating one of the knights to death, the Skull Collectors realize that these knights are nothing more than animated suits of armor.

Kinevil Rampage sporting an eyepatch following being raised from the dead appears from deeper within the complex to hold the stairs to the lower level. He is later backed up by a single angel summoned from deeper within the complex who hits Leroy and roots him to the spot with his hold person powers. The Skull Collectors make Murderface giant and hasted allowing him and his henchmen to beat him down to death. The Masked Archer's Horn of Blasting and Blast Scepter cleared the way through all the chumps. Leroy is freed by a Dispel Magic spell.

As the Skull Collectors begin to descend into the lower level of the retreat, The Masked Archer leads the way ruining several of the spells being cast by another group of clerics. Spite-Tongue's warlock conjures three demon warriors to join the fray. An enemy cleric casts Dispel Magic, ruining all of the enchantments on Murderface. The stairs are held by some lawful dwarves, who do a pretty good job of keeping the remaining Skull Collectors from engaging the squishy spellcasters behind them. More ghostly knights appear, and another angel arrives to back up the lower level. Whispy Nuggets is beaten senseless by the angel as it fights in a rage to get to Spite-Tongue. Rinaldo realizes that he is able to turn the ghostly knights just as he might undead. He also manages to drive the second angel from the mortal plane in the same way. The cleric Gaius arrives with a cadre of blink dogs and his lawful mage friend Septimus. The two "law friends" manage to burn some Skull Collectors with a Flame Strike and turn The Masked Archer into a frog before being burned to death by Spite-Tongue's fireballs. The Masked Archer

is turned back into his normal form just before he and Mighty Beavis are by the second angel. One Axe Jack moves both held heroes into a corner for safekeeping. A strategically cast dispel magic removes magical effects from all three.

The Skull Collectors secure the lower level, but are unable to cross the bridge over a sewer to get to the library level. Two Lammasu block the passage, but they are both attacked and beaten to death. The Masked Archer uses his horn of blasting to knock the bridge to bits, giving the Skull Collectors a moment of respite before pushing toward the final level.

A hasty plan is made. The Masked Archer will use his ward against magic after crossing the remains of the bridge (now bolstered by vines grown from magic beans) and allow everyone to move into position to attack what is believed to be a group of wizards prepared to strike. The Skull Collectors all cross, but only see a single mage waiting for them. A hydra is conjured by Manfred, but as it attacks it appears to fall into a death-like sleep. The group realizes that the group of mages is just an illusion that doesn't fool them but does confound the hydra who now believes itself dead. Manfred is mangled by another conjured angel. Murderface notices some flaws in the stonework, but charges the single mage anyway. He triggers a trap that releases yet more ghostly knights hidden in the walls. However, the Masked Archer manages to get a few arrows on the unarmored mage, and Murderface's returning thrown axe finishes the job. Another mage appears from invisibility and fires a lightning bolt at the group. Rinaldo manages to turn one angel just as another angel appears on the other side of the bridge and attacks the Skull Collectors from behind. Mighty Beavis manages to hold off this last angel until it too can be destroyed and the mage is quickly slain before he can cast again.

Archbishop Wardrick appears along with his head guard Captain North and a man who looked exactly like King Amicus. Deadeye Hayes, Decius, and Leroy move to try to save the king, only to realize that the man is in fact Brother Nemico – Amicus' estranged brother. Hayes and Decius trigger explosive runes and are laid low. Leroy carries the Bladedancer back away from the action and retreats back across the bridge. Decius passes into eternity from his wounds. Brother Nemico trades magical fire with the Skull Collectors, with Spite-Tongue's mighty fireballs winning the duel. Captain North duels The Masked Archer, and initially gets the better of him until Murderface locks up with him and beats him down. The hydra is awakened, and manages to crush some more ghostly knights before it is dispelled by the Archbishop.

The group backs the Archbishop back up to his workshop stairs, defeating all the explosive runes through a combination of the Masked Archer's magical ward and Spite-Tongue's summoned chaos monkeys. An archangel is conjured which threatens to end the Skull Collector's final push, but it is turned by Rinaldo against crazy odds. Murderface locks up with the Archbishop, who wears an obscenely magical hat that glows purple and dark red while throwing off sparks every so often. Murderface's henchmen take a beating, but they press on. The Archbishop is slain by one of the Masked Archer's arrows just as an explosion is heard. The complex is being invaded by Old Ones supported by a compliment of summoned demons. The Skull Collectors grab as much loot and enemy bodies they can and run out of the Archbishop's retreat.

Tiberio flies the Drake right into the city, and dips low as the Skull Collectors climb aboard to get out of the city before the attacking army of Old Ones and demons swarm out behind them. Leroy, freed of his charm person spell once Rinaldo cast a dispel magic on him makes a break for it into the city carrying as much loot and equipment as he was given.

Epilogue:

While he was never the wisest or smartest guy, Leroy detested having his loyalties manipulated without his consent. He decided after the battle that his best chance for freedom was to run before he was charmed again by the Skull Collectors. He realized that all he had to do was ditch his chain armor, and he could hide like a boss so that's exactly what he did. He stuffed it in a bag while waiting for the others to come across the bridge and just walked away.

All attempts to revive Decius fail. He slips away to be one with eternity.

Hacka Ma'am was restored to life, but s/he was never the same. The legs that grew back were stubby and useless. The Masked Archer's trusted henchman is dismissed and is set to live in the country for the rest of his/her days as a transgender paraplegic.

The Murderface Gang makes it through alive. Whispy Nuggets once again escapes with his life, but he now has scars on his scars. His once fair face is reduced to a gruesome mask of puffy pink scar tissues.

Murderface realizes from the Weapon that the Archbishop carried that some of the dwarves of Rathrig must have survived the great purge. Some of the dwarves that defended the retreat may have been descendants of that group. However, it must have been a lot more than the traitors he fought. He decides to get answers from Wardrick and has a Speak With Dead spell cast. He learns from the dead Archbishop that selling the dwarves into slavery with the Old Ones helped broker the treaty between those two peoples early in Portchester's founding several hundred years ago.