

Twin Oaks

Our third session found our party with one of the six rings on hand, so to speak. They were getting ready to head out of the Gnome chambers and head to Twin Oaks when the embodiment of Miroku-Bosatsu appeared before them. It was a winged celestial being that phased in and out between two forms; first a translucent blue being that filled the chamber with cool crisp air, then as a fiery angel whose heat threatened to singe eyebrows.

Miroku, who kept his eyes on all things future, was very concerned with Sarutahiko's meddling with the fate of the adventurers. He had warned Sarutahiko about acting on his vision. He decided to step in and test the party's strength in putting luck on their side. Miroku dropped two bags; one filled with 100 gp and the other with 100 sp, and posed to them a challenge. Miroku's fears subsided, albeit slightly, when the party succeeded in doing what was necessary to maximize chance in their favor. Even though fate still went against the party their quick thinking and logic was rewarded with the two sacks of coin, but the promise of a greater gift was lost.

With the challenge behind them and two sacks of coins before them they headed out of the tunnels into the fresh air of the forest. Following Rune Bridger's advice the party decided not to backtrack, but instead to follow the stream that led more directly toward Twin Oaks. Not far down the path the party succumbed to differing degrees of dizziness and nausea. The forest became blurry as waves of fevered chills washed over them. They feared they caught some bug in the rancid waters battling the Mites. Theo nor Rune Bridger were able to identify the bug. As they continued along the stream Lord Gideon was the only one to notice trees with eyes that snapped shut when looked at, watching over them. Erica did however become aware that Theo did not seem himself... were those horns beneath his cowl? Perhaps some demon had replaced or possessed her friend?

Upon hearing a squeal ahead, perhaps a rabbit in a snare or a piglet, the party slowed and Dot Nic slipped ahead into the shadows to investigate. Ahead she found a Druidic circle monument of stones. In its center she saw two pleasant robed figures, perhaps Druids, praying peacefully to each side of a circle of flowers. Inside the circle were some rabbits, a piglet, and baskets overflowing with fruits, vegetables, and grains. She returned to the party and told them their were some Druids leaving offerings for the poor. As the party all arrive at the circle at different times they all, for the most part see something that resembles what Dot Nic described. Not quite so pleasant a scene perhaps, why did she leave out the fact that snakes were slithering in amongst the baskets and the piglet? Theo was the exception, he clearly came upon an evil sacrificial ceremony; figures clad in dark ominous robes, maybe evil clerics chanting to each side of a circle of stones. Inside the circle were some snakes, and a crying swaddled baby. Without hesitation he

called out to the party, “they are sacrificing a baby,” and began attacking the clerics. Ah ha, just as Desdemona thought, Theo was possessed! Dot Nic jumped in front of one of the clerics to protect him from Theo’s attacks as Desdemona prepared to stop Theo as well. However in the end the party’s faith in their friend, confusing sounds, and the appearance of a giant frog cleared all their minds and they saw the scene as it truly was, the way Theo had described it. Yurgi charged in, grabbed the baby and carried it out of harms way. Xerxes bravely mounted the giant frog, wrapping his short muscular arms tightly around its neck bringing it to the ground. With Yurgi protecting the infant and Xerxes frolicking with the frog, the rest of the party dispatched the two evil casters. The battle culminated with Yurgi tucking the baby to his chest and bashing into the back of the final cleric. The party searched the area and discussed plans for the baby as Cinderpot finished tying up Xerxes pinned frog. In the end the party left with the baby safely stored in Xerxes cage.

Upon arrival in Twin Oaks the party was met by the town’s mayor who promised pay, supplies, food, and boarding if they would help rid the town of the Mites. Mayor Pennybags recognizes the missign baby and offers to return him to his mother. After visiting the town square for some bathing, barbering, and resupplying the party headed to the mayor’s home, stopping only to check in on the mother and her baby. Everyone looked exceptionally dapper, with the exception of Xerxes, who had been given a very ‘unique’ hair and beard style that looked exceptionally strange on a Dwarf.

The team agreed to the Mayor’s terms and Xerxes, even with his strange new look, managed to coax another few healing potions from the mayor.

Upon hearing of Eric Ericson and his friend’s immanent death, the party raced to the town chapel where they quickly stabilized and healed them. Leaving them to rest and recuperate they head to the town inn looking for Gilbrok the Tongue. Gilbrok explains to them what happened and is exceptionally pleased to have his familiar returned. Maka-Ruku, the monkey, leaves two spells with Boozler and happily rejoins his master. Most of the party sleeps at the inn but Xerxes and Yurgi take the Mayor up on his offer. The two enjoy the luxuries of the mayor’s hearth and home where, for the first time in years, the mayor’s daughters slept in his and his wife’s room, behind a locked door.

Checking in on Eric Ericson and his friends the party learns of the exact location of the Mite’s lair. Eric Ericson asks that they stop and check on his sister and younger siblings at his family farm on their way.

At the farm the party arrives just in time to see Eric Ericson’s sister dispatch two Mites with a hoe before locking her and her siblings in her home. The party is quick to notice several Mites in the swarm have torches and are likely to burn down the barn and house with the children and animals in them. Like a trained machine: Dot Nic circled the house to flank them, Xerxes, Lord Gideon and Yurgi charged in with their melee prowess, Theo and Desdemona blasting with arrows and magic missiles,

and Rune Bridger hexing. The Mites were brought down before they knew what hit them. Eric's sister was beyond grateful, but insisted on staying to care for the farm, even at the party's pleading for her to take her siblings and head to Twin Oaks.

Having done what they could the party continued toward the haunted catacombs on the path described by Eric Ericson.

Just before dark they reached the suggested camping spot, the site of an old hunting lodge. Although carefully inspecting the area for safety before pitching camp, the party was unable to notice the stealthily hidden Kobolds that lay ambush ready. The Kobold attack came suddenly and from all sides. From a ledge above a robed Kobold sorcerer cast spells while protected by two Kobold snipers and a Kobold trapper, who all sent volleys of crossbow bolts raining down into the party's midst. From behind came three Kobold Blades charging swords drawn and splashing in from the side came two more from the river's edge. Dot Nic quickly charged up the steps leading up to the ledge, before reaching the caster however a trap exploded a cone of fire around her. Desperate to help his friend that just disappeared in a ball of flame, Lord Gideon raced to the cliffs edge and began trying to climb it, his angst at his friends predicament and pounds upon pounds of plate quickly sent him caroming to the ground where the Kobold trapper took continuous potshots at him. Rune sent one of the Blades screaming with fear into the woods while Xerxes battled the two remaining. Yurgi took on the two at the rivers edge. Desdemona and Theo slowly whittled down the snipers and trapper on the ledge. Thanks to Runes Hexes the barbarian and the monk were able to occasionally make weapon contact with the very hard to hit Kobold Blades. Unfortunately Dot Nic was hit by another explosive trap giving the Kobold caster time to become invisible. The caster was able to get to a spot where it could raise fallen comrades into frightening undead versions of themselves. After a long arm tiring battle the last of the Kobolds fell, with the exception of the caster who fled when the outcome became clear. The party found a chest with several treasures and a map that marked an attack on an inn planned for the first day of summer, a few weeks from now. Confident the area was now safe the party lay down for the night, expecting to reach the haunted catacombs tomorrow by midday.