*Chapter 53: Gaylord Faulkner and the Hired Fists*

Rounds 66 – 75

A minute passed, and the cleric and his friends saw no activity. Those inside the keep were keeping it so, and it was clear to the heroes that the denizens’ objectives did not include killing the intruders, but rather keeping them out.

Rumi took the long way around the southern part of the estate, skirting the 40o slope as he approached the tower where he saw the heroes fly. He wasn’t about to miss the next leg of the action.

“Where do you suppose those aarakocra went?” Jinx wondered aloud. “They were posted to guard the area, it seemed, or maybe just squatting?”

“Do we go in after them?” Saradette asked Tore.

He looked at the building for a moment, “We may eventually need to, but at the moment, I am not in a big hurry. Were you ever able to find anything inside the tower?”

Round 76

“I think there are illusory rooms visible through the windows,” Saradette said. Jinx nodded in agreement. “We saw the same thing on the floor with the skeletons. We didn’t check this tower, though.” She peered down into the spiral staircase, seeing nothing of interest.

Round 77

The artificer had gotten the sensation that the conjured skeletons had been deliberately placed in such a way as to push them back towards the illusion of the door. It had felt like a bit of a mousetrap to her, and she was glad to not have to contend with the explosive skeletons that were likely no longer in existence. The gnome was impressed at how powerful the skeletons’ explosions had been relative to the damage they could deal while still existing. She had half a mind to taunt the necropolitan into casting the spell as many times as he had it prepared, then fleeing and waiting for it to expire. She smirked, but knew this would only work maybe one more time at most.

The aarakocra that had been posted here—or perhaps just squatting—were nowhere in sight, and in their stead were circling birds of prey seeking out rodents among the brush.

Rumi emerged from the patch of bushes just west of the tower, and pointed out another human-sized breach in the wall to his immediate south.

A screenshot of a calendar

Description automatically generated

Round 78

As Jinx looked down to see Rumi, she also noticed the tracks along the ground, which could not be as easily discerned from the ground. She pointed the tracks out to Saradette, and they identified the tracks that consistently consisted of three claws in front and one at the back.

“Aarakocra?” Saradette guessed, though the wandering paths suggested that they were made by a grazing animal, or one foraging for bugs.

The morning sun continued to rise prominently in the eastern sky, and the warmth of the moment evaporated the dew atop every brush, shrub, bush, and tree in their vicinity, giving the air a sagey, welcoming scent. A few clouds dotted the otherwise promising, blue sky that would last the day through without an overcast hour. In short, they had all day to crack this egg.

“Unless they have a cleric,” Tore suspected. “They’ll eventually run out of food.”

Round 79

“We’re not waiting that long,” Ada protested.

Tore looked at the others, “Any suggestions on how to get through the door and attack them without having to deal with those skeletons? I can turn them and just let them run, but they need a way out of the room for that to work or we need to draw them outside.”

Round 80

“They were summoned,” Saradette pointed out, “So they’ve probably expired by now.”

“We can zap the door open,” Jinx suggested. Saradette nodded. “The iron hinges will melt, and we might even get the wood to burn.”

Rounds 81 – 82

Tore nodded, “Good then, so long as we stand back to allow the skeletons to emerge I can turn them and send them running. If they go back in you can zap them so the detonate inside the building.”

Both artificers nodded and flexed their gauntleted fingers. “We’re ready.”

Rumi’s past was shrouded in moderate mystery, though he did his best to fill in the gaps with the portions of his biography that could be told. Sex was one of the themes that characterized his youth, though in the more recent decade of his life, his scandals have involved swindle-and-run capers, some of which were orchestrated alongside other hooligans.

He’d been fortunate, perhaps curried the favor of others with his unwittingly handsome features, and his antics had paid off—for the most part. There had been a few incidents that had nearly gotten him and his associates nabbed, but knowing whom to bribe, whom to sucker, and whom to steer clear of, the bard-scribe had made a good run of scores over the span of the late 1360s and early 70s. And now, in the very middle of 1374, there had come to him this opportunity: to seek out a quasi-legendary duo of great renown, and seek out their services. And to boot, the contract to shadow them and document their deeds, maybe share in the glory of the reclaiming of this noble estate.

The human scribe though he heard the other humanoids descending the tower via the circular staircase, though he could not be sure.

Round 83

“Want us to go first?” one of the gnomes asked one of the taller folks.

Tore nodded, “Go ahead and blast the door, then step back. If he sends his skeletons out, I’ll turn them once they clear the doorway so they can flee north.”

Saradette led the way, with Jinx behind her. They moved carefully down the stairs, resolving to open the door at the tower’s base to step outside. Ada followed, and Tore brought up the rear.

Rounds 84 – 85

Walking at a moderate, if not natural, pace, they reached the midsection of the 40’ tower, and found a few sealed crates on that single level before turning their attention back down the spiral staircase.

Rounds 86 – 89

Ignoring those for now, they continued until they exited the tower and positioned themselves about 30’ to 40’ from the south door.

Round 90

“Let’s try electricity first,” Jinx and Saradette blasted the door.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **Rng.** | **Notes** |
| Lightning Bolt | 8d6 Electric | 120’ | melts most metals |
| Lightning Bolt | 6d6 Electric | 120’ | melts most metals |

*Dmg: 27 + 23 = 50 electric.*

*See below.*

Though quite smoky and leopard-dotted in embers, the wooden door remained mostly intact, though its hinges, handle, and all wrought metal accents melted to such a state as to make the door teeter, then fall open outwardly as smoke began to dissipate.

Rumi exclaimed something to himself as he dove back behind some bushes.

The smoke prevented them from seeing inside, but Jinx and Saradette heard movement and humanoid speech with an urgent tone.

Ada readied her bow while Tore held his holy symbol in his shield hand and his rod of defiance ready in his right hand. They both waited for something, or someone, to emerge.

Yurm the Sprinter ensured that his crossbow was at the ready, and stood behind the wall, inches from the doorway’s edge.

Ill-at-Ease held her naginata proudly, resolving to be the first to die in combat should it come to that. Standing behind the wall on the opposite side of the doorway, she made eye contact with the necropolitan.

Standing in the doorway as the smoke dissipated, Gaylord Faulkner waited for a line of sight to one of these assholes trying to get into the boss’ house. He’d cast *clairvoyance* when the heroes had shut the overhead hatch, and had surveyed them from the southernmost point atop the keep until now. As they’d descended the staircase, he’d cast *shield of faith* and *protection from good* upon himself.

As they’d approached, he’d cast *detect thoughts* such that he could now get a pretty good sense of where the two gnomes were standing, and now cast *bear’s endurance* on the sohei warrior.

*Ill-at-Ease gained +4 to Constitution.*

A screenshot of a computer game

Description automatically generated

Round 91

The smoke cleared revealing once again Yurm the Sprinter, though this time he was firing from behind the wall, his torso visible for only a moment as she shot his crossbow, then began to reload it.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character**  (Targeting Jinx) | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Dex Mod+** | **W+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Yurm the Sprinter | Heavy Crossbow +1 | 1d10+1 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 7 | 17 |

*Miss.*

Ill-at-Ease remained in place for the moment.

Gaylord Faulkner smiled and cast *Kelgore’s grave mist [expired on Round 119]*, centering it a few feet from the gnomes’ positions.

*Dmg to Jinx: 5 cold [43/48/].*

*Dmg to Saradette: 2 cold [50/69].*

*Jinx and Saradette succumbed to Fatigue: –2 to Strength and Dexterity.*

The gnomes could see through the mist, but it was causing them harm and weighing them down.

“We can always rebuild this thing,” Jinx snarled as she sent a *fireball* through the door and moved to her right to escape the blast.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **Rng.** | **Notes** |
| Fireball | 6d6 Fire | 400’ + 40’/lvl | 20’ Radius |

*Base dmg to all within AoE: 19 fire.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Save vs.**  *fireball* | **Ranks** | **Roll** | **Result** |
| Ill-at-Ease | Reflex | 13 | 19 | 32 |
| Gaylord Faulkner | Reflex | 3 | 19 | 22 |
| Yurm the Sprinter | Reflex | 13 | 5 | 18 |

*Success, success, success. Dmg taken: 9 fire.*

Saradette launched her own *fireball* and moved to her left to clear the door. “Fire in the hole!”

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **Rng.** | **Notes** |
| Fireball | 8d6 Fire | 400’ + 40’/lvl | 20’ Radius |

*Base dmg to all within AoE: 29 fire.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Save vs.**  *fireball* | **Ranks** | **Roll** | **Result** |
| Ill-at-Ease | Reflex | 3 | 6 | 9 |
| Gaylord Faulkner | Reflex | 3 | 14 | 17 |
| Yurm the Sprinter | Reflex | 13 | 11 | 24 |

*Fail, success, success.*

*Dmg to Ill-at-Ease: 29 fire.*

*Dmg to Gaylord and Yurm: 14 fire.*

“Unholy shit!” one of them remarked inside the house as the non-stone furnishings were set ablaze.

Rumi ran southward until he was almost up against the outer wall.

Tore activated his Barricade Buckler Shield and ducked behind its 5’ shield while Ada followed Jinx and stepped to her right.

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

Round 92

The bodyguards ran up the stairs, while the necropolitan cast *summon monster III*, ready to conjure four more skeletons near one of their now dispersed foes. Standing now where the sohei had just stood, he peered at Jinx and smirked.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Skill** | **Ranks** | **Roll** | **Result** |
| Gaylord Faulkner | Hide | 7 | 15 | 22 |

*See below.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill** | **Rank** | **Ability & Mod.** | **Misc. Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Jinx, Spot** | 4 | **Wis (+1)** | 2 | 7 | 9 | 16 |

*Fail.*

At the top of each staircase, Yurm and Ill-at-Ease each drank a potion of *cure moderate wounds*.

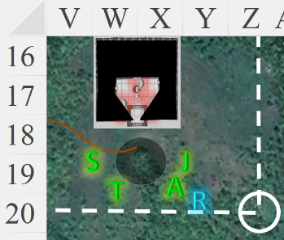
*Yurm gained 8 + 5 = 13 hps.*

*Ill-at-Ease 11 + 5 = 16 hps.*

They could neither see nor hear any foes once the flames from the *fireballs* dissipated.

Tore activated his shield and yelled, “Come out and surrender or we will finish you all!” Ada shifted to her right, trying to get an angle in through the door at whomever was hiding just inside.

Saradette moved further left so she could see around the corner on her side, while Jinx did the same for the right side.



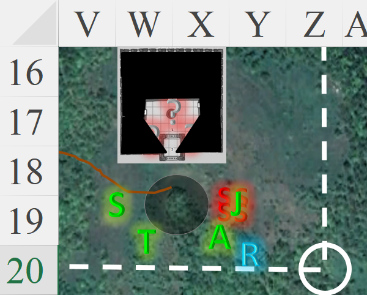
Round 93

A quartet of skeletons appeared around Jinx, and accosted her.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str Mod+** | **Other+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Skeleton, M | Claw 1 | 1d4+1 | 0 | 1 | 2 flank | 3 | 12 | 15 |
| Skeleton, M | Claw 1 | 1d4+1 | 0 | 1 | 2 flank | 3 | **20** | 23 |
| Skeleton, M | Claw 1 | 1d4+1 | 0 | 1 | 2 flank | 3 | **11** | 15 |
| Skeleton, M | Claw 1 | 1d4+1 | 0 | 1 | 2 flank | 3 | **8** | 11 |

*Miss, threat, miss, miss. 1d20 =3 + 3 = 6, not a critical hit. Dmg: 3 + 1 = 4 [39/48].*

They’d slain the ghast nearly 10 minutes ago, and were now about to face off with the remaining squatters of the Adarbrent Estate.



Jinx flew straight up to avoid being blasted by the skeletons.

Saradette also flew straight up and readied her sonic blast, but held her fire for the moment.

As the gnomes flew upwards, Ada backed away from the skeletons.

**[DM assumption]** Meanwhile, Tore smiled, **walked forward a bit to get within 60’**, andheld out his holy symbol and chanted, “Be gone, you abominations, I cast you and your vile imitation of life away!”

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Turning Undead* | |  |
|  | **Max HD Turned** | 12 |
|  | **1d20 Roll** | 13 |
|  | **Turn Check** | 26 |
|  | **2d6 Roll** | 6 |
|  | **Turn Dmg.** | 23 |
|  | **Turns/Day** | 9 |
|  | **Turns Used** | 3 |

The cleric was able to destroy all four skeletons instantly, their retributive negative energy blasting a few dozen feet beneath Jinx.

Seeing the cleric’s power, and determining that the man was—indeed—a cleric, Gaylord nodded, and thought to save him for last unless he got troublesome. He instead cast *summon monster IV*, summoning an allip upon Jinx, whose flesh he found most covet-worthy.



Round 94

The smoke cleared now, and Ada and Tore could see within the house now, though they had no line of sight to anyone.

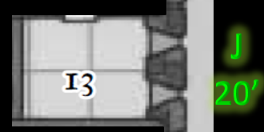
Gaylord cast *hold person* on Ada, hoping to bring her down first.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**  *hold person* | **Rank** | **Ability &**  **Mod.** | **Misc.**  **Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Ada, Will** | **0** | **Wis (+2)** | 0 | 2 | 16 | 18 |

*Success.*

Jinx felt herself succumbing to a *hold person* spell, and did her best to shrug it off.

Since they were close, the two gnomes flew downwards and northwards to their respective closest tower windows and peeked inside again. They were still both looking at fairly identical 10’ x 10’ rooms, each with a door to the north.



Tore reached inward and began chanting the words to a spell in Sylvan: << By Lurue’s power, I call forth allies of good, warriors of the wild! >>. As he cast the spell, he picked a spot inside the building, just inside the door.

*Summon Nature’s Ally IV, conjuring 2 + 1 = 3 Celestial wolverines, to manifest after Tore’s turn on the next round.*

Ada stood with an arrow ready, watching for anyone to come into view.

Saradette, the lead arcanist in this group, was beginning to piece together the elements of their main rival’s prowess.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill** | **Rank** | **Ability**  **& Mod.** | **Misc.**  **Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Saradette, Spellcraft** | 0 | **Int (+3)** | 0 | 3 | ?? | ?? |

*See below.*

An allip appeared south of Jinx, and babbled its way towards her, flailing as if about to slash at her.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**  Babble | **Rank** | **Ability**  **& Mod.** | **Misc.**  **Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Jinx, Will** | **5** | **Wis (+1)** | 2 combat | 8 | 14 | 22 |

*Success. Effect negated.*

While it was clear that the arbalist and sohei were probably hired fists with narrowly focused martial skills and an incentive to survive to see another day of would-be mercenary work, Saradette could tell that the necropolitan was a serious adversary to contend with, and he displayed a more-than-passing interest in holding down this fort. Noting the conjuration of the allip, she could guess he had access to spells of at least middling scope, and thought to tread lightly when confronting him directly, which would likely be sooner than later.

Getting within 30’, it sped its charge, and would reach her within seconds.

Rumi saw Ada nearly reaching the southern wall of the estate, and nodded to her as he took a few notes to elaborate on later.

A screenshot of a computer game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 95

Saradette went to Jinx’s aid, flying counterclockwise around the tower to come up behind the creature. “We have to kill that necromancer, but be careful,” she called to Tore as she zipped past. Simultaneously, Jinx flew counterclockwise around the tower, fleeing the allip’s touch as quickly as she could fly.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**  Babble | **Rank** | **Ability**  **& Mod.** | **Misc.**  **Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Saradette, Will** | **5** | **Wis (+1)** | 2 combat | 8 | 3 | 11 |

*Fail, but HDs are too high for ability to work, so effect negated.*

Saradette felt the buzzing babble tickling her ears, but steeled her nerves against the mediocre magic.

Three Celestial wolverines manifested inside the building and attacked the only humanoid in sight: a woman in a white, bloodstained dress, crouching in the northeastern corner.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack**  **Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str**  **Mod+** | **Other+** | **Total**  **Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Celestial Wolverine 1 | Claw 1 | 1d4+2 | 2 | 2 | 2 flank | 6 | ?? | ?? |
| Celestial Wolverine 2 | Claw 1 | 1d4+2 | 2 | 2 | 2 flank | 6 | ?? | ?? |
| Celestial Wolverine 3 | Claw 1 | 1d4+2 | 2 | 2 | 2 flank | 6 | ?? | ?? |

*Result unknown.*

A woman within screamed something as the wolverines mauled her. “Noooo! Stooop!”

*Probably +4 to AC from being fully defensive.*

Tore still had no line of sight to this, but had noted the direction towards which the wolverines had lunged. Ada, on the other hand, could barely see this as the last of the smoke emanated from the *fireballed* living room and entry. Two of the three wolverines were in her line of sight, as were the woman’s legs.

Tore and Ada both nodded. They were both preparing to charge into the room once Tore’s summoned minions began attacking and distracting their opponents.

The allip charged and swung at Saradette.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Dex**  **Mod+** | **Total**  **Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Allip | Incorporeal Touch | 1d4 Wis | 2 | 1 | 3 | 13 | 16 |

*Hit. Dmg: 2 Wis [expired on Round 102].*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strength** | 6 |
| **Dexterity** | 14 |
| **Constitution** | 13 |
| **Intelligence** | 16 |
| **Wisdom** | 10 |
| **Charisma** | 11 |

A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 96

Saradette and Jinx, who flew around the corner, each triggered a double strength *sonic burst* and blasted the allip.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **Rng.** | **Notes** |
| Saradette, Horizikaul’s Boom | 4d4 Sonic | 25’ + 2½’/lvl | Will DC 14 or deafened for 1d4 rounds |
| Jinx, Horizikaul’s Boom | 3d4 Sonic | 25’ + 2½’/lvl | Will DC 14 or deafened for 1d4 rounds |

*Dmg from Saradette’s Boom: 13 x 2 blasters x 1½ Empowered = 39 sonic.*

*Dmg from Jinx’s Boom: 7 x 2 blasters x 1½ Empowered = 21 sonic.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Save vs.**  Deafening | **Ranks** | **Roll** | **Result** |
| Allip | Will | 4 | 17 | 21 |
| Allip | Will | 4 | 3 | 7 |

*Success, fail. Allip deafened.*

The allip dematerialized.

Gaylord cast *negative energy burst*.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Total**  **Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Gaylord Faulkner | Bypass Spell Resistance | 8 | 4 | 12 |
| Gaylord Faulkner | Bypass Spell Resistance | 8 | 14 | 22 |
| Gaylord Faulkner | Bypass Spell Resistance | 8 | 17 | 25 |

*Success, success, success.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Save vs.**  *negative energy burst* | **Ranks** | **Roll** | **Result** |
| Celestial wolverine | Will | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| Celestial wolverine | Will | 2 | 6 | 8 |
| Celestial wolverine | Will | 2 | 20 | 22 |

*Fail, fail, success. Wolverine 3 saved for ½ damage.*

*Dmg to Wolverine 1: 1 + 7 = 8 negative energy.*

*Dmg to Wolverine 2: 7 + 7 = 14 negative energy.*

*Dmg to Wolverine 3: ½ x (4 + 7) = 5 negative energy.*

Tore and Ada witnessed a black, silent explosion within the room.

Tore rushed through the *Kelgore’s grave mist* towards the opening, prepared to attack the woman inside.

*Tore succumbed to Fatigue: –2 to Strength and Dexterity.*

*Dmg to Tore: 2 cold [89/100].*

Ada followed Tore, arrow nocked and ready to fire.

*Ada succumbed to Fatigue: –2 to Strength and Dexterity.*

*Dmg to Ada: 5 cold [73/81].*

As Tore went towards the woman, Ada looked around the room for any other threats.

Seeing only the three wolverines attacking the wounded woman who tried to kick them away, Tore and Ada had only time to think about what they would do next.

A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 97

Saradette and Jinx flew to the east window on the second floor and peeked inside, still seeing nothing stirring within that tiny room.

A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

With the woman continuing for plead for her life, Tore mentally called off the wolverines, having them stand down, but still standing in front of the woman. He then cast *nimbus of light* upon himself as Ada began to look around the room for any signs of where the others went (Track).

*Tore gained 30’ illumination, and a one-time touch attack that would dispel the illumination.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tore, Skill** | **Rank** | **Ability & Mod.** | **Misc. Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Knowledge: Arcana** | 3 | **Int (+1)** | 0 | 4 | 13 | 17 |
| **Spellcraft** | 7 | **Int (+1)** | 2 | 10 | 8 | 18 |

*See below.*

The cleric then discerned the casting of the frightened woman’s spell: *dimension door*. And with this, the wolverines were left to growl and snarl at no one.

A screenshot of a computer game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 98

Catching them by surprise, Yurm the Sprinter and Ill-at-Ease attacked the two artificers from the rooftop. Yurm shot a bolt at Jinx as the sohei flew unto the gnomes, an ability she hadn’t boasted before.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Dex**  **Mod+** | **W+** | **Other+** | **Total**  **Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Yurm the Sprinter | Heavy Crossbow +1 | 1d10+1 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 2 height | 12 | 14 | 26 |

*Hit. Dmg: 6 + 1 + 2 charge = 9 [30/48].*

Ill-at-Ease targeted Saradette instead.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str**  **Mod+** | **Dex**  **Mod+** | **W+** | **Other+** | **Total**  **Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Ill-at-Ease | Doom Burst Naginata, 10’ | 1d10+4 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 charge  2 height | 16 | 12 | 28 |

*Hit. Dmg: 8 + 4 + 2 charge = 14 [36/69].*

Saradette and Jinx each fired a pair of sonic blasts at their respective assailants (not Empowered).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **Rng.** | **Notes** |
| Saradette, Horizikaul’s Boom | 4d4 Sonic | 25’ + 2½’/lvl | Will DC 14 or deafened for 1d4 rounds |
| Saradette, Horizikaul’s Boom | 4d4 Sonic | 25’ + 2½’/lvl | Will DC 14 or deafened for 1d4 rounds |
| Jinx, Horizikaul’s Boom | 3d4 Sonic | 25’ + 2½’/lvl | Will DC 14 or deafened for 1d4 rounds |
| Jinx, Horizikaul’s Boom | 3d4 Sonic | 25’ + 2½’/lvl | Will DC 14 or deafened for 1d4 rounds |

*Dmg to Ill-at-Ease: 11 + 8 = 19 Sonic.*

*Dmg to Yurm: 7 + 8 = 15 Sonic.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Save vs.**  *Horizikaul’s boom* | **Ranks** | **Roll** | **Result** |
| Ill-at-Ease | Will | 9 | 10 | 19 |
| Yurm the Sprinter | Will | 13 | 5 | 18 |

*Success, success. Deafening effect negated.*

The wolverines turned to Tore, and tilted their heads sideways in unison, one of them asking, “Errr?”

With the target of the wolverines attacks gone, and nothing else in sight on the lower level, Tore motioned to Ada to follow him up the right-hand steps. Tore moved with shield in one hand and Rod of Defiance in the other. He also called to the wolverines both verbally and mentally, “Come, follow us.”

Round 99

The diehard Yurm returned to the hatch that led downward, and reloaded his heavy crossbow.

From a distance of 10’, Ill-at-Ease full-attacked Ada in midair.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str Mod+** | **W+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Ill-at-Ease | Doom Burst Naginata, 10’ | 1d10+4 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 12 | 8 | 20 |
| Ill-at-Ease | Naginata, 2nd Attack | 1d10+4 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 10 |

*Miss, miss.*

The sohei was surprised that neither of her slashing attacks hit the alacritous artificer.

Downstairs, the woman was now nowhere in sight, and Tore and Ada heard the struggles of their gnomish friends just outside.

Ada and Tore made it to the second floor, noting that the hatch was open.

Jinx threw herself into a roll, taking advantage of her flight ability to dodge the attacks. She snarled and fired an electrical charge at her assailant’s chest. “Fry, bitch!”

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **Rng.** | **Notes** |
| Lightning Bolt | 6d6 Electric | 120’ | Ref DC 16 for ½; melts most metals |

*Base Dmg: 24.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Save vs.**  *lightning bolt* | **Ranks** | **Roll** | **Result** |
| Ill-at-Ease | Reflex | 3 | 7 | 10 |

*Fail. Full damage taken.*

The woman was barely alive now, and scorched hairless from the inside out... without so much as an eyelash unsinged. She fled eastward like the aarakocras had. Had Jinx had a melee weapon in her hand, she would have had the opportunity to swing at her once as she flew away.

Saradette lifted up to the tower’s top and shot a *fireball* into the floor at the crossbow wielder’s feet. She ducked back down to avoid the blast.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **Rng.** | **Notes** |
| Fireball | 8d6 Fire | 400’ + 40’/lvl | 20’ Radius |

*Base Dmg: 42 fire.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Save vs.**  *fireball* | **Ranks** | **Roll** | **Result** |
| Yurm the Sprinter | Reflex | 13 | 1 | 14 |

*Fail. Full damage taken.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**  *fireball (indirect)* | **Rank** | **Ability**  **& Mod.** | **Misc.**  **Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Ada, Reflex** | **10** | **Dex (+2)** | 2 | 14 | 4 | 18 |
| **Tore, Reflex** | **4** | **Dex (+1)** | 0 | 5 | 8 | 13 |

*Success, fail.*

*Dmg to Ada: ½ x 3 = 1 fire [29/48].*

*Dmg to Tore: 5 fire [84/100].*

Rendered about as hairless as his fleeing associate, the charred man ducked back down the hatch, leaving it open.

Round 100

“Oh, why don’t you just dieeee!” Yurm the Sprinter shot a bolt at Tore, not even realizing that this would likely be his last act as a mortal.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Dex Mod+** | **W+** | **Other+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Yurm the Sprinter | Heavy Crossbow +1 | 1d10+1 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 2 height | 12 | 9 | 21 |

*Miss.*

Outside, Jinx aimed at the fleeing woman and zapped her again. “I don’t think so,” she muttered as her gauntled misfired, causing an *ice storm* to manifest where the fugitive now was.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **Rng.** | **Notes** |
| Ice Storm | 3d6+2d6 Cold | 400’ + 40’/lvl | 20’ Radius |

*Damage: 18 + 7 cold = 25.*

The ice shards rained down on her, and cut her up, leaving ground meat on the ground.

Jinx shook her blaster, wondering what the mishap was about.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill** | **Rank** | **Ability**  **& Mod.** | **Misc.**  **Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Jinx, Spellcraft** | 0 | **Int (+4)** | 0 | 4 | 1 – 5 | ?? |

*See below*

“Hm... wild magic zone for sure over there,” she warned Saradette.

Saradette hadn’t seen what happened, as she was facing west now. She landed on the tower roof and cautiously made her way to the hatch. She peeked quickly and drew back, having caught a glimpse of the arbalist now at the bottom of the ladder.

Yurm heard the lid above opening and closing, and thought to make a final stand as he took a measure of the cleric at the top of the staircase.

Tore beheld Yurm, saw the bolt stick in the wall behind him, and charge-attacked the man, swinging his Rod of Defiance (Heavy Mace +1) at his foe. Tore also mentally called the wolverines to his side in case Yurm put up more of a fight than he expected.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Rod of Defiance | 1d8 | +3 +1  +2 charge | 1 + 2  charge | x2 | Bludgeon | 8.0 | +17 | **20** | 37 |

*Threat. 1d20 = 15 + 17 =32, critical hit. Dmg: 4 + 3 + 1 + 2 = 10.*

The rod connected with the man’s head, causing a concussion. The man passed out and started bleeding to death.

At the midpoint of the staircase, Ada came up the rest of the steps and moved to the side, seeing Yurm fall before her mentor and spiritual advisor.

Still at the bottom of the staircase, the wolverines stayed put.

Rounds 101 – 102

As far as they could tell, the keep’s denizens were nowhere to be seen.

“Who was that woman?” Tore wondered standing by the hatch in the silence of the moment.

Outside, birds chirped as the *ice storm* dissipated.

Tore called out, “Saradette, Jinx, are you both alright? I think we have finished them off, though the woman downstairs has teleported somewhere, not far.”

Saradette opened the roof hatch. “That wispy creature did something to me, but I’m okay otherwise. She looked up as Jinx appeared over the parapet. “Jinx is fine, as well.”

Ada began searching the area, listening at the doors and checking for any kind of traps.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill** | **Rank** | **Ability & Mod.** | **Misc. Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Ada, Search** | 10 | **Int (+2)** | 0 | 12 | 11 – 15 | ?? |

*See below.*

Tore warned Ada about the illusory wall to her immediate north, which they’d identified when they came down the hatch, called the wolverines to his side, and thanked them for their assistance before dismissing them and ending the spell.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**  *silent image*  **+ Skill** | **Rank** | **Ability**  **& Mod.** | **Misc.**  **Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Ada, Will** | **0** | **Wis (+2)** | 0 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| **Ada, Spot** | 10 | **Wis (+2)** | 0 | 12 | 12 | 24 |

*Fail, success.*

She could see a figment before her, but it was difficult for her to discern the real wall and door from the illusory one just in front of it.

A screen shot of a computer screen

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Rounds 103 – 107

“I think there is an area of wild magic here,” Jinx said as she lightly touched down next to her cousin. “The gauntlet fired ice particles instead of the electrical charge.”

Saradette blinked. “I don’t know if wild magic would affect these. They aren’t at all magical. Maybe the mechanism malfunctioned?”

“We can check,” Jinx replied, flexing her fingers experimentally, but carefully as to not trigger the devices.

“Tore, should we come down, or watch from up here?”

Tore looked up, “Keep a lookout for any other surprises. I’ll yell if we find anything down here.”

They took an inventory of their health.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **TAC** | **FFAC** | **AC** | **Melee** | **Ranged** | **Fire** | **Cold** | **Electric** | **Evil/ Neg** | **Good/ Pos** | **Chaos** | **Total Damage** | **Healing** | **HPs** | **Current HPs** |
| **Ada** | **16** | **18** | **20** | 3 |  |  | 5 |  |  | *Imm* |  | 8 |  | 81 | 73 |
| **Jinx** | **13** | **21** | **23** | 4 | 9 | 1 | 5 |  |  | *Imm* | *Imm* | 19 |  | 48 | 29 |
| **Saradette** | **13** | **21** | **23** | 14 |  |  | 2 | *R30* | 40 | *Imm* | *Imm* | 56 | 23 | 69 | 36 |
| **Tore** | **13** | **21** | **23** |  |  | 5 | 2 | *R20* | 9 | *Imm* | *Imm* | 16 |  | 100 | 84 |

Rounds 108 – 110

The air outside was still, and the space inside the house was stiller still. Tore and Ada sighed for a moment as the threat of enemies in their midst was now absent.

Outside, the two gnome artificers surveyed the land, seeing no one stirring except for Rumi, who gave a hand gesture indicating that he was alright.

Jinx grinned at Saradette and spoke in Gnomish. << Yell, or scream? >>

Saradette grinned back. << With them, there probably isn’t a difference. >> She looked down and switched to Common. “We will keep watch up here.”

Rounds 111 – 115

Rumi stayed in the bushes, wondering if the threat was over. It seemed like less resistance than his benefactor had told him to anticipate.

“We still need to figure out what those illusory walls are,” Saradette said.

Tore cast *sanctuary [expired on Round 128]* upon himself and then climbed back down into the house.

Round 116

Tore walked over to the illusory wall and stepped through, shield and Rod or Defiance ready to face any foe. Ada watched from the rooftop, peering through the open hatch, ready to either follow Tore through the wall or fire at anything he chased out of the hidden room. Ada was as far from the illusionary wall as possible to give herself time to react.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**  *prismatic wall*  DC 22 | **Rank** | **Ability**  **& Mod.** | **Misc.**  **Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** | **Notes** |
| **Tore, Reflex** | **4** | **Dex (+1)** | 0 | 5 | 11 | 16 | Red |
| **Tore, Reflex** | **4** | **Dex (+1)** | 0 | 5 | 7 | 12 | Orange |
| **Tore, Reflex** | **4** | **Dex (+1)** | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | Yellow |
| **Tore, Fortitude** | **10** | **Con (+1)** | 1 | 12 | 19 | 31 | Green |
| **Tore, Fortitude** | **10** | **Con (+1)** | 1 | 12 | 20 | 32 | Blue |
| **Tore, Will** | **7** | **Wis (+3)** | 0 | 10 | 15 | 25 | Indigo |
| **Tore, Will** | **7** | **Wis (+3)** | 0 | 10 | 11 | 21 | Violet |

*Fail, fail, fail, success, success, success, fail.*

*Dmg: 20 fire + 40 acid + 80 electric = 140. Partial electric damage negated.*

*Con dmg: 1d6.*

*Petrification and insanity negated.*

*Tore’s body was sent to another plane.*

As soon as Tore’s hand turned the handle and pushed the door open 1 inch, Ada witnessed the horrendous sight of Tore’s body being burned, corroded, and electrified at the same time, followed by his complete disappearance.

Without a line of sight, Saradette and Jinx asked simultaneously, “What?”

A screenshot of a game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Saradette and Jinx went down to see what had happened, seeing no trace of Tore, save a few splatters of blood where he had stood.

Round 117

Saradette took a breath while she blinked away sudden tears. Tore was her friend, and losing him so horribly was more than she could take all at once.

Jinx noticed her distress and stepped away to give her cousin a moment while she carefully examined the area around the wall. “There’s no way any sane person would leave this thing on all the time. There must be a way to shut it off.”

Ada watched in horror as Tore was utterly destroyed in front of her. She couldn’t move or react for several seconds. The thought of joining him crossed her mind as she thought of throwing herself against the illusionary wall. Those thoughts faded those as anger and a need for revenge replaced those darker thoughts of personal destruction. She would make the person that created that spell pay and anyone that was allied with that person would feel her vengeance.

Ada stood back, giving Jinx room to try and figure out a way around the spell.

Rounds 118 – 126

Jinx saw nothing that could have been used to trigger the activation of the spell, but they’d only searched about a third of the house so far.

“Keep looking,” Jinx growled. “It has to be here somewhere.”

Saradette joined in the search, where she also looked for any other traps.

They entered the room to the east, then spotted a secret door to the north. Carefully, they pushed and slid it open, revealing the room with the window that Jinx and Saradette had seen from the outside. Taking the door to the north, they entered a hallway with more doors, and two flights of stairs, one of them being beyond the *prismatic wall’s* area of effect. As she studied the wall that would have blinded a lesser hero just by looking at it, she noted that it was a Shaped effect, as it did not conform to standard dimensions. The caster must have been formidable to have Shaped and rendered such a high-level spell Permanent.

A screen shot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Rounds 127 – 153

Ada considered opening the door to her north, while Saradette thought about taking the stairs.

“We need to stay together,” Saradette called to the others. “Let’s go up top and work our way down.”

Ada followed Saradette’s lead, waiting before opening any doors. She checked the nearest one for any kind of trap or anything.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill** | **Rank** | **Ability**  **& Mod.** | **Misc.**  **Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Search** | 10 | **Int (+2)** | 0 | 12 | 6 – 10 | ?? |

*See below.*

She saw nothing out of place, and was now looking for the same telltale signs of a secret door in every portion of the walls around them. Jinx and Saradette—also wily-eyed—didn’t see any obvious efforts to ensnare or otherwise harm them.

“Let’s see about these doors, but be careful,” Saradette said as she pointed to the nearest door. She checked it closely, even though Ada had just checked it, and found nothing trappy.

“Stand back,” Saradette warned as she tried the door.

Saradette beheld a room with a desk, a chair, a bookshelf, and not much else as far as furnishings. The skull of a halfling was mounted on a plaque on the northern wall, and on the desk were parchments and books, as well as a quill with dried ink on the tip.

Ada also searched the room, careful to check any drawers or chests for traps before opening them.

They took their time [taking 10 on all relevant checks] searching the area for any other nasty traps, but found the rest of the area east of the *prismatic wall* to be safe, though icky things like teeth and cicada carapaces adorned the bookshelves and desk along with the papers and other useful items.

There were no chests, but the desk’s four drawers contained the following:

* Top left (shallow): keys, dagger, poison, flares, personal hygiene tools, tindertwigs
* Top right (shallow): the skulls and other bones of small animals, spell components of a mostly necromantic nature
* Bottom left (deep): flint & steel, Small character’s cooking utensils, trail rations
* Bottom right (deep): crystal ball, quills, ink vials, parchments (correspondence and/or poetry?), compass

Saradette handed the keys to Ada. “Let’s check the next room.”

She used the key to open the locked door to the adjacent room. The door creaked open, and an unlit storage room was revealed, containing a half-dozen suits of armor, and about three times that many weapons and other items, all of which looked nice, surely, but nothing as fancy as what she and her comrades were donning.

Souls had likely been taken before or after their belongings were confiscated, and though the bodies were probably long gone, or used in some nefarious necromancy, their belongings collected dust in this uneventful room.

A screen shot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Saradette stood a few feet from the *prismatic wall*, knowing to steer clear of it. Jinx joined her and Ada, asking, “Anything useful in here?”

“Probably to folks starting out,” Saradette shook her head. Saradette went back into the main room and then over to the door at the hall’s other side. She checked it, and then opened it, finding a candle-lit room with a single chest inside, and nothing else.

A screenshot of a computer game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Saradette went back to find Ada and Jinx. “I found a chest in another room, but I can’t get to the other side of this hall. Maybe we can take these stairs?”

They agreed, and found themselves downstairs in front of the continuation of the *prismatic wall* into the ground floor.

A screen shot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 150

Saradette led the way, checking all four doors on their side of the prismatic wall.

These were sleeping quarters for Yurm [J4]—it looked like—and possibly Ill-at-Ease [M4], or a larger woman with a massive wardrobe. Each of these rooms had a wooden chest with an ornate lock.

To the south, a much sparser room with only a cot and a chair made it evident that no one had rested here in a while. Jinx could see parts of the *prismatic wall* jutting out just fractions of an inch beyond the wall to her west. The room to the southeast had a secret threshold similar to the one on the second floor.

A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Saradette passed through the secret door and made her way to the main entrance.

The room behind the secret entrance had the largest of the chests—about 6’ wide and 3’ deep and tall.

A screenshot of a video game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Saradette checked the room to the left – carefully searching for traps before trying the door. Therein, she found a queer-looking switch painted in the same rainbow hues that the *prismatic wall* glowed.

A person in a garment

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

There was a painting of the many-fingered necropolitan they’d chased off, as well as of a woman that looked like the woman that Ada had seen in the entry earlier.

A person in a black robe

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 160

Saradette went to the door. “I found a switch here that might control the spell. You two may want to wait outside, just in case.”

Not sure of whether that meant outside the room or the entire keep, they hung out just outside the door.

A grid with numbers and letters

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Saradette crossed her arms. “Outside means out in the sunshine, people.”

Round 161

Jinx grinned. “Ah, okay. Come on Ada.” She walked out the main door and watched the proceedings from there.

Once they were away from the spell, Saradette flipped the switch.

The switch turned eastward with an uneventful click. Nothing happened, at least not to Saradette. She went into the entry and turned south to see the ladies outside, and turned back north to see that the illusory wall was dispelled, and the door that Tore opened now hung ajar, revealing no trace of the *prismatic wall* behind it.

If their suspicions were correct, they’d effectively deactivated two Permanent spell effects, and it stood to reason that flipping the switch again would reactivate both. There weren’t too many ways of achieving that outcome in such a controlled manner.

A screenshot of a video game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 162

Saradette stepped up to the doorway and looked inside without entering, seeing a mostly empty room, save a portrait of a woman that Saradette identified as Lady Erewyn Adarbrent, and an elaborate console

A person in a garment

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

“Maybe we should lock that switch,” Jinx said as she walked back into the house and up behind Saradette.

A screenshot of a game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Rounds 213 – 229

They scoured each room, upstairs and down, and those past the *prismatic sphere* had far more contents than the others.

Minutes passed, and Ada and Jinx began to piece together things as they went through each room, reading a few parchments and documents along the way. There was a man named Whisper back of this fiendish takeover of the Adarbrent Estate, and his posse was known as the Rumors.

The room he’d been using would reflect his status and personality. Based on the alpha script on the document Jinx had filched, he was Netherese. A twin-sized bed with black silk curtains accompanied a mahogany desk with a locked drawer, and a one-person wardrobe. The room is lit by everburning candles that emitted a dim, eerie glow.

Saradette and company found:

* A shadow cloak (Cloak of Elvenkind, but with a shadowy aesthetic).
* A journal detailing Whisper’s plans to expand his influence in Cormyr, including notes on the Adarbrent family and their keep.
* A locked chest (easily undone by Jinx) containing heirloom jewelry (worth 1,500 gp) and a *+1 defending dagger* with the Adarbrent crest.

The clothing and accoutrements of a goliath were strewn across the bed in the next room, as well as a partial breastplate and gorget appropriately sized for such a humanoid. A sturdy stone bedframe with a fur-covered mattress and a full-length mirror were the prominent features of this room, whose walls were adorned with a displacer beast’s head, a broken shield with an enemy’s insignia, and a few other trophies.

They found:

* A set of masterwork full plate armor in the corner.
* A knight’s insignia (a brooch that grants a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks with other knights or nobles).
* A book of melancholic poetry and musings on undeath.
* A map of Cormyr with markings indicating other locations of interest.
* A tapestry depicting a famous Adarbrent ancestor in battle, slightly torn but salvageable.
* A locked cabinet containing a *+1 light fortification breastplate* and a *ring of counterspells* (currently empty).

Another room—a makeshift study—was lined shelves on which rested books, scrolls, and magical paraphernalia. A cluttered desk covered in parchment and inkwells, bookshelves filled with tomes, and a small bed tucked into a corner. The room smelled of old paper and incense. A journal written in an alphabet not known to the heroes was open to the last page with an entry.

They also found a few magic or precious items along the way.

* A wand of scorching ray (7th level, 15 charges).
* A deck of illusions (missing a few cards).
* A music box that played a haunting melody when opened.
* A silver hairbrush with the Adarbrent crest, now used by Myrtle.
* A jeweled necklace (worth 750 gp) hidden in a secret compartment in the vanity.
* A +1 rapier with a jeweled hilt.
* A potion of cure moderate wounds.
* A set of thieves’ tools.
* A silver pocket watch (worth 250 gp) engraved with the Adarbrent crest.
* A set of silver cutlery (worth 500 gp) engraved with the Adarbrent crest.
* A painting of the Adarbrent family estate, slightly damaged.
* A jade statuette (worth 300 gp) of a lion, symbolizing courage.
* A golden locket (worth 200 gp) with a picture of an Adarbrent ancestor.
* Artwork and tapestries depicting the family’s history.
* Jewelry and trinkets (e.g., signet rings, brooches).
* Books and scrolls on Cormyr’s history or the family’s lineage.
* Magical items that the squatters couldn’t identify or use (e.g., a *helm of comprehend languages and read magic*).

A screenshot of a computer game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

“This gives us money to run the place for a while,” Saradette observed. She looked to Ada. “Is there anything here that you want?”

They placed the liberated items in the middle of the floor in the main room, divvying up the best stuff.

Ada took the dagger, flares, five tindertwigs, and the compass from the desk with 4 drawers, and rom the large chest she took the Shadowy Cloak (Cloak of Elvenkind) +1 Defending Dagger. “Never seen one of these before,” she’d only heard of the shadowy properties of such a cloak. She also fancied the +1 Rapier and the knight’s insignia, stuffing it into Jinx’s haversack since she lacked one herself.

“Oh, you should really get one, girl,” one woman told the other. “They’re so handy!”

Saradette took the *cure moderate wounds* potion, and Jinx took the helm of *comprehend languages*.

Whisper cast every long- and medium-term buff at his avail, ending with *enlarge person [expired in 14 minutes]* on himself, and dismounted.

*Whisper gained +2 to Strength,–2 to Dexterity, and –1 to attacks and AC*

A screenshot of a game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 230

Saradette and the other ladies then heard something outside, not a voice, but maybe the chinking of chainmail budging. Could it be Rumi?

When they heard the noise, they both stepped outside to see what was happening.

Whisper came into view as they set foot outside the open double-doors. He was an unfamiliar, yet familiar-looking shade with the arms of a fighter and the spells of a sorcerer. A quasit the likeness and size of which Saradette had never seen flew above him and out of her line of sight.

A person in a garment

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

“Aw, what?” the shade asked, having readied a hostile action against the intruders that the aarakocra had told him about. He cast *acid fog [expired on Round 244]* and cursed the mothers of the trespassers in some nefarious language.

*Dmg to Ada: 7 acid [66/81].*

*Dmg to Jinx: 6 acid [23/48].*

*Dmg to Saradette: 7 acid [29/69].*

*PCs incur penalties: Speed is 5’; –2 penalty on all melee attacks/damage.*

*Ranged weapon attacks are ineffective inside fog.*

“Close them in,” he commanded, and Saradette heard the doors slam shut, now unable to see through the fog.

A screenshot of a video game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 231

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Group** | **Initiative** | **Roll** | **Modified Roll** | **Speed** |
| Aarakocra | 3 | 7 | 16 | 23 | 60’ |
| Ada | 1 | 2 | 20 | 22 | 30’ |
| Residents | 3 | 2 | 16 | 18 | 30’ - 40’ |
| Saradette | 1 | 3 | 12 | 15 | 20’ |
| Jinx | 1 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 30’ |

An aarakocra flew up high, about 200’ above the keep now.

Ada drew the rapier, holding it in her right hand and her bow in her left. She then moved to her left, intent on getting to the stairs if she could find them.

*Dmg to Ada: 11 acid [55/81].*

Whisper heard spellcasting inside, and murmured, “Tenacious buggers.” He then cast *enlarge person.*

*+2 to Strength,–2 to Dexterity,–1 to attacks and AC*

*Spell Resistance 25*

*DR: 5/fire, cold and acid*

*Flying*

His quasit flew around scouting the area.

Lady Asunder [invisible] drank a potion of *bear’s endurance [expired in 5 minutes]*.

*+4 to Con; +30 hps.*

*+2 to Strength,–2 to Dexterity,–1 to attacks and AC*

*Critical hit reciprocity (reciprocal bracers)*

*Critical/hit shrug (formless vest)*

*Invisible*

*Flying*

Positioning himself behind the wall by the front entrance, Grim Gerome cast *call lightning*, conjuring 10 handheld lightning bolts into his right hand.

*Invisible*

*Detecting magic*

*Seeing invisibility*

*Flying*

Waiting at the southeastern corner of the building, Myrtle Eyes cast *summon undead IV [expired on Round 244]*.

*Invisible*

*Flying*

Septimania cast *dragonskin [expired in 120 minutes]*.

*Invisible*

*Flying*

Saradette and Jinx activated their *dimension stride* boots and teleported sixty feet straight up, now seeing the buffed battle sorcerer remove his hood to display a gray, bald head looking up at them, and pointing upward, saying, “Oy! Get the fregs off this plane!”

A black square with green text

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

A screenshot of a game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 232

Ada continued to move at maximum speed.

A close up of words

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

*Dmg to Ada: 7 acid [48/81].*



Whisper flew up 60’ and targeted the little artificers hovering 20’ above the rooftop like hummingbirds, and cast *necrotic skull bomb [DC 21]*, hurling a human skull infused with nasty vibes at them, and smiling as it exploded where the magic guided it.

*Spell Resistance 25*

*DR: 5/fire, cold and acid*

*Flying*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ySave vs.**  *necrotic skull bomb* | **Rank** | **Ability**  **& Mod.** | **Misc.**  **Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Jinx, Fortitude** | **3** | **Con (+0)** | 0 | 3 | 11 | 14 |
| **Saradette, Fortitude** | **3** | **Con (+1)** | 0 | 4 | 17 | 21 |

*Fail, success. Jinx gained 3 negative levels: –3 attacks, saves, and checks; loses 3 Hit Dice and 15 hps; loses use of Lightning Bolt, Fireball, and Ice Storm powers [8/48].*

A screenshot of a computer game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Once the bomb went off, Typhoid flew up to the gnomes but did not have enough time to attack yet.

Then, unexpectedly, a floating disc vaguely familiar to Saradette materialized over the keep, and an instant later, the rest of the apparatus’s infrastructure: a console, and some pylons and fronds that facilitated planar travel. Dextir the Gatecrasher—now with a full head of gray hair and a bushy beard to match—was piloting a different version of the craft they’d last seen him on, and Argent—Saradette’s former mentor—was now kicking another elder man out of the disc and onto the keep’s room. “The fuck outta here,” Argent said to the robed man, who also sported a bushy, white head and beard. The man fell onto his hands and knees, then looked up to see Saradette, and recognized her.

She and Jinx recognized him as well. “Tore! How?!” asked Saradette.

Argent the Artificer and Dextir the Gatecrasher shook their heads, and the floating disc disappeared into the void of the Multiverse to reappear elsewhere and elsewhen.

“I’ll share later. Looks like I’m just in time,” the familiar cleric’s voice now raspy with a few decades’ worth of experience.

**OOC: Tore is back, older, but with the same stats, the same spells prepared, and all slots and daily abilities (e.g., Turn Undead) refreshed. He’s also buffed by a *bull’s strength* spell for the moment, and despite the years of experience, he’s the same level as before (13). ☹**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Spell** | **Level** | **DC** | **Cast?** |
| Detect Magic | 0 | 13 | q |
| Detect Magic | 0 | 13 | q |
| Detect Magic | 0 | 13 | q |
| Detect Magic | 0 | 13 | q |
| Read Magic | 0 | 13 | q |
| Read Magic | 0 | 13 | q |
| **Calm Animals** | 1 | 14 | q |
| Nimbus of Light | 1 | 14 | q |
| Nimbus of Light | 1 | 14 | q |
| Nimbus of Light | 1 | 14 | q |
| Protection from Evil | 1 | 14 | q |
| Sanctuary | 1 | 14 | q |
| Ayailla’s Radiant Burst | 2 | 15 | q |
| Ayailla’s Radiant Burst | 2 | 15 | q |
| **Hold Animal** | 2 | 15 | q |
| Knife Spray | 2 | 15 | q |
| Knife Spray | 2 | 15 | q |
| **Dominate Animal** | 3 | 16 | q |
| Searing Light | 3 | 16 | q |
| Searing Light | 3 | 16 | q |
| Sword Stream | 3 | 16 | q |
| Summon Monster IV | 4 | 17 | q |
| **Summon Nature’s Ally IV** | 4 | 17 | q |

Lady Asunder flew up towards Saradette and clocked her a good one, losing her *invisibility*.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str Mod+** | **W+** | **Other+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Lady Asunder | Domineering Morningstar | 2d6+7+1 | 12 | 7 | 1 | 2 charge  –2 height | 20 | 1 | 21 |

*Miss.*

*+2 to Strength,–2 to Dexterity,–1 to attacks and AC*

*Critical hit reciprocity (reciprocal bracers)*

*Critical/hit shrug (formless vest)*

*Flying*



Saradette got swiped at by an invisible foe who came into view as her morningstar missed her altogether. Before her was a fully armored goliath woman, clad in the heraldry of some sinister organization. “No one wrests this place from us,” she wove a cautionary tale into the tragedy of their homecoming.

Grim Gerome flew up to see the party, and only had two options to choose from, so he went with the lady that seemed more razzled by the *necrotic bomb* than the other, and gave up his *invisibility* to zap her with a *lightning bolt*.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Dex Mod+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** | **Notes** |
| Grim Gerome | *Call Lightning* | 3d6 electric | 5 | 1 | 6 | 11 | 17 | 9 bolts left |

*Dmg: 7 electric [1/48].*

*Detecting magic*

*Seeing invisibility*

*Flying*

Another allip appeared adjacent to Saradette, and attacked her.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Dex Mod+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Allip | Incorporeal Touch | 1d4 Wis | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 9 |

*Miss.*

Myrtle Eyes, flew upward, satisfied with the casting for now, lost her *invisibility* as soon as her allip attacked, and decided to use her only casting of baleful polymorph on the senior gnome.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**  Baleful Polymorph | **Rank** | **Ability**  **& Mod.** | **Misc.**  **Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Fortitude** | **3** | **Con (+1)** | 0 | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| **Will** | **5** | **Wis (+1)** | 0 | 6 | 8 | 14 |

*Fail, fail. See below.*

*Flying*

Saradette—a rock gnome—was transformed into a toad, and her gear fell 20’ to the rooftop as she also began to fall herself after a brief moment of magical suspension.

Septimania had flown up 60’, and executed her master’s contingency after a baleful polymorphing. She grabbed the frog before it splatted on the ground. “Got’er!” the duskblade said.

Saradette was now a helpless amphibian in the clutch of a champion swordswoman.

Jinx fired both gloves at Septimania, maximizing two sonic blasts.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **Rng.** | **Notes** |
| Horizikaul’s Boom | 3d4 Sonic | 25’ + 2½’/lvl | Will DC 14 or deafened for 1d4 rounds |

*Base dmg: 10 sonic.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**  *Horizikaul’s boom* | **Rank** | **Ability & Mod.** | **Misc. Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** | **Properties** |
| **Septimania, Will** | 8 | **Wis (+3)** | **3** | 14 | **2** | 16 | +2 vs. all spells |

*Success. Deafness negated.*

The duskblade remained aloft, and now squinted at Jinx with distaste. She stuffed the toad into a waterskin with little care for its wellbeing, and thought about charging towards Jinx head-on.

Tore cast *summon nature’s ally IV*, calling forth (1d3) giant eagles. He knew by now that it would take another 6 seconds for the animal to appear, and chose Lady Asunder as the large birds’ target.

The gatecrasher’s floating disc materialized once again, this time south of the keep, and zapped Septimania.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Dex**  **Mod+** | **W+** | **Total**  **Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Dextir | Turret | 10d10 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 12 | 13 | 25 |

*Hit. Dmg: 60 laser [fire].*

Septimania now had a hole the size of her fist bored through her chest, and fell towards the keep.

Argent promptly reached through a short-range portal, his arm effectively grabbing the waterskin, and pulling it back into the space he occupied on his transplanar platform.

The disc blinked out of sight once again, and with it, Saradette’s toad form.

A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 233

Ada continued to work her way towards the stairs [K13]. She was able to barely see the stairs through the acid fog that was eating away her eyes.

*Dmg: 4 acid [44/81].*

Whisper cast *Sinsabur’s baleful bolt*, centering it on Tore. “Catch this, you fuck!”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**  *Sinsabur’s baleful bolt* | **Rank** | **Ability & Mod.** | **Misc. Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Tore, Reflex** | **4** | **Dex (+2)** | 0 | 6 | 8 | 14 |

*Fail. Dmg: 3 + 3 = 6 Strength [13]; 2 + 3 = 5 Constitution [7; 61/100].*

*Spell Resistance 25*

*DR: 5/fire, cold and acid*

*Flying*

Typhoid charge-attacked Jinx, saying something in Abyssal.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Dex Mod+** | **W+** | **Other+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Typhoid | Bite | 1d4+1 | 3 | 2 | 2 charge | 2 | 11 | 18 | 29 |

*Hit. Dmg: 1 + 1 = 2 [-1/48].*

Jinx dropped to the ground, bleeding out.

The *enlarged* Lady Asunder charge-attacked Tore.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str Mod+** | **W+** | **Other+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Lady Asunder | Domineering Morningstar | 2d6+7+1 | 12 | 7 | 1 | 2 charge | 22 | 5 | 27 |

*Hit. Dmg: 6 + 7 + 1 + 2 charge = 16 [45/100].*

*+2 to Strength,–2 to Dexterity,–1 to attacks and AC*

*Critical hit reciprocity (reciprocal bracers)*

*Critical/hit shrug (formless vest)*

*Flying*

*Concentration DC 10 + 12 + 4 (sna IV) = 26.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill** | **Rank** | **Ability & Mod.** | **Misc. Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Tore, Concentration** | **7** | **Con (-2)** | 0 | 5 | 9 | 14 |

*Fail. Spell lost.*

A yellow, sparkly circle appeared on the rooftop, and a woman stepped through, someone vaguely familiar to Saradette... though only in dreams.



“Whisper,” the half-drow said, resembling Septimania a little, “I’ve been looking for you.” The duskblade had been stalking the elusive band of shades for a year now, and a ping from Dextir alerted her to his presence.

Whisper’s grin faded as he recognized the woman who’d found Whisper amidst all the Shadow Weave activity. “You!? But, but it can’t be!”

She’d just buffed up with a *chasing perfection* scroll, and produced her Shattermantle Bloodstone Falchion +5, ready to decimate the Netherite battle sorcerer once and for all.

This was Steelshade, a duskblade like no other, and behind her was a grizzled, wizened hound archon no one here knew: the elder known as Barkley.

*OOC: This is a future version of Barkley with something like 20 levels!!*

“I know you,” Grim Gerome had gotten a little closer by now, and cast *divine storm [expired on Round 246]* centered around the master duskblade. However, the spell seemed to partly fizzle out, and the spinning disk of weapons did not manifest into an entire storm, but rather into a much smaller bolt of weapons that all flew into and through Steelshade.

*Dmg: 4 + 13 = 17.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**  *divine storm* | **Rank** | **Ability & Mod.** | **Misc. Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** | **Properties** |
| **Steelshade, Reflex** | 6 | **Dex (+5)** | 3 | 14 | 19 | 33 | +2 vs. Enchantments |

*Success. Damage negated.*

*Detecting magic*

*Seeing invisibility*

*Flying*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**  *divine storm* | **Rank** | **Ability**  **& Mod.** | **Misc.**  **Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Tore, Reflex** | **4** | **Dex (+2)** | 0 | 6 | 18 | 24 |

*Success. Tore jumped 10 eastward to avoid effect.*

The allip was destroyed by an invisible force as it charged within 5’ of Steelshade.

Myrtle Eyes could see the sliver of the floating disc rematerializing, and changed her target from Steelshade to Dextir, who commandeered the impressive vessel.

*Unerring, damage indeterminable.*

*Flying*

Having lost his concentration in the conjuring of the eagles, Tore cast *sword stream* directed at Lady Asunder.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tore** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Bypass Spell Resistance | +11 | 12 | 23 |

*Success.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Save vs.**  *sword stream* | **Ranks** | **Roll** | **Result** |
| Lady Asunder | Reflex | 7 | 4 | 11 |

*Fail. Dmg: 7 + 10 = 17.*

The floating disc platform had trouble materializing, and blinked repeatedly into and out of view for a moment.

A screenshot of a computer game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 234

Ada moved out of the acid fog and grabbed the railing of the staircase, much of her skin corroded away. She ran up the stairs, and made it to the second floor.

Whisper was clearly distressed at Steelshade’s entrance, and cast *burning blood [expired on Round 248]* on the epic duskblade.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Bypass Spell Resistance | 1d8 acid damage + 1d8 fire per round | +14 | 12 | 26 |

*Success. 3 acid + 7 fire per round for the next 14 rounds unless dispelled.*

*Spell Resistance 25*

*DR: 5/fire, cold and acid*

*Flying*

Typhoid was a fool, and charge-attacked Steelshade.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Dex Mod+** | **W+** | **Other+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Typhoid | Claw 1 | 1d3-1 + Poison | 3 | 2 | 0 | +2 Enhanced  +2 Charge  +2 Height | 11 | 8 | 19 |

*Miss.*

Still *enlarged*, Lady Asunder full-attacked Tore.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str Mod+** | **W+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Lady Asunder | Domineering Morningstar | 2d6+7+1 | 12 | 7 | 1 | 20 | 14 | 34 |
| Lady Asunder | 2nd Attack | 2d6+7+1 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 15 | 3 | 18 |
| Lady Asunder | 3rd Attack | 2d6+7+1 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 10 | 16 | 26 |

*Hit, miss, hit. Dmg: (9 + 7 + 1) + (5 + 7 + 1) = 17 + 13 = 30 [15/100 (61)].*

*+2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, –1 to attacks and AC*

*Critical hit reciprocity (reciprocal bracers)*

*Critical/hit shrug (formless vest)*

*Flying*

Grim Gerome cast Quickened *raise dead* upon his duskblade comrade, Septimania. “I *knew* this would happen,” though he’d only suspected it would; he wasn’t quite a fortuneteller.

*Detecting magic*

*Seeing invisibility*

*Flying*

Having spent the afternoon on a hunt, the most powerful spell slot available to Myrtle Eyes now could conduce *chain missile*, and so she did that, targeting Steelshade, who was close enough to Barkley and Tore for a few of the *magic missiles* to ricochet off of her and hit them.

*Dmg to Steelshade: 23 + 10 = 33 magic [force].*

*Dmg to Barkley: 1 + 1 = 2.*

*Dmg to Tore: 2 + 1 = 3 [12/100].*

*Flying*

Tore, resigned to his fate, cast *searing light* at Lady Asunder.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Bypass Spell Resistance | +11 | 16 | 27 |
| Ranged Touch Attack | +13 | **20** | 33 |

*Success, hit. Dmg: 21 fire.*

Steelshade charged Lady Asunder, full attacking her with her falchion.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Crit** | **x** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Shattermantle Bloodstone Falchion +5 | 2d4 | +9 +5+2 | 7 + 2 | 18 | 2 | Slashing | 8.0 | +40 | 5 | 45 |

*Hit. Dmg: 7 + 9 + 5 + 2 charge = 23.*

Barkley charged Lady Asunder.

*Hit. Dmg: 32.*

A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 235

Ada made it up the ladder and opened the overhead hatch, seeing all hell breaking loose outside, peeking only her head and eyes above the hatch.

Whisper wasn’t about to face Steelshade in melee; not without stacking the deck in the favor of the Rumours. He Quick-manifested his *control light* effect to generate a field of shadows around him, enveloping the keep and everyone atop it. He then cast *scorching ray*, targeting Steelshade with all of the rays.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg** | **+ Mod** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** | **Properties** |
| Ranged Touch Attack | varies | +2 | 1 | n.a. | varies | 0.0 | +8 | 17 | 25 | +2 damage in darkness |
| Ranged Touch Attack | varies | +2 | 1 | n.a. | varies | 0.0 | +8 | 1 | 9 | +2 damage in darkness |
| Ranged Touch Attack | varies | +2 | 1 | n.a. | varies | 0.0 | +8 | 16 | 24 | +2 damage in darkness |

*Hit, miss, hit. Dmg: (10 + 2 + 2) + (14 + 2 + 2) = 14 + 18 = 32.*

Typhoid continued to try to kill Steelshade.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Dex Mod+** | **Other+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Typhoid | Claw 1 | 1d3-1 + Poison | 3 | 2 | 2 + 2 charge | 9 | 8 | 17 |

*Miss.*

Lady Asunder was duly threatened by Barkley and Steelshade, and attacked the latter.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Str Mod+** | **W+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Lady Asunder | Domineering Morningstar | 2d6+7+1 | 12 | 7 | 1 | 20 | 19 | 39 |
| Lady Asunder | 2nd Attack | 2d6+7+1 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 15 | 8 | 23 |
| Lady Asunder | 3rd Attack | 2d6+7+1 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 10 | 7 | 17 |

*Miss, miss, miss.*

The knight was astounded that the duskblade’s armor could not be pierced.

Septimania rose to her feet, weary and frailer than before, and drank a potion of *cure critical wounds*, thanking the halfling for saving her life.

Gerome nodded, “Welcome,” and cast *flame strike* on Barkley.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**  *flame strike* | **Rank** | **Ability & Mod.** | **Misc. Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **EpicBarkley, Reflex** | 6 | **Dex (+5)** | 3 | 14 | 13 | 27 |

*Success. Saved for ½ damage.*

*Dmg: ½ x 51 = 25 (12 fire + 13 evil).*

Myrtle Eyes had no high-level spell slots left, so she cast *magic missile* upon Tore, seeing him badly wounded already.

*Dmg: 7 + 4 = 11 [1/100 (61)].*

Having eventually mastered the art of twin blade fighting, Barkley full-attacked Lady Asunder with a pair of longswords.

*Dmg: 28 + 34 = 62.*

The floating disc then appeared and disappeared, and Barkley simultaneously disappeared with it.

Able to see perfectly in the low light, Steelshade channeled vampiric touch through Arkenlyl, and empowered her strikes (+4) against Lady Asunder.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Crit** | **x** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Shattermantle Bloodstone Falchion +5 | 2d4 | +9 +5 + 4d4 | 7 + 4 | 18 | 2 | Slashing | 8.0 | +42 | 5 | 47 |
| SB Falchion +5, 2nd Attack | 2d4 | +9 +5 + 4d4 | 7 + 4 | 18 | 2 | Slashing | - | +37 | 20 | 57 |
| SB Falchion +5, 3rd Attack | 2d4 | +9 +5 + 4d4 | 7 + 4 | 18 | 2 | Slashing | - | +32 | 13 | 45 |
| SB Falchion +5, 4th Attack | 2d4 | +9 +5 + 4d4 | 7 + 4 | 18 | 2 | Slashing | - | +27 | 11 | 38 |

*Hit, hit, hit, hit. Dmg: (6 + 9 + 5 + 10 AS) + (3 + 9 + 5 + 15 AS) + (5 + 9 + 5 + 8 AS) + (6 + 9 + 5 + 9 AS) = 30 + 32 + 27 + 29 = 118.*

Either the second or third slice killed her, but Steelshade kept on slicing away, leaving no chance of a simple resurrection.

Able to see about 30’ in front of him, Tore mustered what energy he could and fired off another *searing light* spell at Typhoid, now that Lady Asunder was extra dead.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Ranged Touch Attack | +13 | **16** | 29 |

*Success, hit. Dmg: 23 fire.*

A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 236

Having just opened the overhead hatch, Ada threw back the hatch and climbed onto the roof, keeping her rapier trained on the quasit with its back turned to her.

Whisper was devastated by the death of Lady Asunder, his betrothed. Choking back tears, the shocked shade flew through his own *darkness* and charge-attacked Steelshade in a fit of rage.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **+ Mod** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** | **Properties** |
| Unholy Heavy Flail +3 | 1d10 | + 2d6 evil + 3 +6 + 2 charge | 2 + 2 charge | 19-20, x2 | Bludgeon | 10.0 | +12 | 9 | 21 | +2 damage in darkness |

*Miss.*

Typhoid turned around to attack Ada.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Dex Mod+** | **Other+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Typhoid | Claw 1 | 1d3-1 + Poison | 3 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| Typhoid | Claw 2 | 1d3-1 + Poison | 3 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 16 | 23 |
| Typhoid | Bite | 1d4+1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 11 |

*Miss, hit, miss. Dmg: 2 – 1 = 1 + Poison (Fort DC 13; 1d4 Dex; 2d4 Dex) [41/81].*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**  Poison | **Rank** | **Ability**  **& Mod.** | **Misc.**  **Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Ada, Fortitude** | **2** | **Con (+1)** | 0 | 3 | 15 | 18 |
| **Ada, Fortitude** | **2** | **Con (+1)** | 0 | 3 | 4 | 7 |

*Success, fail. Dmg: 4 Dex starting on Round 246.*

Fresh out of her best spells, Myrtle Eyes shot at Ada with her hand crossbow.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Attack Type** | **Damage** | **BAB** | **Dex Mod+** | **W+** | **Total Score** | **Roll** | **Total** |
| Myrtle Eyes | QR Hand Crossbow +1 | 1d3+1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 13 | 20 |

*Hit. Dmg: 1 + 1 = 2 [39/81].*

Grim Gerome only had one befitting spell left to turn the tides, maybe. He had to get closer to his enemies, which was risky, but he didn’t give a fuck at this point, so he moved north a bit and cast *castigate*.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**  *castigate* | **Rank** | **Ability & Mod.** | **Misc. Mods.** | **Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Steelshade, Fortitude** | 15 | **Con (+5)** | 3 | 23 | 3 | 26 |
| **Ada, Fortitude** | 2 | **Con (+1)** | 0 | 3 | 17 | 20 |

*Success, success. Both saved for ½ damage.*

*Dmg to Steelshade: ½ x 10 = 5 sonic.*

*Dmg to Ada: ½ x 26 = 13 sonic [26/81].*

Septimania charge-attacked Ada.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Crit** | **x** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Shattermantle Bloodstone Falchion +1 | 2d4 | +3 +3  + 2 charge | 3 + 2  charge | 18 | 2 | Slashing | 8.0 | +20 | 1 | 21 |

*Miss.*

A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Steelshade went to Ada’s aid, splitting her attacks between Typhoid and Septimania, taking the enemy duskblade first.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Crit** | **x** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Shattermantle Bloodstone Falchion +5 | 2d4 | +9 +5 | 7 | 18 | 2 | Slashing | 8.0 | +38 | 13 | 51 |
| SB Falchion +5, 2nd Attack | 2d4 | +9 +5 | 7 | 18 | 2 | Slashing | - | +33 | 12 | 45 |
| SB Falchion +5, 3rd Attack | 2d4 | +9 +5 | 7 | 18 | 2 | Slashing | - | +28 | 20 | 48 |
| SB Falchion +5, 4th Attack | 2d4 | +9 +5 | 7 | 18 | 2 | Slashing | - | +23 | 6 | 29 |

*Typhoid: Hit, hit. Dmg: (6 + 9 + 5) + (5 + 9 + 5) = 20 + 19 = 39.*

*Septimania: Hit, hit. Dmg: (4 + 9 + 5) + (7 + 9 + 5) = 18 + 21 = 39.*

“Dead quasit and dying former apprentice. Fuck you too, Septimania,” Steelshade thought to part her lips and say as the junior duskblade held her bleeding throat in vain, falling over and creating a puddle of blood under herself.

Grim Gerome lusted after Septimania, and now wept with incel rage.

Tore activated his Badge of Glory (Swift action) and his Boots of the Battle Charger and charge attacked Grim Gerome, swinging his Rod of Defiance at his foe.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Rod of Defiance | 1d8 | +1 +1  +6 Badge | 1 + 2  Charge | x2 | Bludgeon | 8.0 | +15 | **20** | 35 |
| Rod, 2nd Attack  (Boots) | 1d8 | +1 +1 | 1 | x2 | Bludgeon | - | +8 | **7** | 15 |

*Threat, miss. 1d20 = 3 + 13 + 2 = 18, not a critical hit. Dmg: 1 + 1 + 1 + 6 = 9.*

A screenshot of a computer game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 237

Ada moved away from the group of attackers near her using her Travel Devotion Feat.

*Travel Devotion: Move her speed as a swift action*

*AoO Whisper*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **+ Mod** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** | **Properties** |
| Unholy Heavy Flail +3 | 1d10 | + 2d6 evil + 3 +6 | 2 | 19-20, x2 | Bludgeon | 10.0 | +10 | 5 | 15 | +2 damage in darkness |

*Miss.*

She then (a) sheathed her rapier before she (b) unshouldered her bow and (c) let loose with an arrow at Grim Gerome through the magical *darkness*.

*(a) and (b) already constitute a full round for Ada, but I’ll allow the attack for flair.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** | **Notes** |
| Composite Shortbow, Str +2 | 1d6 | +0 | 0 | x3 | 70’ | 2.0 | +12 | 11 | 23 | +1d6 Sneak |

*1d100 = 79, does not bypass Concealment. Miss.*

Whisper—suffering a mild stroke from the death of his quasit familiar [-1 Con]—swung mightily at Steelshade, who laughed at the battle sorcerer’s feeble attempts, even aided by his magical *darkness*.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **+ Mod** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** | **Properties** |
| Unholy Heavy Flail +3 | 1d10 | + 2d6 evil + 3 +6 | 2 | 19-20, x2 | Bludgeon | 10.0 | +10 | 16 | 26 | +2 damage in darkness |
| Flail, 2nd Attack | 1d10 | + 2d6 evil + 3 +6 | 2 | 19-20, x2 | Bludgeon |  | +5 | 11 | 16 | +2 damage in darkness |

*Miss, miss.*

Myrtle Eyes called to her brother, who flew to her. Grim Gerome clasped his sister’s hand, as she cast *teleport*, abandoning Whisper to his ex-girlfriend, who had just slain his new girlfriend. That had to suck.

Saradette appeared with the floating disc, dressed in a different attire, refreshed and a few weeks older, and jumped off the platform, flanking Whisper alongside Steelshade. [move action taken, move or standard action left to take, all abilities refreshed]

Saradette flew to her cousin’s side, while Steelshade attacked Whisper.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Melee Weapon** | **Dmg** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Crit** | **x** | **Type** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| Shattermantle Bloodstone Falchion +5 | 2d4 | +9 +5 | 7 | 18 | 2 | Slashing | 8.0 | +38 | 12 | 50 |
| SB Falchion +5, 2nd Attack | 2d4 | +9 +5 | 7 | 18 | 2 | Slashing | - | +33 | 7 | 40 |
| SB Falchion +5, 3rd Attack | 2d4 | +9 +5 | 7 | 18 | 2 | Slashing | - | +28 | 14 | 42 |
| SB Falchion +5, 4th Attack | 2d4 | +9 +5 | 7 | 18 | 2 | Slashing | - | +23 | 14 | 37 |

*Hit, hit, hit, hit. Dmg: (7 + 9 + 5) + (5 + 9 + 5) + (3 + 9 + 5) + (6 + 9 + 5) = 21 + 19 + 17 + 20 = 77.*

Tore took a step forward (5’ step) and cast Sword Stream at Whisper.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Save vs.**  *Sword stream* | **Rank** | **Ability & Mod.** | **Misc. Mods.** | **Total** | **Dark Total** | **Roll** | **Check** |
| **Whisper, Reflex** | **4** | **Dex (+4)** | 2 | 10 | 14 | 6 | 16 |

*Success. Saved for ½ damage. Dmg: ½ x (5 + 10) = 7 fire.*

A screenshot of a computer game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Round 238

Meanwhile, Ada used her Travel Devotion to move 20’ north before full attacking Whisper with her bow, sending multiple arrows at her target (Skirmish Ability).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ranged Weapon** | **Dmg.** | **D+** | **TH+** | **Critical** | **Rng.** | **Wt.** | **Atk** | **Roll** | **Check** | **Notes** |
| Composite Shortbow, Str +2 | 1d6 | +0 | 0 | x3 | 70’ | 2.0 | +12 | 7 | 19 | +1d6 Sneak |
| Shortbow, 2nd attack | 1d6 | +1 | 0 | x3 | 70’ | 2.0 | +7 | 13 | 20 | +1d6 Sneak |
| Shortbow, 3rd attack | 1d6 | +1 | 0 | x3 | 70’ | 2.0 | +2 | 20 | 22 | +1d6 Sneak |

*Miss, miss, threat. 1d20 = 18 + 2 = 20, not a critical hit. Dmg: 5 + 1 = 6.*

“F- fooooolllss!” Nearly dead now, Whisper Quick cast his *Shadow Travel* ability, shifting either into the Plane of Shadow, or some other shadowy region on the Material Plane. He would live to retribute another day, and the heroes now stood atop the keep, taking in the situation.

“Anyone have a *raise dead* spell handy?” Saradette asked, seeing to her cousin, Jinx.

Steelshade fumbled through her scrolls and wands to see what she had left.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scrolls and Potions** | **Qty.** | **Level** | **CLev** | **Notes** |  | **Value** |
| Potion of *Cure Moderate Wounds* | 2 | 2 | 10 |  |  | 1000 |
| Scroll of *Teleportation* | 2 | 7 | 13 |  |  | 4550 |
| Scroll of *True Seeing* | 2 | 6 | 11 |  |  | 3300 |
| Wand of *Raise Dead* | 1 | 5 | 9 | 12 charges |  | 13500 |
| Oil of *Greater Magic Weapon* | 2 | 5 | 8 |  |  | 2000 |

“I can help,” she said as she walked over to the deceased, and applied the wand to the gnome’s forehead.

Jinx blinked her eyes open, her raspy voice still suggesting she was knocking on Heaven’s door. “Here,” Steelshade then said, uncorking the potion of *cure moderate wounds*, and letting the now alive artificer sip it slowly.

“That’s the closest I’ve ever seen Whisper come to being killed,” Steelshade admitted. “He and his lot are quick ones to disappear when the deck is stacked against their favor.”

“Thank you,” Jinx said as she stood up. “I’m Jinx. Who are you?”

“I am called Steelshade,” the half-drow replied. “I was summoned here to help you take this keep.”

“Those people were kicking our arses. I’m glad you arrived when you did.”

“Agreed,” Saradette said with feeling. “Are you able to stay for a while?”

“For a few minutes, I think, but I will have to return soon.”

Tore looked around to make sure there were no other threats. “I can cast some healing spells to those who need it.” He did not mention that he needed a good amount. We also need a way to fortify this building for the night before we try clearing the rest of the structure.”

Ada agreed and picked up the rapier that she had dropped. “We could probably use some reinforcements if anyone is able to hang around for a while.” Ada then turned her head at a sound.

They all now heard some movement below, through the open hatch, and some trained their arrows at the opening. Rumi emerged, seeing that the battle was over. “What the frogs was that?!” he absentmindedly asked as arrows were pointed downward to the rooftop at their feet. “Oh, hi! Rumi—the party’s scribe—at your service,” he tipped an invisible hat to Steelshade as he stood up from getting out of the hatch.

The day was a fair one, and the bodies of a few deceased littered the ground, in particular the green-blooded quasit that was in a way part of Whisper.

Tore, after casting a few *cure wounds* spells of differing strengths, decided to check as much of the building and walls as possible, so he and Ada scouted the other towers and walls, careful to avoid anything that looked even remotely like a trap or illusion. They would spend the rest of the afternoon salvaging stuff they uncovered in the basement—accessible via the secret floor hatch inside the room warded by the *prismatic wall*—and opted to remain at the keep and, hoping to finish off Whisper and any of his fellows, should they return. Tore would send a letter to the archon and recruit him to the keep as well. There would be some adventuring in the meantime, to hopefully gain enough experience to gain a few levels and recruit others to man the walls and towers of the keep.

**OOC: They find equipment that they can use, taking Tore’s equity to 150,000, and Ada’s to 110,000.**

~\*~

A tenday later… New Waterdeep, Maztica

Rumi stood at the podium with two sets of notes before him, studying them as a woman rose from her seat near the podium, rang a silver triangle three times and announced Rumi’s presentation to begin, “Master Rumi, you have the floor.”

“Ahem, I thank you, Lady Adarbrent, for *teleporting* me over and hosting me with such comforts and pleasantries,” the bard began before delivering the account of that fateful day—not a fortnight ago—when the heroes hired by the Adarbrents had vanquished the likes of Whisper, though not likely for good. He began to articulate the events, collected chronologically on the left-hand parchment, adding speculative conjecture and perhaps some sensational embellishments that he’d scripted in his commentaries on the right-hand parchment, along some diagrams and sketches.

“It was a decisive battle, taking part in two acts: the first being the one I just recounted with the necropolitan and his lackeys; but oh, when Whisper and his shade lot got there, the earth practically shook under my feet from the strength of those blows. Necrotic skull bombs exploded, the goliath knight—*enlarged* at this point—smashing her weapon against the heroes’ armor. I could hardly see from my position of relative safety, though it was evident that they had clearly cast some spells earlier that day, as they were quickly downgrading the scope of their spells with every round, until a few of them apparently were left fresh out of anything useful, and resorted to their ranged weapons until they phased out.”

“Where do we think they phased to?” a woman who didn’t want to wait until the Q&A period asked.

“I’m glad you asked, because it prompts the further investigation that I have recommended to this Estate’s conservators,” the bard politely answered. “Shades as powerful as Whisper are able to shift from any shady area in the Material Plane to either another similarly shady area or even directly into the Shadow Plane. Either prospect puts them as prime risks to the future of the lands in question, which is why the continued vigilance is needed at the Estate.”

“But didn’t we offer the heroes the keep, for keeps?”

“Yes, what are you saying? Are they still there? What has become of them?”

~\*~

The group was having lunch on the keep’s roof, where they were enjoying the beautiful day, when Whisper and his crew arrived. Jinx was on watch from her perch on the parapet, and she yelled out a warning, ducking down to avoid being targeted.

Steelshade took up her sword and shield, lifting herself into the air. Devrion followed her, with Saradette near him. The epic warmage acted first, weaving his hands in a complex pattern. “Furcsa!” he barked.

Nothing happened for a moment, and then Whisper’s group screamed in a macabre chorus. They all dashed off in different directions until they either ran or flew headlong into the keep’s walls, where they all just dropped dead.

Jinx peeked around one of the stone crenellations, her eyes wide. “Holy crap!” She turned to Devrion with wide eyes. “What did you do?”

Devrion shrugged and landed lightly on the roof. “The spell is called *weird*.” He shrugged. “It worked better than I expected that time.”

The young gnome looked to her cousin. “Wow. Don’t screw with the wizard.”

“He’s a warmage, and the only person who can screw with him is her,” Saradette pointed to Steelshade with a grin. Both heroes blushed fiercely, causing the gnomes to laugh delightedly.

“You two are next,” Steelshade growled unconvincingly.