

Session/Game: Eldritch Earth: 5 Hacks Deep
Episode 18: The Longcrook Goat Oracle

Date: January 30th, 2021

Campaign Date: July 28th - August 1st 1130 AD

Characters

Angus McNasty, Scottish Barbarian - 3 (Bob)

Johnny Venice, Italian Venturer- 3 (Dave N.)

Prostitutta, Italian Thief - NPC

Welshie (aka Tom Jones), Welsh Ranger - 3 (Jason)

Father Calen Kildare, Irish Cleric - 2 (Quinton)

Judge: Andrew Smith

July 28th 1130

Relaxing on a hot, summer night the Reeve and his men listen to the cicadas whirr and watch the sun set. There is much work to do to reactivate the lordship of the Hill Camp Hundred. Reeve Angus has a manor house, a parish church and a bell-tower in Worm's Ferry. There are currently 185 people under his authority in Worm's Ferry and 172 in Shepherd's Hollow, for a total of 357. If he can bring the secured population up to 500 people, by some combination of bringing the other two villages firmly under his control and bringing in a new band of settlers, then it is likely he can apply to the Earl to be elevated into Lord of the Hundred. The Reeve and his men will also have to bring 23 more hides under cultivation to meet his obligations for the hundred. All the men agree that the next step is to help Lesserton in order to bring it under the Reeve's authority.

In order to come under the rule of the Hill Camp Hundred, there must be some sort of commitment to the safety and security of the people of Lesserton. That means that a permanent garrison of fighting men must be established and the threat of the Lesserton Witch should be ameliorated.

July 29th, 1130

Reeve McNasty accompanied by Johnny Venice, Welshie, and Father Calen Kildare make the short trip down the South bank of the Longcrook creek to Lesserton. There, they find the hamlet in even worse shape. Ricketts, the former spokesman of the village has also gone missing just like the four score other men folk from the Lesserton over the past decade. The Reeve is received warmly, and the fanciest breakfast possible is provided from the meager resources of the people of Lesserton.

The Reeve and his men cross the wide, shallow creek to the other side. There, they are attacked by several strange, lumpy demons made flesh. These monsters appear to be green mossy rock beings wielding crude clubs and axes of rock and wood. They exclaim "Celebrate!"

as they attack from their crude mouths. While piercing weapons appear to do little damage, bludgeoning attacks crack the bones and rocks within their bodies and cripple them quickly. Father Kildare gives his blessing to those who have been harmed by the monstrosities, and the group continues toward a bit of civilization indicated by a plume of lazy smoke rising nearby.



As the heroes approach, they begin to hear voices in their heads. “Tomorrow is the big celebration!” they hear. “Why don’t you stay for the festivities! You’ll be welcome!” Moods improve as the Reeve and his men see another hamlet, along with about a half-dozen men tending fields of turnips and beans. A pen of the nearby farmhouse has almost a dozen billygoats in it. The group approaches one of these simple farm folk. “Are you here to see the Oracle? Tomorrow is the celebration!” he says. It is such a nice, warm day. This man looks completely innocent. What could hurt in staying just for a little bit? Father Kildare offers a blessing, only to look into the heart of a demon made flesh. These aren’t villagers at all! These are more of the corrupted spawn that attacked them earlier!



Another fight breaks out, and this one does not go nearly as well for the heroes. Johnny is seriously hurt, and Father Kildare manages to break a weapon. Once all the monsters are slain, they investigate the farmhouse. As they approach, the dozen goats crash against the fence toward them seeming to plead for freedom with their tremendous bleating. Inside the farmhouse is a charnel slaughter of goat bodies, heads, and haunches. Blood is caught in stone containers, and the meat of these animals is chopped and ground into loose, wet buckets of slop. Bones and horns are collected in a bin in the back. All these products seem to then be carted off toward the river, where the heroes would later find the spawn pits of these inhuman monsters. The heroes glimpse a hooded figure slip into one of three cave entrances in a hill behind the farmhouse.

Fearing that the goats may in fact be the men of Lesserton, the Reeve and his men decide to take them all back toward Lesserton. They help the billygoats cross the creek, and direct the women of Lesserton to not consume these goats before resting for the night back at home in Worm's Ferry.

July 30th, 1130

On the morning of the 30th, Father Kildare holds a special morning mass to celebrate the strength of Saint Peter Chrysologus and his struggles against paganism. That afternoon they set off toward the caves near the farm. They find three entrances. One is tight, a middle entrance has the bleating of a goat emanating from it, and the third is large but a light fog seems to emanate from it. Johnny asks Prostitutta to investigate for traps, and she successfully

identifies the obvious 15' diameter pit in the third cave as the only threat. The heroes press into the middle cave, and find a small billy goat tied up. As it looks up with its eyes, the heroes all swear that this very goat is actually Ricketts. The goat is left for safekeeping with Prostitutta while she watches over the horses.

The heroes press deeper into the cave complex. They happen on a chamber with a little natural light in which the Oracle apparently is cultivating Nettle Moss, a ghoulish green dangling plant that can be used to enhance the power of venom delivered by injury. A Danish book named "Black Gut" found nearby confirms this.

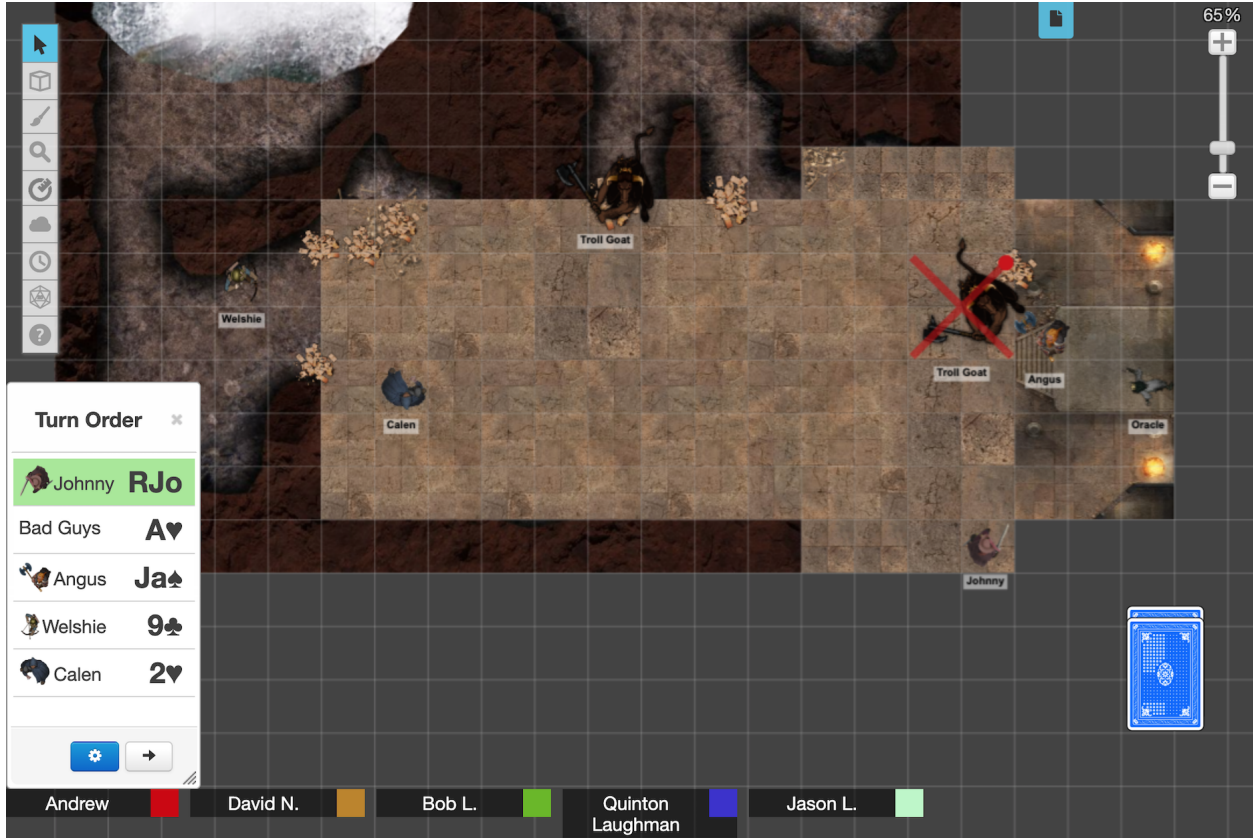
Deeper in the cave, the heroes find a small cave with a chimney of sorts that the Oracle uses as her chambers. The group bypasses this choice at first, but return after the final battle to find six healing salves, wolfsbane, and a dozen cigars of assassin's hemp.

Instead, on their first trip through these caves the heroes descended a rough-hewn staircase that appears to have pre-dated even the Atlantean structures commonly found. It leads to an expansive 300' long chamber of waist-high glowing purple mushrooms. Every so often, the heroes discover a human body picked to the bone off to the side of the path through this forest. The heroes make sure to stay clear of the death-shrooms while they loot these bodies. Two nature spirits attack since there was no offering of flesh to the ancient mushroom forest, but they are immediately overcome by Welshie's single magical arrow and Kildare's enchanted staff.

The Reeve and his men come to a waterfall leading down into a hole. A thick, rusty chain stapled to the wall allows them to climb lower, and the hole above matches the one Prostitutta identified in the third cave. They climb down, and find the oracle in a large Atlantean chamber. A few piles of bricks are here for the taking, and she sits on a throne that looks like a box of pinkish speckled granite. She is naked to the waist and wears a full face mask made from a goat skull.

Reeve McNasty charges before she can get many words out past, "Welcome! I am the Oracle of Longcreek Creek! Please, stay for tomorrow's celebration of life!" As he does so, he notices two trollish goat-men emerge from a ruined side chamber. His breath catches in his throat and he is not able to breathe as the Oracle's magic slowly asphyxiates him.

The others enter. Welshie and Kildare shoot the first trollish goat-man to death, while the other nearly breaks the Reeve's leg with a swing of its great axe. Johnny sneaks up, looking for an opening to kill the Oracle. The witch casts a spell on Father Kildare, making him believe that his body is turning into a dry, dead husk. Luckily, Calen's faith stays strong and he manages to aid Reeve McNasty in the fight. Welshie shoots the second trollish goat-man dead and Johnny approaches the Oracle's platform to land a sneak attack. She falls under axe, rapier, and arrow fire soon after.



The heroes find a variety of treasures, and Johnny Venice is able to identify that the granite box is actually an Elementary Enchanter's Furnace. They return to the surface with their treasures and decide to travel to Kingston to sell them.

July 31st, 1130

The heroes wake to learn that the thirteen goats have turned back into the Lesserton men, including Ricketts. Any remaining pit spawn servants of the Oracle have fled to live the remainder of their time on their own rather than continue to toil in her fields. The group makes arrangements to travel to Kingston and return well before the time for the Jorvikburg trial on August 13th.

August 1st, 1130 - August 10th, 1130

Many of the Reeve's men travel to Kingston and spend the week selling off treasures and shopping for wares.

August 11th, 1130

The heroes return to Jorvikburg, many of them to stand trial for the slaying in the Red Cod Inn.