

**Game:** Gloomwrought Campaign, D&D 5e

**Date:** June 15th, 2019

**Characters:**

Ping the Vile, half-elf ranger - 8 (Dan Gilbert)

Bartleby, gnome hedge wizard - 3 (NPC)

Trogdor, human barbarian/bard - 6/2 (Nate Grim)

Vlad, lizardfolk pugilist - 3 (NPC)

Rear Admiral Nigel Ramsbottom, half-elf rogue/warlock - 5/3 (Quinton Laughman)

Ellie Finnbuckle, gnome wizard - 8 (Kayla Nicholas)

Duck Newton, half-orc cleric/fighter - 5/3 (Justin Nicholas)

**DM:** Andrew Smith

**Log:**

With the other heroes of the Drowned Quarter returned back to their home, Rowan has struggled with her emotions. She's lonely, but she knows that she's got important work to do as "the lightbringer." Within hours of Prince Rolan's death, another noble claimed control of Gloomwrought. The chaos gave the forgotten people a measure of relief. Rowan took advantage of the situation. She and the Shovel Knight worked alongside the Midnight's Own to get voices of the downtrodden heard within the new regime. Harkon, once the bartender at the Cracked Keel is now in charge of the well-being of all the drowned quarter. Rowan is grateful just to have had the opportunity to know her companions from the light.



On the prime material plane, Duck Newton and Ellie Finnbuckle are travelling through the desert Plaguelands. The two left from Blackangel over two weeks ago. Ellie has been tasked with bringing back an artifact for her mentor, Professor Belthos Liadon. He is an archmage, and master of the Arcane Academy in the city. Duck has been hired by Ellie, and they are on their way to an abandoned temple in the desert where Professor Liadon believes the artifact can be found. The item in question is a sword known as "The Prophet's Demise", a tulwar believed to have been used to murder Prince Aska, one of the primary prophets of Erathis and patron saint of Salt Temple. Professor Liadon expects the artifact back at the academy in the next few months.

The two are confronted by three ogres and a giant. They include Grodd the dumb giant, Max the sensible ogre, Bernie the comically stupid ogre, and Herman the ogre who only speaks in Internet memes. They reveal that they work for "Plaguelord Ickakleback" and that they want all the two travellers' valuables. When Ellie and Duck refuse the giantfolk attack.

The two are locked in deadly combat. The ogres flank Duck, driving him back. Duck and Ellie stand back-to-back concentrating their attacks on Grodd. Eventually, they manage to break their morale and drive off the giant, and then kill two of the three ogres. Ellie offers Max a chance to live. When confronted with his own mortality, Max promises never to do bad things again and flees.

Ellie's grandmother wrote extensively about a "Prince Ickalaback" who was a talented mage with expensive tastes and selfish motivations. She put him in his place more than once by denying him the research he needed to win more power. She would steal spell components, books, artifacts, or anything she could to stop Ickalaback's greedy plans. However, this would have been hundreds of years ago. The human prince is long dead. Maybe "Plaguelord Ickalaback" is an ancestor of this mage-prince, reading his own great-grandfather's old journals just like Ellie is?

Ping and Bartleby find themselves on a raised stone platform overlooking a sparse scrub desert. All around at a distance of about 60 feet, is a throng of undead standing calm in a dense circle surrounding them. The rotting, haunted eyes all stare at them. Soon after, Ping is joined by Trogdor, Vlad, and Nigel. Through the throng of undead, a man in bone adorned black robes with greasy matted hair comes running, "Prince Rolan! Your grace! You have arrived!" He bows deeply in front of Trogdor.

The necromancer clearly believes that Trogdor is Prince Rolan, former master of Gloomwrought. He makes many apologies for not having a suitable welcome for him. He was expecting Rolan three days later. Trogdor backhands the greasy sycophant. The necromancer leads them to a dark red tent standing along the edge of the circle of undead. They learn that the name of the necromancer is Goldrudder. Nigel learns that the same amount of time has passed on both the prime material plane and the Shadowfell, so although they have been missing for about six months to them the world is more or less as they remember it. Goldrudder leaves, and as the heroes discuss they overhear a conversation Goldrudder has with his master. "Prince Rolan has arrived early, master!" they hear silence, then "Oh I see, yes. Yes, I'll make it so!" as the necromancer begins to sprint in a line away from the tent back toward the throng of the undead. He shouts orders for the army of corpses to kill the party. They run, and easily outpace the restless dead by nightfall.



The party sets up camp in the lee of a stone. They have no supplies, which causes Bartleby to complain incessantly. They decide to travel three days to the East to the site of the village

Trogdor was born into, but they are interrupted by their rest. Rowan has reached across the planes with her magic, and tells them about the news of Gloomwrought. She lived, and is thriving, even though the city has just traded an old tyrant for another. She misses her friends, and wishes them well. Ping is despondent that Rowan didn't say goodbye to him in person like the others. Vlad sums up everyone's feelings when he says "We wish you all the best."



Later that night as the others sleep, Nigel feels a wet lump on his face. An Obelix Spawn, a slimy grey mostly amorphous ooze demon introduces himself to Nigel as Questlump. He has a direct line to Abraxas and will serve as Nigel's communication and handler for all things. Nigel can send contracts and notes to Abraxas just by feeding them to this blob familiar. Questlump is very helpful and has a voice like Abraxas' only much higher. If Questlump is ever destroyed, he will return from the Abyss in about twenty-four hours time.

After another two days' march, The heroes arrive at the remains of the village Trogdor was born into. Very little remains other than the canyon that sheltered the village. All the homes have long since been destroyed, and the spring that fed the canyon creek had long dried up. The group scavenges the barren desert for food and water. Ping, Trogdor, and Nigel decided to split up and search in different directions. Trogdor and Vlad are unsuccessful in their search, but Nigel manages to hunt down a meal of a roadrunner. Ping and Bartleby find a cactus up above the canyon and harvest it for water. As Bartleby slurps down the pulpy feast, complaining the whole time, Ping spots a wandering caravan in the distance. He approaches and meets the leader named Maro. The caravan seems hesitant about including an armed stranger in their midst, but Ping says he has friends - one of which is from the village formerly in the canyon. Maro's wife Neann travels back to the abandoned village with Ping. The blue-eyed woman tells the story that at one time this village was hers before she was forced to flee and married Maro.

Trogdor has one particular memory from before he left his village of a very young woman who watched over him after his mother left. She was unique in that unlike all the other women of the Plaguelands her eyes were a brilliant blue - like clear water. She, along with his brother, made sure he was fed and cared for. Trogdor has a suspicion that this woman might be the same person.

As the heroes return to the caravan, they see a phalanx of ogres and giants menacing them. "Give us all your stuff in the name of Plaguelord Ickakleback!" the biggest giant says, clearly the same Grodd that the heroes fought earlier. Meanwhile, from behind a nearby dune Ellie and Duck hear the same attack. Both sets of heroes converge on the spot.

Ellie crests a dune and launches a fireball at the monsters. Duck closes the gap and Ping locks them all down with a growth of dangerous spiked vines and sticks across the battlefield. Trogdor charges into the fray, heedless of the spiked growth. On the right, Vlad struggles with an ogre trading blow for blow, while Nigel moves between the giants and the helpless caravan slipping in bolts of magic power and a sneak attack.

The first giant is felled by a combination of Duck Newton's sword and Ellie's blasts of energy from her chromatic orb. Trogdor comes to the aid of Vlad, then leaps through the spiked vines to take down the second giant. Nigel fells the two that were menacing the caravan and the rest were feathered by Ping to fall dead.



After the battle, everyone is overjoyed with relief. The two groups of adventurers introduce themselves to each other and to the helpless caravan. Maro calls for a feast in all the adventurers' honor, and Neann suggests that everyone take shelter in the footprint of the village in which she and Trogdor were born.

Duck is struck when he meets Trogdor. Duck remembers the day his brother was born. Trogdor was a blessing Duck and his mother had looked forward to for some time. She was a strong hunter, perhaps the best with sling and javelin in the village. Her second boy was just as big as her first, and he didn't even have any orcish blood. Then the plague came. Duck's mother came down with the rotting disease during Trogdor's third summer. She was deemed unfit and was thrown out of the tribe.

Duck watched over Trogdor after their mother was exiled, but he had help. A young woman about his age named Neann with otherworldly beautiful blue eyes also helped. Trogdor could be a handful, and Neann was always there patiently helping.

Duck and Trogdor said a tearful goodbye to her when they left the village for Blackangel. There Duck left Trogdor at the step of the Fool's Echo Bardic College. Every so often, Duck wondered how Neann fared. He kept a distant eye on his brother until he was sure Trogdor would do well on his own.

Neann reveals and confirms their shared history and the three of them bond. Neann reveals that their mother was infected by the whims of Plaugelord Ickalaback. He came through the desert, infecting whole tribes just to build his undead army.

Ping had never been to the Plaguelands before, but he has encountered giants and ogres. They are nasty, brutish beings with their roots in the Feywild. During the feast, Ping points out that it seems odd that a group of giants might be serving another master in the middle of the Plaguelands.

Ellie mentions that she and Duck are on a search for “The Prophet’s Demise.” At the words “The Prophet’s Demise” Nigel is contacted by Abraxas. Apparently, the boss sometimes listens in to Nigel’s conversations!

*“Ah, my friend Nigel. It is so good to hear from you. I...ah. I need that item. Sue me, I’m a collector! If you can get it for me, I’ll give you a gift in return. I’ll give you my...personal rod. If not...well, I’ll be a little disappointed but no hard feelings. None. I guarantee it. I’ll still be your friend. Pal.”*



The heroes question Max the ogre. They realize that Ickalaback’s current lair is the abandoned temple that holds the artifact Ellie is supposed to retrieve. Duck takes the lead, saying that they should take on “ickle-snickle” and secure the tulwar. At first, Ping is reluctant to go. He doesn’t know Duck or Ellie, and he’s skeptical that Trogdor and Duck just happen to be brothers who have met near the site of the village they were born into. Ellie does her best to persuade Ping, saying “I can’t sleep until we are best friends!” Neann threatens Ping, telling him that if he doesn’t help stop the Plaugelord she will see that he gets no food or water. Ping eventually is convinced to do the right thing by Trogdor. Duck says that Trogdor was always the “smart one” in the family.

That night, Ellie once again offers Max a chance to live. “You can’t go back to your friends” she and Nigel say. Once again, when confronted with his own mortality, Max promises to “never get wrapped up in evil necromancer stuff again” and thanks Nigel profusely before fleeing into the desert just before Trogdor comes to kill him.

The next day, the heroes set out. Ellie walks alongside Ping, asking him question after question. Ping responds simply, eventually telling the gnome wizard some half-truths and falsehood

including a yarn about confronting and defeating three green dragons. They find the temple at the bottom of a gorge. A dozen mindless undead stand vacantly while three ogres sit and play dice. As they watch, the ogre Max comes puffing up the valley of the gorge. All the ogres go inside the temple, then come out shortly after. A necromancer comes out and commands the undead into a defensive block in front of the temple entrance. The ogres no longer play dice and pay better attention.

The heroes begin to plan, then execute the plan flawlessly. Duck, Trogdor, Vlad, and Nigel all feather fall from the cliff above the entrance to the temple. The ogre guards never hear them, and the three guards are murdered. A fireball from Ellie incinerates the block of undead. Goldrudder the necromancer rushes into the first room of the temple. Duck and Trogdor murders him along with his skeletal guards, which clears the entrance to the temple.

The heroes take a moment. They decide to send in some scouting. Along with Jeremiah, Questlump spies ahead. There are stairs down to a chapel, with a carved out hole where the altar may have once been. The whole room is stuffed with mindless undead just standing around looking empty and lifeless. Up and to the left, eight ogres are relaxing and talking with each other. To the right are two undead giants -- not the two that were killed yesterday, though. but is spotted and destroyed. As Questlump squeezes into the carved out hole, he is recognized and destroyed with a well-placed magic missile blast from a pale mage who could only be Ickalaback. The battle is joined!

Duck descends the stairs and turns all the zombies to dust. The two giants are turned as well, and cower in the right-hand room. Trogdor blocks off the left passage, keeping only two ogres from reaching the heroes at a time. Ellie joins Duck, lobbing a weak fireball in at the ogres in the left-hand room. Ping and Nigel hang back at first, choosing targets of opportunity with bow and magic.



Ickalaback strikes at Trogdor with a dire flood of negative magical energy, wounding him greatly. Three dire ghouls emerge from the rough-hewn room at the end of the temple. The plaguelord berates Ellie, guessing correctly that she is an ancestor of his former nemesis Elenor Finnbuckle. Next, he recognizes Duck and Trogdor's heritage and describes in too much detail how delicious it was to first see that their mother and then their entire village succumbed to the dire plague, and how pleased he was at her service after her death. Ickackleback mostly ignores Ping and Nigel dismissing them as halfbreeds.

Another necromancer appears, with an emo-looking sprite. A ball of magical darkness encompasses Bartleby and Ping, and like a shot the sprite zips toward the ball and disappears. Ping reaches back for Bartleby to guide

him out of the dark, but he can't find him. Ping smells a magical glamour. The scent is like bubblegum, perfume, and glitter. He recognizes that particular smell as coming from only one place - The Feywild. Ping moves out of the magical darkness himself, and it appears to him that Bartleby just exited in another direction entirely.

Ping, Trogdor, and Duck begin to push back against the ghouls. Vlad is struck by a lightning bolt from the other necromancer. Ickalaback counters Ellie's magic with his own, snarling in defiance as the battle turns against him. Duck conjures an illusory duplicate of himself to deliver a massive blast of his own necromantic energy, but the plaguelord just laughs at him. The spell does nothing to a man already long dead.

Trogdor closes the gap with Ickalaback. His weapon moves with blinding speed, forcing the plague lord to spend his own resources to defend himself. With most of his minions crushed, and the threat of bodily harm very much on top of him, Ickalaback escapes by turning into a puff of smoke. They have won the day, if not the war against Ickalaback.

The heroes begin a search for the Tulwar. Nigel does his best to look elsewhere, but he is cajoled to search with the group. The weapon is found hidden in plain sight beneath the powdered bodies of the restless dead turned by Duck. Ellie takes possession of the artifact. Nigel asks to look at it. When he begins to take the artifact to a quiet place on his own, Ellie asks for the item back. Victorious, the group decides to travel back to Blackangel to deliver the item to the Arcane Academy.

