

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

**Date:** July 6th, 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)

Questlump, quaggoth spawn herald of Abraxas - 3 (NPC)

Ellie Finnbuckle, gnome wizard - 8 (Kayla Nicholas)

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

**DM:** Andrew Smith

**Log:**

On their way through the Stony Mountains toward Blackangel, the newly formed party follows a cliffside path alongside a rushing river. As they crest a rise, they are met with the sight of some violence. A large barbarian woman with wild red hair holding a greatsword threatens a smaller merchant woman hostage. An older man, also dressed like a merchant lies bleeding to death at their feet. "Give me the tulwar and no one else gets hurt!" she yells. Duck Newton lays down his weapons and begins to walk forward calmly to try to reason with the wild woman.

Nigel recognizes that they are about to be ambushed and the attack is on. A scoundrel emerges from invisibility to stab at Nigel. An infernal looking fighter who goes by several infernally-themed alliterative names also appears, to confront Trogdor and Duck. The barbarian champion moves to attack, dropping the pretense of her hostage who stops concentration on the illusion of the bloody merchant to launch a fireball at the party.

Ellie locks down the barbarian champion with a paralyzing stare, then deftly counters the second fireball launched by the fake hostage. Nigel finds chinks in the fighter's armor, and Ping goes toe to toe with the scoundrel. Four scouts appear up the hill and launch arrows at the party. Ellie retaliates with her own fireball, incinerating three of the four of them. Trogdor and Duck rake the fighter with blows, and eventually he crumbles. The sorceress falls next to Ping's arrows as she, the scout, and the scoundrel all make their escape. The barbarian champion Vermeil launches a desperate attack, but she is knocked unconscious and bound.

They learn that the champion's name is Vermeil and that she has taken a contract to take "The Prophet's Demise" from someone who fits the description of Ellie and return it to her employer. Vermeil made a point to identify her employer as a wizard named Bartley. They understand from Vermeil that they are to meet Bartley at the Osculatory Club after the job is done to trade the artifact for the remainder of their pay. After all the information can possibly be extracted, Ping executes Vermeil with the understanding that she would have done the same in his position.

As the party approaches Blackangel, Vlad asks in his broken common if he might have two days to travel to Jorba Lynde on his own. He says he has “a bride” there, which is confusing since Trogdor didn’t know he was married. Maybe lizard folk have different customs? Either way, Trogdor figures he just wants some lizard tail, and the ethnic neighborhood of lizardfolk would afford him just that. He cuts Vlad loose and he heads away from the city.



The party arrives at the gates of Blackangel. Just inside, Ping spots a unique club named “You’ll know it when you see it” and goes in. There Ping meets with Gritt where they have a wild and strange conversation. Gritt calls out Bartleby, identifying him as a fey gnome named Herbert. Herbert pleads for Ping to pretend he’s still Bartleby for fear his family will be tortured or his candy stash would be stolen. Ping agrees to do as Herbert asks and not tell anyone that he’s not actually Bartleby.

Trogdor spots a playbill advertising a concert featuring “The Songs of Trogdor.” The barbarian travels to Club Sandwich, a hipster club where the “Draco Noir Band” is currently performing Trogdor’s tunes. Draco sports a gigantic black mullet. He wears leather pants and a moleskin

vest festooned with chips of bone. He plays the bass guitar with his annoyingly small hands and fronts the band. He sings Trogdor’s songs, but without knowing the exact lyrics they are of poor quality. Draco spots Trogdor and takes a break from playing. Trogdor confronts Draco about the songs. Draco says that the songs are his fair and square. He bought them from “some guy” at the “Fool’s Echo” that he identifies as Dio Sa’bath. Trogdor threatens Draco. Draco challenges Trogdor to a play-off with the winner keeping the songs. The two take turns playing the same song for the crowd, and Trogdor wins easily. Draco and his band slink off and Trogdor plays on into the night for the crowd.

Nigel and Ellie go back to her townhouse in the College Hill section of town. They meet Jeremiah the rat who reports that no one has been in the house since they left. Nigel heads out to the Osculatory Club to see if he might spot Rooke Bartley.

Duck goes to the Calamity Clam club disguised magically disguised as his former employer Sven to talk with Jasper the Bastard. After getting by Skunk the bouncer, Duck as Sven meets with Jasper and asks him what he knows about the mercenaries who were supposed to take the “Prophet’s Demise” tulwar from Ellie and the party. Jasper knows about the job, but doesn’t have details. He suggests that Sven talk with Carolena at the Osculatory Club, assuming that “Sven” knows exactly who Carolena is from their shared history.

Duck heads directly to the Osculatory Club. Duck is joined by Nigel there. They learn from a server that Carolena is a long-time madame who works for the club. They are talking for a bit when they are approached by a drunk named Bob. Duck charms Bob and asks him to bring back Carolena. Bob staggers off, and a round of drinks later Carolena appears. To Duck's dismay, she's very taken by Nigel. She even mispronounces Duck's name which shakes the half-orc. Apparently, Duck believes that he's shared at least one night with this older woman.

After some cash changes hands, Carolena mentions that rumor is that Rooke Bartley is laying low in Vin, a gated neighborhood of expatriate high elves set in a rough part of town. She says she can learn more, perhaps even the exact location of the house Rooke is staying in if they come back tomorrow night.

The next morning, the heroes rally at Ellie's to travel to the Arcane Academy. There, they are met by Rosie who is very cordial and thoughtful. They are ushered into Professor Liadon's study. He seems disinterested, and is about to dismiss Ellie and the group when he looks up and catches the glance of Duck. Duck and he recognize one another through dreams and their "mutual friend."



Focusing mostly on Duck, Liadon explains to Ellie and the group why these artifacts are worth locating. The Professor's working theory is that someone is looking for clues of how to ascend to godhood from being a mortal. All these artifacts carry the spark of the hero or mage that created them. They are magic because of their undying divine souls. By studying these items and perhaps using them a bad actor may be able to achieve godhood themselves.

The Professor tells them that the next artifact he's identified as being a target is the Lute of Lumb. This bass guitar holds the soul of the orcish warlord Lumb. It was his right hand that held the scimitar that conquered the Plaguelands, and his left hand united tribes of greenskins using this very instrument. Liadon believes it is located in the abandoned Villa of a performing group known as Cabala Kick.

Duck and Nigel challenge the Professor about what he might do with these artifacts. Couldn't he use them for himself to achieve godhood? Liadon states that the archmage Erendriel Fenberos of the Bright Tower in the Empire would vouch for his findings. Nigel asks about several of the artifacts kept securely in glass lockers that surround the immaculate office.

The first artifact Liadon shares is a flute made of alabaster. It's decorated with strange symbols and looks very exotic. He describes how its original owner Kang would use it to lure innocents to their death with the invisible gas that is released when it is played.

The next artifact he shows is a small box made of glass. It's set with gemstones and looks quite tacky. It has the power to heal mortal injuries and is known as the menagerie of St. Cubort, a follower of Erathis.

The final artifact he decides to share is a mask made of brass decorated with animal teeth and chips of bone. It gives off a foul stench, as he takes it out of its glass vault. Professor Liadon admits that he is unsure of the powers of the Mask of Brass. That admission makes everyone uneasy and Professor Liadon ends the tour there. The party leaves the Arcane Academy.

When Nigel and Duck return to the Osculatory Club they learn that Carolena was found dead the night before. Chances are that the woman who Duck and Nigel met with was not her. Duck is relieved that the woman with whom he had spent several nights of romance with didn't actually forget him but was instead someone posing as her.

Duck meets with Professor Liadon privately to learn more. Liadon does his best to explain that his job is to protect these artifacts and figure out what they may be collected for, while sending out adventurers like Duck and Ellie to acquire new ones. The two of them are joined briefly by the Traveller, proving that the Professor and Duck both serve the same deity.



Ping asks a member of The Towers where he might find nicer lodgings, dropping the name of Ping's paternal uncle Sergeant Dean Rathbone. "Sarge" as the guardsman calls him appears to be an old favorite of the rank and file within the city watch. They were sad to see him leave the force to a modest retirement, and could probably help Ping out of a jam with the law. However they are unable to help Ping find better digs.

Trogdor goes to the Fool's Echo to figure out who is responsible for stealing his songs. Gerard the half-elf busker tells Trogdor about Dio's newfound wealth. The party meet Dio near his offices and tell Dio about the situation. Dio seems to have no idea how the songs were stolen and is helpful in trying to track down the culprit.

Together, they learn that Draco Noir is new in town, and his band could very well have just been conjured from the abyss that very night they are so unfamiliar to everyone. Draco Noir dropped out of his most recent gig in the Beverage Hill area. Meanwhile, Ellie and Ping sneak past some inattentive students to go through Dio's office. They learn he has come into some money through inheritance, not song theft. They marvel at the red herring they find frozen in glass stowed in his locked chest.

Trogdor returns to the college, and learns from Mozzie the music teacher that some guy with small hands stopped him when he went to check on Trogdor the night he disappeared. Trogdor works out that perhaps it was Draco Noir himself who shipped Trogdor to the Shadowfell that fateful night.

Nigel meets with his good friend Dorothy. They discuss banal topics such as the weather, their hair care regimen, and the state of their mutual acquaintances. Absolutely nothing shady goes on and the two leave without sharing any secrets or contraband at all. Dorothy is, after all, a model citizen who would never crush or melt a witch.

The heroes meet that night to play a drinking game. They take turns getting to know one another by suggesting things that one of them has done, but the other hasn't. Ping takes the game to an extreme place, and it falls apart.

The next morning, after bacon, eggs, and pushups the heroes take a carriage North of town to the Villa of Cabala Kick perched on the cliffs overlooking the Serene Expanse. The heroes arrive at the path to the villa from the main road. Overgrown, sinister vineyards surround and threaten the path, hanging over and covering the way in shadow. The heroes follow the path through the oppressive vineyard to the carriage house and they are immediately accosted by the caretaker. He tells the heroes to leave, threatening to get the city guard to drive out them as well as the group had been there earlier.



Duck tells the caretaker that they are from the “Historical Society of Blackangel.” The caretaker isn't buying it and wants to see documentation. Nigel knocks him out. The carriage house he has been living in is a complete and utter mess. The caretaker is left tied up in the vineyards hiding the villa from the main thoroughfare. Ellie leaves him a snack.

They approach the villa itself. A heavy chain that was holding the door locked hangs open. The building is old and rickety, smelling of mold and sulphur. They enter and walk through what might have once been a grand foyer, now ruined marble and rotted staircases. They go straight through to a ruined room shuttered to the view over the cliffs and the water below. They go to open the windows, but stop short for fear of traps. This room may have once been the band's rehearsal space. Two portraits hang on either side above two grand fireplaces.

The first portrait is of the band Cabala Kick itself. It features the four of them in a dramatic tableau playing. The featured front man, with a dark black mullet and long mutton chops featuring black face paint Backwood Basilisk shreds on his bass with eerily small digits down low. To the left, the gigantic guitar player Homestar is picking out a sick riff. Behind these two, Slinky Sly, a half-elf featuring a cat-whisker motif facepaint is drumming, and Platinum Penguin

plays the keys with hands that appear to have been painted incorrectly wearing a black and white jumpsuit and bright silver face paint.

Across the other side of the room, over the other fireplace is a portrait of the band's benefactor. He is reaching out in generosity to the members of the band in profile. Nigel looks at the portrait and immediately blurts out, "That's lckalaback."

The group is stunned. It is certainly a portrait of the plaguelord in his younger days. The group pieces together that lckalaback may have killed his parents to take over a beet fortune, then funded this venture in Blackangel almost a hundred years ago. Then they realize that Cabala Kick is in fact an anagram for lckalaback. The heroes slightly panic when they understand just how trapped and deadly this villa may be.

Nigel tries to walk right out the front door, but it slams shut as he approaches. By the front door, the group realizes that the cinders are in fact the remains of one of the scouts who attacked them on the road to Blackangel. Nigel considers throwing Bartleby through a shuttered window.

They do some searching and manage to find a switch that they believe turns off all the traps on the first floor. Ping starts to say some out of character things, calling other party members a "drab stiffie" in response to their interjections several times.



They start searching, first finding the quarters of Backwoods Basilisk. This room is an absolute mess of torn sheets, posters of various bands, clothes, empty stands for bass lutes, abandoned recently with books and musical notation lying all over the place. Trogdor recognizes his own melodies and writings in the scratchings. A harmony for "Skullhacker" is found.

Next, the party finds a locked door. Nigel disarms a mechanical axe trap that crashes harmlessly through the door swinging above his head. Trogdor breaks through the remaining bits of door. This room hasn't been used in decades, and is in disrepair. Two keyboards are in this room along with empty closets and bare bookshelves.

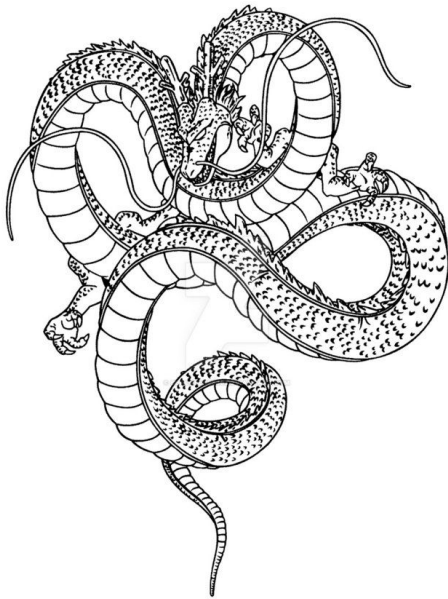
From the portrait on the wall, they realize this is the room of Platinum Penguin. In his picture he's an easterner, clad in shining finery sitting at a keyboard. Trogdor puts on Penguin's fancy glasses and sits down at the keyboard. From the portrait they realize the musician is playing an odd chord. Ellie and Trogdor strike the key in unison and a bit of treasure is revealed from a secret trapdoor.

The party doubles back through a ruined dining room to the foyer. They determine that there is a false door hiding a magical stone vault underneath the stairs. It requires a six-letter word to

open. Ellie successfully guesses that the password is Ickalaback's pet named Quarge. They descend the spiral staircase.

The group finds the stairs open out into a grand cavern carved as if by a gigantic monster. It is easily 300 feet across and another 120 feet high at its highest. A low naturally carved wall sits at the other end of the cavern, and a giant hole falling into the sea centers the room. A huge cache of treasure sits in one far corner, and a monstrous nest lined with the bones of men and beasts perhaps eaten as a meal dominates the other. Carved draconic musical notation decorates the floor and walls. A stone platform with two-dozen various bass lutes catches the light. Nigel and Ping sneak out across the cavern. Trogdor investigates the hole and plays some of the musical carvings on his axe while Ellie and Duck stand by the stairs.

Nigel carefully slides all the lutes into his bag of holding. As he makes his way across the cavern to the cache of treasure, Duck hears someone slowly making their way down the stairs. The group prepares for a fight. Nigel and Ping take up positions across the cavern behind the wall. Duck and Trogdor stand shoulder to shoulder on the stairs, with Ellie just behind. Emerging from the circular staircase is a man with a gigantic dark mullet, mutton chops and tiny hands. The heroes recognize him as Draco Noir from before.



“My friends, I figured you would come down here and meet me...Backwoods Basilisk! You ready to back up your smack talk you lily livers!”

The black leather-clad musician jabs a tiny, tiny finger at the barbarian. “Trogdor your songs may be amazing but you suck! It's time for you to die and for me to take your tunes.”

“Your tiny hands can't grip a real axe!” Trogdor taunts back.

The musician then transforms into a terrible serpentine beast with hideous acidic breath and tiny claws, “Draco Noir at your service!” The party is now standing in front of a fully grown black dragon. The beast breathes acidic breath on Ellie, Duck, and Trogdor nearly knocking the gnome unconscious as she and her pet rat dive and roll for cover.

Ellie drinks a healing potion and casts Haste on Trogdor. Trogdor also swigs a healing potion and attacks. From across the chamber, Ping uses Hunter's Mark and feathers the dragon with arrows. Bartleby pokes his head around the corner of the stairs and drops some magic missiles

on the dragon, only to have the beast use a Hellish Rebuke burning Bartleby the gnome into cinders. Trogdor rages and charges the dragon attacking recklessly with his axe. Nigel places a hex on the dragon, then shoots him with his crossbow in a vulnerable section below his arm. The dragon flaps his wings and buffets Duck to the ground. He flies into the room, taking an attack of opportunity from Trogdor as he passes.

Duck casts Shield of Faith on Trogdor, then stands up and moves toward the dragon dodging as he goes. The dragon swings his razor sharp tail at Duck and misses. "Trogdor I want your songs! Who has my looooot?!?" the dragon bellows.

Duck closes on the dragon, swinging for his tiny arms. Backwoods Basilisk keens at the party "I have mighty claws! I will tear you apart!" as he scrapes ineffectually at Duck with his diminutive arms. Duck repostes and repostes again, sinking his sword in the dragon's hide. Duck casts Spiritual Guardians, slowing the dragon with ghostly warriors who hack away at the monster. Trogdor moves between Backwoods Basilisk and Ellie, moving to flank with Duck and working himself into a full-on frenzy. He draws blood from the monster. "You suck! You mispronounced the lyrics!" Trogdor grunts back at the dragon. Nigel directs two Eldritch Blasts at the dragon, triggering his hex for more decaying damage. The dragon rears back, trying to instill fear in the party but Trogdor is unaffected and shrugs off a massive acidic bite attack. Ping uses his sharpshooting skills to direct his arrow at a chink in his armor for more damage. Ellie launches inky, black tentacles at the dragon which force themselves down its throat, draining the life force from the giant beast that was once Backwoods Basilisk. The dragon begins to choke, trying to summon up another blast of acid to burn the party.

Once again, the dragon takes to the air. Its wings buffet Trogdor and Duck, knocking them down as it rises into the air out of reach. Trogdor lobs javelin after javelin at the monster, tearing at its wings. Ellie launches a fireball targeted just above the dragon, knocking it out of the air and burning it from nose to tail. The dead body of the beast sizzle and bubble as the party celebrates their victory.

The group harvests a mote of dragon horn and three motes of dragon scales from the monster. They return to Blackangel only to learn from Professor Liadon that the lute recovered is nothing but a clever forgery. The real instrument has been lost. Trogdor rejoins the party rested and refreshed.