

The Players

Wexler Krosh Creadus played by Zig

Tiefling Cleric from a different plane of existence called Eidos. He has silver tinted skin, red pronounced veins throughout face, forehead horns- from crest of scalp, proceeding straight back around side of head, black. Purple haired, with red deep dyed red roots. Slightly scawny, sveltd upper body, no hair past face. Strong muscular lower body, cloven feet are always exposed to the ground. Tail is very sturdy at base of cloak, thinning toward a flattened spaded end, turning purple-ish at the end. After completing his Clerical Essay on the History of Eidos, mandatory to enter the Clergy of Scarborough, Wexler attends the celebration ceremony with the rest of his family. In talking with his matriarch - Ju'on, he learns of her visions of a powerful, catastrophic entity -Lavos-, destroying a peaceful, prosperous island nation on the PMP. Feeling the need to give these visions the proper weight and forethought, she besieges her fellow priestesses of Glamoire, along with her 3 husbands - Feynar, Zolar, & Lycinian to go with her to seek the advice and counsel of the Placence - High Scholars and Emissaries for the Order of Eldest. Upon retelling of these disastrous scenes, it was concluded that eventually this can only lead to Lavos' hunger, in union with his sovereigns of evil, finding their way unto Eidos. Undoubtedly destroying this perfect, separate, peaceful demiplane of Eidos, wreaking unspeakable havoc eternally. Though not from a particularly great house of influence, or ranking in exceptional skills compared to his fellow clerics, Wexler was chosen by the Placence to journey to the PMP, search out evidence of Lavos and his minions, seek out alliances with other races, and if possible stop "IT" before any of its chaos can taint paradise- at all costs in needed.

Riven Nominea played by Andy

Elf rogue that is charismatic, wild at heart, and fiercely proud. He never shied away from speaking brashly about the past glory of the Nominae family... and has the black eyes, broken ribs, and disjointed nose to prove it. It's not so much certain as to whether or not he truly believed the story, or if he just loved to stir it up with anyone who would listen to his

rantings, because just as certain that he was gonna limp away with a beating, he would be jangling all the way with a weeks work worth of coin from his assailants.

His reputation as a cutpurse began to precede him, and soon he wasn't allowed within any building or within arms length of any other elf. This only helped to spurn his hatred towards the elves of his home land. Instead of rebuilding his family name, he was going to leave and build a new legend, one that stretches so far and wide that no one could ever strip him of it. And when that day comes, he would return home, ready to take back from them what was taken from him. That would be his greatest heist.

Sweaty Lettuce played by Matt

Half-Orc Barbarian born into slavery. Became a gladiator and enjoyed winning fame shínys. Hated being a slave. Upon seeing another half-orc child whipped as he was, killed his owner and freed the other slaves. Left to earn more fame and shínys. Now rushes in to free all slaves without thinking. Otherwise just does things for himself and shínys. Green skin. Neck beard. One big canine tooth.

Casious of Parma played by Cancio

Human barbarian that grew up with his family enslaved underground by the Legion of Lavos. He managed to escape and has been searching for a way to free his people from the evil cult. Pale skin with a mohawk, small build.

Bildo Braggins played by Bill

Dragonborn Eldrich knight has spent many years as a soldier and mercenary. Recently finding himself at the request of Yarna, the governess of Umatu.

Throcknor played by Tom

Wood Elf Ranger and forester in the woods near Hínon. His wife and children were murdered in front of him by the Legion of Lavos. Since then, only strong drink will drown out the sound of their screams and let him fall asleep.

Gideon Smalls played by Tim

Halfling bard that entertains and drinks nightly at The Final Countdown tavern in Hiron. He has become an honorary member of the Nightline thieves guild that call this tavern's basement their base. He has run the circuit of Talus, playing at all the dives in the four major cities, but Hiron is his favorite mainly because it is easy to talk the rogues into drinking and causing mischief.

Ari played by Ashley

Half-Elf druid that lives in the Maplewoods, caring for the earth. She has been sensing an imbalance and received a vision from an old god about a cult creating an underground army. She dresses in green, has red hair and has a fox companion named Tod.

All other players and concept created and played by Nate

The Terror on Talus Book 1: Umatu

Episode 1: Funny Meeting You Here

Riven, a handsome, wise cracking wood elf rogue, gave up his life in Fel River Run to find a wealthier, judgement free one in the city of Umatu where he can surely find some “friends” he can “influence.” On his way there he feels an energy pulsing in the air along with a faint hum. He ducks behind a tree in time to see a stocky pale faced humanoid with purple hair, cloven feet and horns dressed in fine religious cloths appear magically in awesome super hero three point stance. Unknown to Riven, this tiefling cleric named Wexler Krosh came from another plane of existence to stop the rebirth of Lavos that his mother saw in a vision. Riven stealthily follows this newcomer, noticing that he is also heading toward Umatu but looking around at everything as if seeing it for the first time. He comes upon a building on the outside of town, but no one answers.

The tiefling puts the hood of his cloak up. He was warned that the inhabitants of this land could possibly be frightened of his appearance. Wexler, with Riven still following, happens upon a farmer who is a little timid of Wexler but offers him some goat cheese and tells him where to find the temple of Bahamut in Umatu. He thanks the man and heads to the temple so he can warn them of Lavos and have a safe haven to pray. He finds the temple to be full of friendly dragonborn clerics and paladins. A priest named Tymus answers many of his questions and says he should talk to Garthal, the paladin captain of the guards who should be at The Charred Star Tavern. Wexler thanks Tymus and heads into a chamber where he can begin his ritual meditations.

Riven passes by the temple and heads to the local bar. At The Charred Star tavern he instantly noticed a pile of coins in front of a hulking brute of a half orc barbarian named Sweaty Lettuce that smelled strongly of onions and could best anyone in a feat of strength which he loudly will proclaim to any that will hear. Riven throws down some coin and challenges him. Sweaty is so strong and Riven is so weak that he gets thrown across the table knocking all the coins on the floor and deftly grabs a handful on his way down. Sweaty is delighted that he tossed someone across the bar that he doesn't even notice the missing

coin and offers to buy a round of drinks. Wexler then meets up with Riven and Sweaty in the Charred Star tavern.

Sweaty seems to have a mental condition that makes him say names wrong. He has been calling Riven, River, and when Wexler introduces himself as Wexler Krosh Creadus, Sweaty calls him Krotch. This upsets him the more Sweaty does it, and he corrects him one last time with his voice booming magically and shaking the tables. He gets convinced to join in an eating and drinking contest with Sweaty and matches him with three blackened starfish and three of the very potent Dragon Drop specialty drink. Since Riven had been thrown across the room in his arm wrestling match with Sweaty, the half orc now wanted to throw everyone across the room as his new feat of strength and reluctantly Wexler agrees to this strange custom for a small wager of more drinks.

Unfortunately, Sweaty had a few too many drinks and starfish that when he tries to lift the Tiefling in the air he lets out a loud onion soaked fart that nearly soils his loincloth and falls to the ground laughing. At this moment two red cloaked thieves run by being chased by a hair-lipped halfling girl shouting for someone to stop them. Riven shoots an arrow but misses on purpose because he is not sure whose side he should be on yet. Wexler promptly stops one and lays him out with his hammer, while Sweaty grabs a hold of the other one. When questioned, he is able to wrestle free and take his own life. Wexler stabilizes the other and secures him as the halfling thanks them and introduces herself as Seraphina Greenbottle, the alchemist. She says these guys have stolen four of these potions of longevity from her and they are hard to make. She has a shop on the boardwalk where they can take this creep to interrogate him.

Behind the Curtain Episode 1

This was my first ever time being a Dungeon Master. We started at around 9:00 at night and went until midnight. This part of the story was pretty easy to steer. Starts out like most D&D episodes, "You meet in a tavern...." The fun thing about this is that the dice rolls can make you fail any mundane act. The best part of the night was when Matt (Sweaty) rolled a one on his attempt to pick up Wexler and throw him, thus resulting in me deciding that he almost poops himself in his attempt.

Episode 2: Missing, Presumed Metal

On their way to Seraphina's our heroes were stopped by Garthal, the dragonborn Paladin of Bahamut, who commended most of them, except Riven, for their bravery in stopping the thieves. She says that she will take the captive and that she could use some warriors to help with an urgent matter at the castle. Because of some strange body throwing OCD, before they go with Garthal, Sweaty tosses the corpse of the Legion of Lavos cultist an impressive 60 feet down the street, this time without nearly pooping himself, hooray! Once in the audience of the Governess Yarna she reveals that her son Kilnor is missing presumed kidnapped by the Legion of Lavos.

They investigate Kilnor's room for clues. Riven found some shiny objects to put in his pockets along with a bag of fuzzy balls, while Sweaty promptly decided to take a nap on Kilnor's bed, and then fall off and disturb everyone with his snoring despite getting a few kicks to the ribs. Wexler set up shop in the middle of the room to start a ritual of detect magic that revealed a magical glow coming from under the giant rug. Under the rug was a large circle of hollow burnt lava rock that they got Sweaty to jump on and break it and found a ladder leading down into a black corridor. They began to hear a metallic hammering sound and came across another blackened hollow lava doorway that contained some corpses and skeletons. A little further along they ran into a few red cloaks that Sweaty cleanly cleaved one in half and Wexler toasted another one with radiant light. The third pulled something from out of his cloak, put it in his mouth, bit down hard and his head turned to lava as the rest of him melted away into a steaming pile.

At this time there is a screaming along with the hammering and the heroes rush further down the corridor to open a lava rock door where Kilnor is on a table screaming with metal fused to his body and long sharp spikes coming out of his palms. A cultist pours a potion down Kilnor's throat and the battle begins. Riven was able to shoot an arrow right through an enemies throat while Wexler ran up to the cultist to deliver some justice, but as he did, the cultist reached out and cast a dark spell that knocked him unconscious and spasming on the

floor. Seeing this, Sweaty ran up, took a few hits from the cultist's mace and then sliced him in half from balls to brain. In this commotion the mutated metallic form of Kilnor slowly got off the table and made his way mindlessly past everyone to try to leave the room and enter the corridor.

Behind the Curtain Episode 2

At the end of each session I like to find out what the characters plan on doing next time, so I know what to write. The general outline of the story has been written loosely because it has to be flexible to accommodate the decisions of the players. I had not planned on them taking a prisoner for questioning and I hadn't really worked out exactly what he would say yet or how much information I was willing to make him give up so I decided to have Garthal show up and take the prisoner under her custody. Also, they needed her to take them to the manor anyway to start the main quest. The magic using cultists have access to a spell I wrote for this game that lets them create lava rock barriers that the characters have to beat a 15 strength check on a D20 to get through it. Whenever a player becomes unconscious in the game they start making death saving throws which means during their turn in battle they roll a D20. If it is 9 or below it is a failed save, 10 or above is a successful save. Get to three failed saves and the character is dead. Get to three successes and the character is stabilized. I admit I could have made the battles a little harder but at this point I was kind of scared about killing the players. I need them to get attached to their characters more before I kill them, MWAHAHA!

Episode 3: Barrels of Fun

As Kilnor leaves the room, there is much debate between our heroes as they decide whether to help Garthal stop Kilnor, or if they should look for “shinies” (treasure) in the room they just conquered. Wexler does his detect magic thing again while Sweaty and Riven go out to see how they can stop this hulking metal monstrosity. Garthal is struggling mightily to stop the mindless mutant from trekking further down the corridor. It doesn't even look at her, just keeps marching. Garthal throws a little metal orb at Kilnor that expands into a bunch of chains to subdue him, but it falls short. She sends for more guards to come and to let Yarna know what has happened to her son. Wexler comes up to the metal monster and shines a bright light in his face that makes him turn away and Sweaty tries a few times to bear hug Kilnor and finally succeeds as Riven trips him and ties his feet up while Garthal ties up the rest of him.

Then the guards come to haul the struggling body up to the manor. After that the search for treasure commences as they open the other two lava rock blocked doors. One room contains a barrel of water and a couple other barrels that Sweaty decides to smash open to reveal nothing. Riven finds a tantalizing metal chest that he eagerly and easily lockpicks open but to his dismay a hidden needle springs out and pierces his hand and his vision starts to get blurry as he starts foaming at the mouth and falls unconscious to the floor.

Wexler quickly uses his medicine skill to revive him and Sweaty takes this opportunity to open the chest and take out a bag of gold and a necklace with a black gem. They then investigate a barrel of water that has a magic aura coming from it and a golden dragon statue at the bottom. Riven drops a ball bearing in the water but as soon as it hits, there is a bright spark and the bearing shoots across the room and hits Wexler right between the eyes. Then they debate about how to get the water out of the barrel and think about how handy it would have been to be able to use one of the other barrels in the room to try to empty it into to get the statue, however that is not an option because **SWEATY SMASH!** Sweaty says he is just going to dump the water out in the empty chest. The others try to

dissuade him because all of the water is electrified but he kicks them out of the room if they want to be chickens.

He moves the barrel and pours some out but then notices the statue isn't in the barrel or the chest. After a few confusing moments they realize the dragon is actually attached to a recess in the ceiling above where the barrel was. Sweaty exalts that he gets to throw Riven again into the air so he can grab the statue. After that they go back up to talk to Yarna and she rewards them each with a magical gem that, when activated, spin around their heads. Then they are introduced to the scholar Pendrago who surprises Wexler by being able to speak the Infernal language to him and he identifies some items for them and implores them to head to the town of Ninon to check on their safety. The heroes then get some much needed rest.

Behind the Curtain Episode 3

This evening our heroes got to find out about traps. First one is a simple poison needle trap that turns out is guarding a pendant of poison resistance, ironic. The other trap was fun because they disarmed the trap by putting the ball bearing in the water but still spent at least 45 minutes real time trying to figure out how to get the water out without getting electrocuted. Also, Wexler got hit in the face by the ball bearing because he rolled a 1 on his dexterity check to dodge it. Good times.

Episode 4 Dragon Meet

Our heroes awaken refreshed and revitalized. Wexler and Garthal stayed in the Temple of Bahamut and talked about the security of the town after Wex did his morning prayers and rituals. Sweaty woke up and took over the manor kitchen making a breakfast stew with some unknown meat he found, his potatoes, his bag of slain monster teeth, and of course some loincloth onions. After eating this scrumptious concoction, Riven headed to Seraphina's to get his potion identified, while Wexler and Sweaty went to check on Kilnor and the other cultist prisoner. Wexler tried a restoration spell on Kilnor to see if he could cure him to no effect, but learned that he was now undead from whatever potion they gave him. If you like watching someone argue with a pole, then you would enjoy Sweaty trying to interrogate and intimidate the Drow cultist as they did not speak each other's language.

At Seraphina's Riven finds out he has a potion of poison and shows her the dragon statue that she is thrilled about because she has a potion that will cure the petrification. The dragon starts to move and stretch, but turns invisible and flies away as soon as he sees them. Riven coaxes the dragon out with some jerky and his red gem that the dragon happily grabs it and goes in his bag as Sweaty comes in to get Riven to come interrogate the drow elf and ask Pendrago what their dragon friend is. Pendrago is able to talk to it in Draconic and learn that it is a mischievous Faerie Dragon named Farluck. At the interrogation they learn that Kilnor is what they call a Life Eater and they stole the potion of longevity from Seraphina to use to make the Life Eaters. After that they meet Wexler and decide to go explore the Dragon Crystal and the rest of the cave underneath the castle.

The Crystal is large and orange protruding from the ceiling. Farluck is fascinated by it and begins to "hug" it vigorously. They find nothing else strange about it. As they continue further north, they find another blocked room with corpses in it. Then they find a staircase leading up to yet another blocked door. When they get it open they are greeted with a bright flash that blinds them all but Wexler, and they hear footsteps and yelling coming toward them.....

Behind the Curtain Episode 4

Each monster that Sweaty kills, he tries to grab a tooth from because he uses them as a flavor enhancer and agitator in his stews. He strains them out and keeps them in a pouch for future use, tasty. I wasn't sure if I wanted Seraphina to be able to unpetrify the little dragon, so I had her do a D20 roll to decide. If I rolled above 15, she would have a potion that would do it, and I did. This might be a good time to tell you that I use a DM screen so that the players cannot see what my dice rolls are. They only know that I am rolling dice. Sometimes I roll a D20 for no reason, just to make them wonder. The point is, I could just roll the die to give the perception that I am letting it make the decision but, in fact, whatever the dice say, I can tell them it says whatever I want. I rarely do this though because I enjoy the chaos of things not going the way I plan them.

Episode 5 Blind Rage

Our blinded heroes are confronted by three Legion of Lavos loyalists. Riven blindly shoots an arrow into the belly of one and puts him out of commission. Wexler, the only one of our heroes that can actually see, starts wailing on the big guy in the room along with a blinded Sweaty who is swinging his greatsword dangerously around and missing everything. The magic cultist runs to the other room and starts casting a spell to seal off the doorway with a lava wall while Farluck the Faerie dragon turns invisible and hides against the wall. Wexler starts to chase after the spellcasting cultist but gets tackled by the big guy. Riven takes advantage of this and plunges his sword into him to finish him off, but thrusts a little too deep and catches Wexler in the leg as well. Wex then casts restore on Sweaty so that he can see again and try to break down the lava door, but he is unable to do it in time and the cultist runs outside. Riven jumps up and drop kicks Sweaty into the door breaking it and falling through gracefully.

They all run outside to chase the cultist, Riven firing arrows, Sweaty throwing hand axes, and Wexler shooting beams of light that knock down trees that fall in their path to their quarry, very helpful. As they dodge the trees, they see a thick arm come out from behind a tree and clothesline the cultist then stomp on his head. Riven catches up and does his own stomp, but to casual onlookers it was more like a gentle tap. This new comer takes a magic blast from the fallen victim and then ends him with two hacks from his short swords. Wexler immediately begins to stabilize him with bandages so that they will be able to question him. The hulking stranger introduces himself as Casious of Parma, a human barbarian that him and his family has lived in captivity as slaves of the Drow elves of the Legion of Lavos.

As Sweaty hears this he starts going berserk screaming that all slavers must die and begins punching a tree until he can't hold back anymore and swings his greatsword to cut off the head of the slaver cultist while Wexler screams NOOOO!! and shoots a bolt of light at Sweaty to knock him back, but the damage had been done and their captive was left headless on the forest floor. Wexler can't believe it and starts a fury of his own storming back to the inn where the battle was fought, putting claw marks in trees along the way while yelling in his infernal language. The others head back after him to find the inns tables and

chairs turned over and Wexler meditating by the fireplace. As they search the bodies and the rooms, Wex heads back down the tunnel and towards the temple still fuming.

Behind the Curtain Episode 5

This was a great session for a lot of reasons. It is always satisfying to start a session with a battle. A blind barbarian swinging a greatsword is always fun too. The chase scene worked out well as Wexler kept botching and rolling low numbers when he was firing spells that they exploded into trees making them fall in front of Sweaty and the rest while their target got further away. This is where Cancio comes into the story and I felt kind of bad because everyone else was in that battle for probably an hour and a half before his character even shows up. Zig and Matt did a great job of roleplaying when Sweaty cut off the cultists head. They were yelling at each other and later Matt was worried that Zig was actually mad at him.

Episode 6 Water you doing?

As Wexler arrives at the temple, Riven, Sweaty, and Casious head further north in the tunnels to find more open rooms with corpses in them. They walk for 2 hours without seeing anything of substance until they come to a lava door on their left. They bust it down and see the corpse of a long decaying ogre. A little farther on they get to a large underground lake with the tunnel continuing on the other side and a small river going off to the east of the lake. Sweaty lights fire to some hazardous yellow mold that is blocking their way and then chucks a javelin into the water to see how deep it is and the javelin disappears into the water. At this point they all hear a voice inside their head asking if they are here to play with Dreck? "Dreck wants to play!" Sweaty takes a few steps into the lake and it swirls to life forming a serpent of some kind made entirely of water. It barely misses grabbing Sweaty with a water tendril. Casious tries to throw javelins and Riven shoots arrows into it but it doesn't seem to be very effective.

Eventually they notice if they get far enough away, the water goes back to being an underground lake, so they decide to turn their backs to some probably super awesome treasure and deal with this when they are rested and have their full party with them. During this whole thing Wexler sits down with Tymus, the priest of Bahamut, in the temple and tells him about his concerns with his companions and their disregard for life. He is also concerned about his connection to his gods as he has felt they are stretched a little thin in this plane of existence. Tymus insists that he go to the Bahamut statue and do a meditation with him. During the meditation Wexler has a vision of the sun being pulled into the planet followed by the Dragon God Bahamut coming before him and telling him about the missing artifacts that must be found to stand a chance at stopping the rebirth of Lavos. He awakens with his warhammer in hand and a cold smoke coming off of his blessed weapon.

After the others get back to town, Riven goes to get supplies and notices another thief gesturing for him to follow them down an alley. She reveals herself to be a half-elf named Jinx and says she has heard of his great lock picking abilities and has some info on a great treasure vault in the roots of the hidden elf tree city Fel River Run. She wants to

know if he is in, but they still need to gather some more intel, so they agree to meet back up in a few days.

Behind the Curtain Episode 6

I tried to get Matt, Andy, and Cancio to not venture down into the cave further without Zig because the monster that I had down there was basically only vulnerable to magic which none of them have without their cleric friend. Also, the way that Cancio plays is very timid as he is afraid of his character dying. This creates a bit of a problem as he is playing a barbarian who tend to be in front of the battle hacking away at everything. Since Wexler had such terrible dice rolls last episode while he was trying to cast spells through his deities, Zig and I decided that his gods were maybe too far away in this plane of existence and it was having an effect on his power. I made him do a religion check roll and get a vision from Bahamut to make him become a Paladin. The game lets you change your class whenever you gain a level. So after this episode everybody got to level 4, but instead of getting to level 4 as a cleric, Zig is now level 3 in cleric and level 1 in paladin. It was really funny because after episode 5 I had come up with the whole vision weapon blessing idea and then later that week Zig called me saying that because his spells went so bad that he wanted to see what I thought about him changing to paladin. Crazy.

Episode 7: Water you looking at?

Our barbarians, Sweaty and Casious awake to find Riven gone and a note saying he needs to find a treasure under his birthplace of Fel River Run and he will meet up with them later. Wexler comes back to the manor to humbly show off his newly blessed weapon and understanding of the Draconic language through gifts from Bahamut. He apologizes to Sweaty for his actions yesterday and they are friends again. Wexler quickly realizes that now that he can understand their little dragon friend Farluck, he is not sure that he wants to. Never has he heard such foul language and filth. They meet with Yarna and she introduces them to a silver Dragonborn fighter named Bildo (Played by Bill) who is going to join them on their mission to find the underground city base of the Legion of Livos. Pendrago talks with them about where to possibly find information of the location of the lost artifacts of the old heroes.

Casious stops by the blacksmith to get a chain attached to his mace so that he can throw it and swing it around. They head down to the caverns and make their way back to the underground lake to get the voice of their friend Dreck in their heads asking to play. Sweaty asks Wexler to put some power into one of his throwing rocks and Wex says that's not how it works but half heartedly waves his hand over the rock so Sweaty will shut up and leave him alone. They tie a rope around Sweaty then activate the water monster again and it immediately grabs Sweaty up in one of its tendrils and starts to drag him into the water. Casious swings a mace at the tendril and does some damage but the tendril does not release Sweaty. Bildo pulls on the rope that they attached to Sweaty and pulls him out of the waters grasp. Sweaty then stands up and chucks his magic rock at the water weird and to Wexler's surprise it actually does some massive magic damage. Wexler then shoots a bolt of guiding light into the water while Farluck sends some balls of light into its head that does nothing. The water weird grabs onto Casious but he immediately swings his mace and does a super sweet backflip to escape the grasp of the tendril. Seeing that Casious is free, Bildo raises his hand and shoots three gemstone missiles out toward the water and it splashes into its head and explodes, but then the water becomes still.

Wexler then asks to see if what they killed was Dreck. Dreck says he still wants to play with them. They make their way to the western part of the lake and open a lava door that has a tunnel covered in spider webs. Sweaty immediately decides to light them on fire and it spreads all the way up the tunnel and the group hears some shrieks and clicking noises coming closer to them....

Behind the Curtain Episode 7

Before this episode I was sadly informed that Andy had to quit the campaign as he is entering his last semester of programming school. I decided to write that he couldn't resist the temptation of great treasure that was proposed to him at the end of the last episode. However, I did enlist Laura and I's friend Bill, who has never played before. The introduction of Farluck has been a great hit. It is hard for me to describe what his voice sounds like, but it is somewhere in the elmo/muppet/meatwad family, and he says some very foul and inappropriate things and curses a lot. The "blessed" rock was good. It wasn't supposed to do anything but when Matt rolled his attack with it, he rolled a natural 20 and so I had it be that Zig actually did bless it on accident. So now Sweaty thinks he can get all his stuff blessed.

Episode 8: A fire in their eyes

The group is confronted by two flaming giant spiders that run past them into the lake to douse themselves and another three non flaming giant spiders. The spiders all attack but all of them miss their marks except one digs its fangs into Bildo and does some poison damage to him. Farluck breaths some funny breath on one in the water and it just stands there with a dumb look on its face, if spiders can have looks on their faces... Casious swings his mace and hits the other one in the water and makes another attack with his short sword but that gets deflected and he drops it into the water. Bildo uses his cold breath to damage two of the spiders in the cave while Wexler grabs onto one leg and does some massive damage with inflict wounds spell. Sweaty rages and hacks and slashes with his greatsword killing one of the spiders. Casious hits with his mace again and Farluck bites the dazed spider. Bildo slices with his longsword but then gets entangled in a web shot out by one of the spiders. Wexler hits another with a flame spell while the disoriented spider starts climbing up the wall. Sweaty slices the legs off one spider then chucks one of his onions at the spider crawling up the wall and kills that one too while Casious crushes the last ones head with his mace and goes to pick up his dropped sword.

Bildo sneaks his way up the tunnel to see what he can find, but he does not find much but burnt webbing and corpses and wooden chests in ashes. He lets the others know what he found and that the tunnel seems to be going up toward the surface. They all decide to go check out the other doors. Wexler stays by the water to say some prayers while the others open the next door. Inside is a skull on the ground with a horned helmet surrounded by 11 gemstones and two elaborate scimitars stuck into the ground behind it. Other than that, the room is just a circle. Bildo grabs the helmet while Casious eagerly grabs for the two swords.

As soon as he touches them the skull bursts into green flames with red glowing eyes and starts cackling maniacally. It fires two fire rays out of its eyes that hit Casious in the chest for major damage. Bildo casts a frost spell that does nothing while Farluck shimmers into three versions of himself and flies around. Casious returns fire with his new swords and chips off a piece of bone from the skull. Sweaty smashes into it with his greatsword and

Wexler barely misses with the sacred flame spell. Bildo hits it with its longsword while Casious backs away and drinks a health potion. Sweaty then really hauls off and clubs the skull against the wall and cracks it in half then hits it a few more times into the ground to make sure it is gone. He then picks up the gems after Wexler does detect magic to make sure they aren't trapped, but does notice that there is still a faint magic glow coming from the skulls remains.

They decide to wrap it up in Sweaty's bedroll while they get some sleep so it doesn't watch them or something. The heroes settle down with Wexler taking the first watch. After an hour goes by and everyone has just started to drift off, they hear the skulls cackling laughter again and Sweaty's bedroll erupts in green flames as the skull comes back with its red glowing eyes....

Behind the Curtain Episode 8

So I definitely did not plan on them setting the whole spider tunnel on fire. I thought they would leave it alone for the most part until they opened the other doors. But alas I had to have all the spiders come after them and set in motion what happens in the next episode. I also made them feel a little guilty by adding that upon searching the burnt remains of the tunnel there were charred corpses that may or may not have been alive before the fire and possible treasure chests that had been burned to ash. Always consequences for your actions. The flaming skull monster is a fun one because if you don't put holy water on it, it reforms and comes back to full health after one hour passes. I was so elated that Matt decided to roll it up in his bedroll.

Episode 9: Here's looking at you

The flame skull keeps cackling and shooting eye lasers as it is hovering over the middle of the underground lake while our heroes bravely run away through thigh deep water. Sweaty is keen on chucking rocks at it until he sees an especially juicy looking one that makes him fall head first into the water and smack his head on it. Wexler stays behind to pick up the waterlogged barbarian so he doesn't drown. Casious decides to shoot a few crossbow bolts into the skulls eyes while retreating bravely and Wexler keeps shooting radiant flame at it until it finally breaks in half and sinks to the bottom of the lake. As they are leaving Dreck says "Aw, don't run," in their heads.

They go back to town to pick up some holy water that might make the skull stay dead. Wexler grabs some from Tymus and another from Garthal. Casious goes to the blacksmith to get a throwing chain attached to his mace. Sweaty goes to The Charred Star to eat his weight in starfish and pass out on the table. They meet back up at the manor and talk to Pendrago about what to do next. There is quite the argument among them, but they decide to go back to the cave to see if they can find the underground cultist city and maybe some clues to the whereabouts of the artifacts. Upon reaching the lake, they do not see the skull around until they make it to the doorway of its origin and it is floating there laughing and starts shooting its eye fire at them. Wexler smashes a bottle of holy water on it, but it doesn't go away. Everyone takes hacks at it until it shatters lifeless on the ground once more.

Wexler does a detect magic spell and proves that the skull is dead once and for all. Then they head to the next room that is fairly large and has a wooden chest in between two large boulders. Wexler does detect magic again and notices magic on top of one of the boulders. As they get closer the boulder opens a big eye and says "I See You" in their heads. The boulder sprouts four eye stalks and a long tongue surrounded by razor sharp teeth. One of the eyes stares at Sweaty and paralyzes him in place. Another glares at Casious and leaves him shaking in his boots. Wexler and Bildo start hacking away with their

weapons as Dreck stares some pain into Wexler and another eye confuses Bildo into thinking that Wex is the enemy. Finally, Casious overcomes his fear and starts chopping with his scimitars and Sweaty can move again and he finally slices off Dreck's eye stalks, shoves them in the creature's mouth and removes one of the teeth to put in his bag. They open up the chest to find a bag of holding, a foot long wooden box, and a shiny leather cloak.

Behind the Curtain Episode 9

This one was pretty straight forward. Defeat the flaming skull for the third time, then have an even bigger boss fight. Matt rolled a 1 when he was trying to pull up a big rock from under the water so I thought it would be fun for him to almost drown. Dreck is a monster called a spectator that shoots beams out of his four eye stalks that damage, confuse, terrify, and paralyze. A bag of holding is a magical bag that has extra dimensional space so that you can store a massive amount of stuff in there; weapons, armor, pieces of monsters....

Episode 10: That's a nice pipe you have

Our heroes decide to rest in the cave that they defeated Dreck and take turns taking watch and inspecting their new treasures. On Wexler's watch he notices the cloak looks like a manta ray and it floats elegantly in the water. During Sweaty's watch he plays with his bag of fuzzy balls that smell like animals. He throws a ball in the air and it turns into an owl and then throws another one that also turns into an owl that just fly around the cave a little until landing on his shoulder. Casious inspects the wooden box on his watch and notices that in Elvish it says "Return" on the lid, "Floatie" on the front and "Big Floatie" on the back. On Bildo's watch he actually tries on the cloak and gets in the water and the cloak holds him under there until he takes a breath. Instead of choking and drowning, he realizes he can breath and swim fast under water with the cloak on. When he comes out of the water he hears some voices coming out of the spider tunnel and alerts the others as he goes back under the water to hide from them.

Three bark skinned completely naked druids emerge. Two shapely female elves and a male elf with the biggest penis they have ever seen. They are wondering what happened to their pet spiders. The male introduces himself as Brother Nature and says he means no harm and he understands if they killed their spiders, after all they are terrifying. He leads a commune of druids in the Maplewoods that have shed their need of material things. He offers a peace pipe full of mapleweed to the heroes, but they are apprehensive to join. Instead the three druids take big puffs from their pipes and cough smoke onto them, and the three collapse unconscious and begin to have strange prophetic mapleweed visions.

Meanwhile Bildo is watching all this happen under the water and another giant spider appears and wraps the unconscious heroes up in webbing and the druids place them on the spiders back as it heads up the tunnel. Bildo then emerges from the water and slashes at them with his longsword until they are able to blow some smoke in his face too and he falls down into dreamland. They all awaken naked, without their armor or weapons tied to a dead

tree outside the cave. As they bust themselves free, the giant spider comes for them and they must defeat it bare handed. They hear drumming in the distance from the druid camp after they find their belongings behind some bushes along with a bunch of other weapons and armor discarded there. Casious says this place is familiar to him and states that it is not far from the tunnel that he used to escape from the Legion of Lavos. If they can make it to Hinon to get some supplies they can then head to the underground city. Sweaty wants to take revenge and kill the druids for what they did and throws another of his fuzzy balls and this time it turns into a lion. And now the debate begins. To take on the druids or sneak away to the town of Hinon.

Behind the Curtain Episode 10

This one I gave them time to try to identify their new treasure. Casious understands the words on the wooden box but is afraid to speak them or some demon might come out. The box is actually a magical boat that when you say the activation words, it folds out into a small boat that holds 8 people or a big boat that holds 20. I thought I was being a little too obvious by making the trigger words "Floatie" and "Big Floatie," but I guess not. The whole thing with the druids was not what I had planned for them. It was an encounter that I had written for them to possibly go to at one point, but I figured that since they burned the tunnel up it would alert the people who use that tunnel. I was expecting them to actually figure out that the boat box turns into a boat that they could take down the underground river to find some underwater ruins. Instead I decided to have them go back up to the surface and continue on to Hinon.

Episode 11: Have you heard of Hínon? People are dying to get there!

As our heroes are discussing what to do, they notice that the drumming stops from the encampment. They send Farluck over to silently investigate and he reports that all the druids are dead. They start walking toward Hínon keeping an eye out for whatever killed the druids. Bildo shouts out as a crossbow bolt sticks into his back and an assassin jumps out to take down the party. The lion jumps at him but misses high and the assassin cuts him up and takes a slice at Sweaty until the party can overtake him. He does have sketches of each of them with their names on it. They then continue on to Hínon. The terrain is starting to turn a grayish color with dying trees and fading grasses that is getting worse the closer they get, and the smell of death is thickening the air.

They come across a worn down shack where a dead woman is walking around inside and starts to attack. She is easily handled, but the idea of a dead person walking around is something terrifying and unheard of. They get closer to the town and notice it is split in half by a fast flowing river. There is a bridge to the other side that is barricaded by debris, but the town on the other side looks inhabited and intact. The town on the heroes side is in shambles. Speaking of shambles, they are greeted by a dozen shambling undead people.

Sweaty cleaves through them with "Sword" and Casious swings his chain mace around to smash into them. As they are finishing with that group, another dozen come up to them with a big undead ogre in the lead. As they keep killing these already dead beings, more keep showing up and they hear some shouts coming from the town across the river as some fire arrows rain down to help their retreat. Sweaty wants to keep fighting them all but is coaxed away by Wexler. Once safely on the other side of the river, they are informed that the Mayor went missing and then their Dragoncrystal started fading and turned gray and that is when the dead from the crypt next to the Crystal started coming and destroyed everything.

Behind the Curtain Episode 11

Last episode was Bill's last episode. He recently got engaged and bought a house so he had a lot of stuff going on and couldn't spend that much time playing a game with us. Totally understand. I still kept him in the story, for a bit, and just had Zig do his rolls. I hadn't mentioned this before in these summaries, but since the second episode, Sweaty kept asking me if there are any apples around because he wants them for his stew, but there are never any apples. In this episode I made it so that the shack that they find the first zombie in has some apples on the counter.... but they are all rotten. I love to play with their emotions. After this episode we take a little break and add Laura's brother Tom, his friend Ashley, and Matt's friend Tim to our party. Find out how Hiron became an undead wasteland in the next thrilling book of The Terror on Talus.