

**Session/Game:** Starkpool-8      **Date:** February 16, 2025

**Game 8:** Thug Life

**Campaign Date:** May 6-9, YN 1025

**Characters:**

**Group-1: The Bortastics**

Aldermann, Cleric-Militant-4, Man, Lawful, Doomspeaker (Andrew)

Eagle Fletch, Scout/Fighting-man-3, Elf, Neutral, Father Sky (Craig)

Squishy, Magic-User-Learned-4, Lawful (Bob)

**NPC Squad: 5 Guys Named Bort**

LFC, leather, shield, spear, dagger

Bort Smith (limpy)

Bort Laughman

Bort LaForge (one-ear)

Bort Judy

Bort Nelson (peg-leg)

**Group 2: On A Mission**

Hektor of Sinxth, Man, Fighting-man-4, Lawful (Andrew)

Nymeris of Brant, Woman, Magic-User-Learned-5 (Quinton)

Al Rangu, Mysterious Stranger (NPC)

Patches, Mysterious Stable-hand (NPC)

**Judge:** Dave N.

**LOG:**

*May 6, Starkpool City, Rough Section*

The Bortastics had quickly moved from Dorgstyn to Starkpool City to begin to spend their money. They had checked into the Shimmering Palace, a notorious dive of a rooming house and bar along Lakeside Street. On the evening of the 6<sup>th</sup> Squishy, Aldermann, Eagle Fletch and Bort Judy (the other 4 Borts being busy elsewhere) were heading homewards when they were accosted by a band of 6 ruffians. The ruffians failed to catch the Bortastics by surprise and were easily defeated by a sleep spell from Squishy and a hold spell from Aldermann.

The party tied up the ruffians and Squishy used a charm person spell to interrogate one of them. They discovered that the ruffians belonged to a gang of hit men and kidnappers called "The Thug Society" and had been assigned a contract to rub out the Bortastics, paid for by Sargon the Alchemist from Wayburg. The Bortastics killed the prisoners and returned to the Shimmering Palace.

#### *May 6, Starkpool City, Kings Road Inn*

Meanwhile, at the Kings Road Inn, one of the best travelers' accommodations in the city, Nymeris who was on a mission for Baron Fiyero to rescue her comrade Balthazar, met up with Hektor, a captain of Sinxth, who had information and instructions from Earl Ronstudd to help. Hektor revealed that he had information that Balthazar was indeed being held somewhere in the city. At this point, a hobbit leper introduced himself as Creepo Crappins and revealed that he had heard someone talking about grabbing someone named Balthazar. He went on to say that he could tell you where those grabbers were in exchange for a small fee. Hektor "dropped some cash" on the floor which Creepo picked up. Creepo then said that group called "The Bortastics" who were currently staying at the Shimmering Palace were the ones who had been talking about Balthazar.

Nymeris and Hektor agreed to track down the Bortastics immediately. However, they were interrupted by a man in the garb of the Western Desert dwellers who introduced himself as Al Rangu. Rangu offered to help them for no reward other than that justice be done. He also called up Patches the Stable-hand whom he said was always eager for a chance at adventure. Patches was more than happy to help.

#### *May 6, Late, Starkpool City, Shimmering Palace*

Hektor, Nymeris, Al Rangu and Patches arrive at the dump known as the Shimmering Palace and find the Bortastics in the taproom. The Bortastics reveal that they released Balthazar into the hands of his "cousin" Weevil Bin Wanx, a desert trader, in the dwarf town of Dorgstyn some days before and had no contact with him since. They asked Al Rangu whether he knew of any Wanxes in the desert lands, but he did not. Eagle Fletch had a brief feeling that he had met Al Rangu somewhere, but he couldn't place it. Patches seemed very excited to fawningly help out Squishy, who thought his voice seemed vaguely familiar. Nymeris used an ESP spell to probe Patches and Al Rangu. She discovered that Patches' mind was completely unreadable and Al Rangu was clearly in some sort of disguised state and was only interested in collecting information about the Thug Society. They all finally agreed to team up to find Balthazar after Hektor offered some cash to the Bortastics.

#### *May 7, around Starkpool City*

In the morning, both groups met in the breakfast room of the King's Road Inn. Squishy used a Detect Evil spell to check out some of the newly met adventurers. He saw that Creepo Crappins had a small amount of bad intent, Al Rangu was free of bad intentions and Patches was nowhere to be found. When Hektor went looking for Patches, he discovered that Patches had run off, having stolen Hektor's and Al Rangu's horses.

The groups decided to split up and search the city for clues. While Creepo Crappins was eating second breakfast, Squishy searched his tiny room on the "short floor" and discovered a variety of Gnomish, hobbit and dwarf costumes in his bags. Al Rangu went to the trade district and bought a new horse. He came back with some stories about 2 apprentice wizards being kidnapped in the rough part of town recently. Aldermann and Eagle Fletch went to Smith Street where Fletch bought a silver spear. Nymeris and Hektor went the Civic Plaza near the Guild of Mystic Knowledge Citadel.

The plaza was very busy because of the upcoming Wizards' Day holiday on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Hektor asked random people about The Thug Society while Nymeris scanned their minds with an ESP spell. They learned that the folk down at the "Two Pints and a Sammich" tavern believed that the Thug Society secretly ran everything. They also concluded that the Thug Society were behind the various kidnappings of learned magicians, including Balthazar.

When they had all re-assembled at The King's Road Inn, the Bortastics and their new allies came up with a cunning plan. They immediately spread the word that there were 5 talented new wizards, named the Borts, who were about to move into the Shimmering Palace. The hope was that the Thug Society would attempt to grab the Borts and the rest of the party could defeat, capture and question some thugs.

### *May 8, Shimmering Palace*

Some of the adventurers rested and recovered spells during the day, while others bought snazzy wizard outfits for the 5 Borts' disguises. Around sunset the team gathered together at The Shimmering Palace to set their trap.

Just as the party had hoped, the Thugs arrived in force around 10pm. 5 thugs burst in the front door of the Shimmering Palace and 5 more in the back door. The attackers began by throwing blinding powder, which managed to blind all 5 guys named Bort up front, and Al Rangu at the back. Squishy and Aldermann used magic to subdue the five thugs at the front door, while Hektor killed one at the back door and Nymeris enchanted the other four.

The adventurers quickly tied up all the thugs and began to tend to their temporarily blinded comrades. Using charm spells, they questioned the thugs and discovered that the Thug Society was led by Hagarella, a priestess of the Queen of Witches, who held great animosity toward all Learned Magicians, such as those who ruled Starkpool. She was capturing as many such mages as she could, intending to sacrifice them to her goddess on Wizards' Day next week. Balthazar was, of course her biggest prize. They also learned that the lair of Hagarella and the Thugs was underneath Milo's Crockery Shop, not too far away.

### *May 9, Lair of the Hag, Starkpool City*

Having spent the daylight hours recovering from the battle and preparing to assault the Lair, the team assembled near where they had dumped the corpses of their prisoners in the lake on the previous day. They busted in and killed the crockery clerk. Bort Nelson put on the clerk's clothes and stood guard while the rest passed into the secret tunnel downward to the lair, of which they had learned from their prisoners from the raid.

Proceeding downward, Fletch was moderately injured by falling into a pit trap. Then they broke into guard room, having to fight 10 thugs in the open and 6 more shooting arrows from behind slits. The thugs were wiped out with only moderate injuries among the adventurers. Al Rangu proved to be a more dangerous swordsman than any had suspected.

Finally reaching the chapel of the witch-queen, the party confronted Hagarella, her henchman Stan the Thoul, 2 giant lizards and a dozen more thugs. Nymeris used her staff of command to neutralize some thugs. Squishy used an animal control potion

to control one lizard, while Al Rangu fought the other. Squishy used a tube of blinding powder which he had taken from some dead thugs at the raid to blind Stan the Thoul and some of the thugs. The rest of the party began a long brawl with the enemies. Hagarella cast a charm person spell on Nymoris which effectively took her out of the fight. Eventually, the thugs collapsed, and Rangu finished the lizard. They all cornered and slew Hagarella.

They quickly freed Balthazar and the two apprentice wizard captives. They took some treasure from the lair and the Bortastics were rewarded by Hektor and Nymoris for Balthazar's rescue and by the Guild for the two apprentices. Bort Smith and Bort Laforge, however, were killed in the fighting.