

Date: April 29, 2018

Episode 11: “The Definition of Evil”

Campaign Date: Tenth-Month, Days 14-28, 1173 of 12th Age

Characters:

Wun Hung Lo, wood elf, druid - 3, neutral (Jason Liebert)

Preacher Lightning, human, ranger - 3, chaotic neutral (Marlon Kirton)

Walter, Destroyer of Evil, human, sorcerer - 4, chaotic good (Dave Nelson)

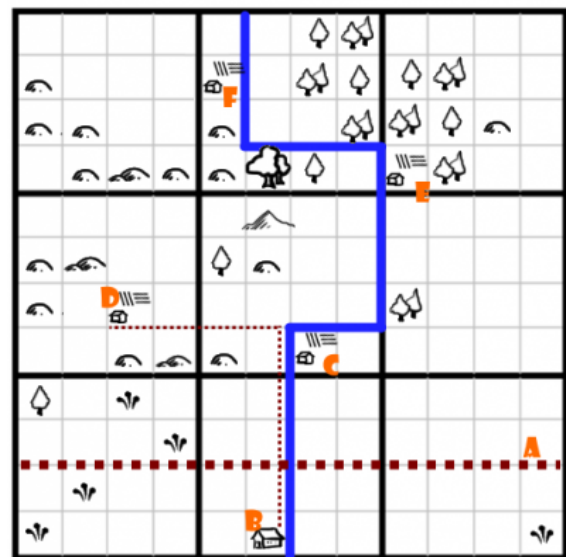
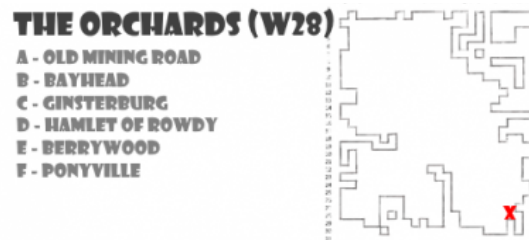
Sparke Rainbrite, elf, fighter - 2, neutral good (Bob LaForge)

DM: Andrew Smith

PROLOG:

Of the Grey Elves that mark the current age, there are a select few that are known to have set foot on the island of Krondor. One of those is the elder matriarch, Mayelle. Among the wood elves she was loved and adored, but she has gone missing for over twenty-five years. If Wun Hung Lo could ever find out what happened to her, it could be of great value to the wood elf community as well as the entire educated world.

The village of Berrywood in The Orchards (W28) is the site of several murderous outbreaks over the past decade, with human farmers threatening to burn the woods down completely and elves retaliating with silent raids on human settlements.



LOG:

With the harvesting season in full swing, the farmers of Berrywood have stopped all work in the fields for fear of nearby elven incursion. Several humans have been found slain, and menacing monsters from the Northern woods have threatened the village. The landowner of Berrywood, Lord Atienne DuPort desperately needs a resolution to this conflict. The castaways are his first choice following the way they were able to handle the disappearance of his wayward daughter earlier that year.

The mission requires that the castaways travel to the village and help the locals get back to work as soon as possible. It is ginster harvesting season, and the longer the wait the less ginster that will be able to be dried and shipped. Lord Duport only wants results. Whether that means guarding the town, attacking the elves, brokering some sort of peace, or just threatening the peasantry with death if they don't work. He sends along his man Grint with his two bodyguards Slick and Tam to watch their progress. If the heroes can end the strike early, they make more money than if it takes longer. Grint must do a little bit of work convincing Walter that the elves of Berrywood are in fact evil in their intent to murder the citizens of Berrywood, the castaways are whisked to Berrywood in a DuPort carriage.

The heroes emerge from the carriage in the late morning, to find the village in chaos. Mayor Stern the leader of the village of Berrywood, is riling the civilians into a fury. "Let's burn the forest down!" he yells lifting a lit torch above his head. The throng react, full throated with blood lust. Nearby, a man of god Parson Cheers is seen to be doing his best to get Mayor Stern to lighten his rhetoric.

Grint walks to the well, now a makeshift podium. "Everyone, back to work! We've now got some troubleshooters to help keep you safe! There is no more need to worry! Back to your business as soon as..."

Just then, owlbears attack. Grint's man Tam is immediately ripped apart. The first owlbear is lit up immediately by Walter and the Exiles of the Wood, elven archers who have been rejected by the law of the forest. Parson Cheers is knocked unconscious by the second owlbear. Wun Hung Lo faces down that owlbear and things look pretty good until a third and fourth owlbear appears. One monster enters a house and ransacks it, killing the lone inhabitant while the other snaps at Preacher Lightning, drawing blood and eventually knocking him unconscious. Wun Hung Lo falls as well, but he is saved by a timely barrage of more spells by Walter. More spells weaken the final owlbear until it is stabbed to death by Sparkle Rainbrite.

After some healing and deliberation, Wun Hung Lo slips into the forest in hopes of making contact with the elves. He comes across tracks that appear to be that of a group of evil humanoids, as well as signs of unnatural monsters lurking in the wood. He continues and he is nearly caught in a trap. Once the trap goes off, it brings some elves to the area. He meets Mossfoot and Blackarrow as well as a wooden Krondorian Dryad.

The elves describe a malady the humans are suffering from in which monsters from beyond time and space are eating the brains of these mortals and taking control of their bodies. It sounds exactly like the monsters that the castaways saw in the Temple of the King in Yellow a few months ago when they killed the ogre and his head cracked open. After some more discussion the elves grow weary and disappear into the forest.

In an attempt to find if there are any agents of the brain monsters, Walter magically alters his appearance to that of the golden-haired cult leader Rolfe from the temple of the King in Yellow. He introduces himself as "Big R" and does his best to generally be seen by everyone in Berrywood. Unfortunately, his visage doesn't attract much attention. Perhaps the brain-monsters know about Rolfe's demise or they are all connected to some sort of elder brain beyond space and time that tells them not to fall for the ruse. In any case, Walter in the guise of "Big R" is welcomed by a massive farmer into his house for the night. The man's name is "Goat" and he is terribly lonely. Perhaps because of his freakish size, but probably because of his blemished face and unhealthy teeth. Goat also houses the other castaways for the night.

Before dawn, the heroes are attacked by giant spiders as they sleep in Goat's house. One of the dog-sized spiders bites Goat, knocking him unconscious. The others are quickly slain, but four more horse-sized spiders approach the hut outside. The Exiles of the Wood standing guard outside retaliate against the attacking spiders, but one of them is trapped in spider silk. Sparkle Rainbrite and Wun Hung Lo rush to support the elven mercenaries. Walter is trapped in spider silk, but he continues to fling spells from where he is stuck. The heroes defeat the spiders, but at the cost of one of the life of one of the four Exiles of the Wood.

The heroes debate about just subjugating the farmers, or just killing all the leaders. Mayor Stern is always flying off the handle about how evil the elves are, and wanting to just kill them. Lightning describes Stern's attitude as "evil" and points out that it is his fault that the elves are attacking from the wood. Walter points out that the incursions from the wood, and the deaths from the owlbears and spiders are the "definition of evil," and that someone should pay. Walter describes boring a hole into Mayor Stern's head to search for the brain monster. Parson Cheers steps in and offers his head instead. A story is offered explaining that Mayor Stern's loved one was killed by "the elves" a few months ago which proves to be a reason for his madness. Walter backs off.

The heroes decide to end the monster incursions themselves once and for all. The venture out into the forest. They soon find some tracks, and come upon a pack of rat men and hyena men. One of the larger hyena men is giving some sort of monstrous speech to the throng of a score of these monstrous beings. Walter quickly gives the order to attack the left flank, but just as the castaways put their plan into action an owlbear rushes to attack from behind.

The attack goes well. The heroes flee the owlbear and quickly grind the beast men down on the one flank. The leader of the beastial men does his best to rally his men, and they begin to slow down the castaways' assault. The three remaining members of the Exiles are slain.

However, another two owlbears appear along with two more gigantic horse-sized spiders led by none other than Mayor Stern himself. Clutched in the claws of one of the owlbears is Grint, held as a hostage. Rather than parlay, the party continues to fight. Mayor Stern is shot from extreme range by Lightning, and his head cracks open to reveal another horrific brain monster. It immediately jumps for Walter's head, and cuts his face open trying to find purchase and burrow into his skull. Another arrow from long range kills the beast. Control over the owlbears and spiders is lost, and they begin to prey on the bodies of the elves and beast men. The leader of the beastial men escapes, but the castaways are victorious.

After a short rest, the elves of the wood appear. They meet the grey elf Mayelle, who is leading a mission against this infection from beyond. She describes a group of invaders known only as "The Masters" who she describes as "four-horned viking warriors" from what she has learned from the lore of the Smirkenburgers. They worship an idiot god known as the King in Yellow, and they have been attracted by the presence of the Smirkenburgers who fled Krondor almost a century ago.

EPILOG:

Bocephus: Spent two weeks working as "Honest Bocephus the Locksmith", got comfortable living the first week, then word of mouth began to spread, and he got a poor living the second.

Ragnar Shinbane: Did two weeks of pit-fighting: only won one match the first week (50gp) and 2 the second (100gp).

Brother Thunder: Spend 2 weeks fishing earning comfortable living and one week making 25gp profit.

Altarboy Midnight: Spend one week contacting Uncle Step-Handrix arranging so that Thunder or Lightning could deliver artifacts to him if Midnight were gone. Spent second week carousing, making 3 middle class contacts.

Nak: Taking advantage of the boom in business with the ginster harvest, Nak takes some odd jobs. The first week involved just lifting bags of ginster powder into ships, which only earned him a poor living, but later he quit and moved to Bayhead to earn himself a comfortable living by helping to grind the dried ginster in a mill.

Edwan Mirths: In an effort to learn more about their faith, and perhaps gain a favor or two, Edwan spends two weeks doing religious service for the Temple of the Screamers. His work is favored by the screamers and he manages to earn two favors over the fortnight, but he is later

shunned by the temple because he mistakenly blasphemed against the screaming god by referring to the "Somnambulist Host" by the wrong gender. As penance, Edwan has agreed to be followed around Newport by a trio of acolytes at all times who scream at Edwan during all nine prayers offered to the screaming god.