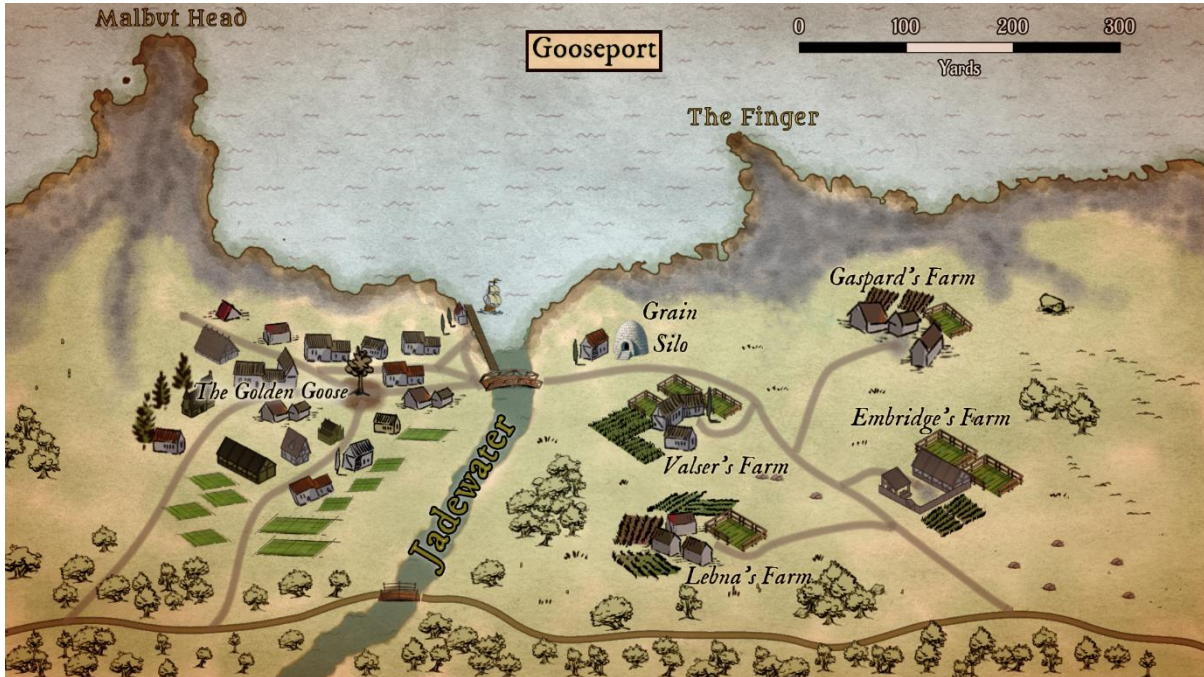


Session Notes: Adventure 13A02 part 1: The missing weapons

Downtime



Yrion, Yria and Gwindor

After the meeting with Selena, Soril catches up with Yrion and Yria just outside Bladeby. He performs the ritual on Strikefast, disguising it as an ordinary warhammer (Strikefast is annoyed – it's very proud of its runes). Yrion sneaks into Bladeby and picks up his strays, which he names **Stinky**, because she likes to roll around in the wrong things, and **Stumblepaw**, her adolescent pup. Together with Gwindor, they hike over to Gooseport and set up camp in the woods.

Gwindor plays the friendly bard act. He soon learns that Golden Order paladins are *persona non grata* in Gooseport – Valser has convinced the villagers that he was duped by the Order. There is a peeling poster of Yrion with the message "Do not trust this elf".

Further enquiries reveal that while the mayor is nominally **Embridge Clor**, Valser Rumblebridge is the effective ruler of Gooseport. Gwindor picks up that some villagers speak about him in a rather constrained way. Valser has toughs who follow him around, that he refers to as his "goose boys and girls". Yrion recognises their tattoos as being from one of the street gangs in Shadowport. He also has a wife and daughter, **Liselle** and **Sylvie**. They mostly stay indoors, though Liselle can be seen feeding the geese and collecting the eggs.

A couple of days after they arrive, Yrion is spying on Valser's farm. He can't get close – there are dozens of highly alert geese in the paddocks around the farm buildings. He sees a mysterious figure emerging from the front door. It's dark and their face is only visible for a moment, but Yrion

could have sworn that it is an orc. He tries to get the dogs to track him, but Stinky decides to go and roll in the latrine again.

After several weeks of observations, Yria and Yrion establish Valser's patterns of movement. Mysterious packages regularly arrive at the farm from ships and wagons. Roughly once a week, late in the evening, Valser and his goosegogs take a walk to the far end of the village, where a path wends its way along the steep eastern cliff face of Malbut Head down to a rocky beach, returning a few hours later. The gogs are laden with boxes when they go out, but not when they come back.

Yria, Yrion and Gwindor investigate the cliff path and find a solid and locked wooden door hidden among the rocks. Gwindor asks the locals, but they claim to know nothing about it. They say that no-one really goes that way, except kids who go swimming from the beach. Malbut Head has an unsavoury reputation due to a local legend about a villager who was chased by a demon up to the top and who threw himself off to avoid succumbing to its blandishments.

Soril, Kavan and J'zakko

The other adventurers hang around Bladeby, taking advantage of the facilities offered by Adventurers' Guild. Lodging, food and training are free, but residents are expected to perform small tasks for the guild. Soril decides to stay at the Goose Egg, supporting himself with scribe work, but visits the Guild from time to time to keep in touch. Kavan and J'zakko are less fortunate and get sent on a couple of missions, one to clear an infestation of giant rats from a local farm, and the other to put down an unquiet spirit that is disturbing the town's graveyard. During the latter, J'zakko gets spooked and trips over a gravestone, hurting his knee.

The Call

One day, the party's guild sigils start to glow. "Adventurer! If you would be so good as to report to Bladeby Adventurers' Guild, we have a quest for you that is relevant to your interests!" Yria, Yrion and Gwindor have been getting bored of sparring with each other, so they decide to attend. Everyone except J'zakko, who is still laid up in bed, meets at the Guild. Selena welcomes back Yria and asks what happened to the cursed artefact. Yria, carefully coached by Yrion, replies that she can't remember – she just woke up and it was gone. Selena ushers everyone into the parlour, where a grumpy-looking clean-shaven man with greying curly hair is waiting. He is dressed in white and gold robes and has a chunk of marble and a fragment of bone on chains round his neck. Yria and Yrion recognise him as **Yeglin Stormbow**, quartermaster of the Golden Order and Yrion's ex-boss.

Yeglin tells the heroes the following:

- Weapons have been stolen from the armoury in Golden Citadel over several months. The thief or thieves got in through a back gate and took a few at a time, so the missing weapons were assumed to have been borrowed temporarily by the paladins.
- The thefts came to light after a tip-off passed from the exiled Yrion to Yria that the watch-geese weren't to be trusted. Yria took to patrolling on her own at night and eventually caught one of the thieves, a ne'er-do-well who called himself Davon. Under intense questioning, he admitted to working for Valser Rumblebridge, a merchant from Gooseport.

- Geese purchased from Valser's farm had been trained not to raise the alarm when one of his thieves tried to enter. Davon was to steal as many weapons as he could carry and bring them back to Gooseport. He didn't know what happened to them afterward – Valser took them somewhere.
- After Davon's capture, Yeglin has been doing a major stock-take which has taken several weeks. The Order has lost a large number (dozens) of swords, axes and bows, enough to equip a small army. They are each marked with the Order's sigil and some of them are magical.
- This is a major embarrassment for Yeglin, his boss Battle Captain **Anessa Roseheart**, and for the Map Maker. Anessa suspects that a rival Icon – The Crusader, perhaps, or the usual suspects of The Blue Sorceress or the Diabolist, may be planning to smear the Order's good name.
- The Order wants the adventurers to infiltrate Valser's operation and get the weapons back if he still has them. If he hasn't, find out where they have gone.
- Discretion is mandatory. The Order doesn't want to annoy the merchants on which it depends, and it doesn't want the Imperial Legions or the Order of the Wyrms finding out either. The adventurers are welcome to take down Valser's operation if he's doing anything illegal, but they need to do it quietly. The size of the payout – and Yria and Yrion's future advancement in the Order – will depend on how discreet the adventurers manage to be.

The heroes trek the 20 miles to Yrion and Yria's camp near Gooseport and discuss what to do next. The mysterious door seems the best bet – opening it could be a problem without J'zakko's expertise, but Soril has an idea for that. They get some rest and prepare for a midnight raid.

Malbut Head

Seventhday, 9th week of Spring, year 43 of the 13th Age

The party sneaks round the south and west sides of Gooseport, crossing the Jadewater on the main road bridge and keeping to the treeline as much as possible. It is a dark night, with high clouds and only a thin sliver of moon; the lights of fishing boats wink and glimmer far out at sea. They reach the path to Malbut Head without incident. As they cautiously pick their way among the loose rocks and treacherous footing, Soril casts an alarm cantrip to deter anyone following.

Yrion leads the way to the door, which is locked. Soril says that he will try a knock cantrip, but warns that it may not work as many doors are magically warded against it. But not this one, which swings open at his touch to reveal a narrow and winding passage. Gwindor takes the lead, followed by Yria, Soril, Yrion and Kavan. Soril casts light in a small cloud above his head and carries a lantern to assist the other members of the party, who do not have his darkvision. The light proves useful as Gwindor spots a loose slab of rock with a wire running from it. Everyone steps over the trap and the party proceeds.

The passage twists and turns a few more times and then flickering torchlight can be seen from an opening up ahead accompanied by the sound of deep, gruff voices. Soril recognises the language as orkish – there appears to be a card game in progress - but the speakers are not orcs. The heroes retreat a little way to decide what to do. Soril bravely volunteers to infiltrate the group. Cancelling the light spell, he disguises himself in smuggler's attire. He cancels the light

cantrip and Kavan casts a protective spell on him in case things go sideways. Then he creeps forward.

The Sea Cave



The passage opens out into what is clearly a smugglers' cave. Boxes, crates, barrels and sacks are stacked in corners and water laps at a sandy beach to the northwest, where a rowing boat is moored. There is a cooking fire near the centre, next to which is a card table. Three bored hobgoblins dressed in leather armour are seated around it, while a fourth – bigger and uglier and evidently the leader – stirs a pot over the fire.

On seeing Soril they leap to their feet, drawing their swords and demanding to know who he is. Thinking quickly, Soril claims to be one of the goose-gogs from Valser's farm who has got bored and wants in on their card game. As he does so, he makes a set of subtle gestures, aimed at one of the hobgoblins by the card table. His scowling face gradually relaxes. "C'mon **Ankel**, he's no trouble. Let him join the game!"

Persuaded by their charmed companion, the hobgoblins lower their weapons and gesture at a chair. They introduce themselves as **Vreg**, **Nuzec** (the charmed one), **Glokek** and **Neged**, who is resting in a side-cave. Ankel, the leader, continues to glare at Soril from her place by the cooking fire.

Soril makes small-talk while casting prestidigitation to influence the rather simplistic card game that the hobgoblins are playing. He learns that they are employed by Valser to guard the cave – they never go up to the farm because the geese don't like them. They take the delivered goods and load them onto ships that anchor in the small cove on the west side of Malbut Head.

Soril almost slips up by complaining about the weight of last week's shipment, which alerts Ankel because it was only herbs. He allays her suspicions by claiming that he must have confused it with the previous shipment, naming the exact date. This buys him enough time for his prestidigitation to pay off. Nuzec has been winning heavily and Vreg accuses him of cheating. They stand up, knocking their chairs back, and start punching each other. As Glokvek and Ankel move to intervene, the heroes take advantage of the distraction to attack.

The Hobgoblin Fight



Round 1 – a whole lot of misses

Gwindor is first through the opening and makes a beeline for Ankel. He strikes with his spear but doesn't get through Ankel's armour. Glokvek yells "traitor!" and swipes at Soril who dodges out of the way. Kavan casts an Invocation of War and summons up a glowing white Javelin of Faith which he casts at Glokvek, but it goes wide. Ankel sees Yria, shouts "Paladin!" and barges past Gwindor, who takes the opportunity to stab her in the side. Perhaps because of this, Ankel's sword swipe at Yria misses. Yria unfurls her tentacles and waves them, hoping to distract Ankel long enough to get a blow in with Strikefast, but Ankel expertly parries both her attack and Yrion's. Vreg hits Nuzec, who is trying to get away to help his friend Soril against the unprovoked attack from Glokvek.

Round 2 – colour spray

Gwindor fails to hit Glokvek. He tells Soril to "move it!" but Soril is unable to disengage. Glokvek at least fails to hit Soril, which gives him the opportunity to cast a spell. Declaiming some mystical words, he spreads his fingers wide. A fan of brilliant shifting colours emerges from them that mesmerises Glokvek and Vreg; Nuzec is also caught, but his face darkens as he both resists the spell's effect and realises that he has been duped. Kavan invokes a mist of spirits that he casts at Ankel, but it has little effect. Ankel yells "Nuzec, Neged – to me!" and swipes at Yria again – she misses, but Yria's riposte does not, landing a meaty thwack on Ankel's arm. Nuzec dashes over to support his boss, passing Kavan who manages to land a blow with his morning star. Vreg moves to engage Gwindor, while Neged emerges from the sleeping cave and charges into Yrion, but misses.

Round 3 – chaos bolts, rope tricks and a hobgoblin kebab

Gwindor decides to try out a new spell he learnt recently from a passing sorcerer and concentrates some of the local elemental magic into a crackling ball. Gwindor never knows quite what form the magic will take – in this case it manifests as a ball of ice spikes that explodes, skewering Vreg and sending out shards that hit Ankel and Neged. Glokvek, who has been trying to skewer the dancing Soril, is so distracted that he drops his weapon. That is not the end of his bad day, for Soril's dancing has been for a purpose; he has lured Glokvek onto a coil of rope near the moored boat which snakes around his leg, tripping him up. Soril conjures a ghostly hand that wraps the rope a few more times around Glokvek's legs for good measure. Over on the east side of the cave, Kavan comes up behind Neged whirling his morning star and

lands a solid hit on him, sending him spinning towards the cooking fire. Ankel grabs Nuzec by the scruff of the neck to use as a living shield and swipes at Yria, but misses once again. Spotting an opportunity, Yria drops Strikefast, grabs her javelin and makes a hobgoblin kebab of Nuzec and Ankel. Nuzec slumps. Yrion tells the now clearly exhausted Ankel to surrender, but she responds “to a paladin? Never!” and wearily raises her sword to defend herself. Yrion strikes; his blow doesn’t go through Ankel’s armour, but is sufficient to knock her prone.

Round 4 – crispy cleric

Only Neged and Vreg are still standing. Vreg and Gwindor trade blows but miss each other. Full of holy wrath, Kavan moves behind Neged, raises his morning star, smells burning – and realises that he has accidentally stood on the cooking fire and his robes are alight. Soril is using his mage hand to truss Glokvek up like a turkey and Yria is busy disarming the conscious but barely moving Ankel, so it falls to Yrion to deliver the blow that takes Neged out of the fight. Vreg manages to score a hit on Gwindor but succumbs to another blow from him.

Investigating the Cave

While Kavan douses himself in the sea, the rest of the party bind their wounds and investigate the cave. The crates and boxes contain stolen valuables – cloth, artworks (Soril spots a distinctive statue of a nymph that he last saw at one of the Tallmarks’ out-of-town estates), gold and platinum utensils. There are barrels and bottles of bootlegged wine and spirits (taxed in the Dragon Empire) and bags containing a variety of dried herbs and spices, some of which are banned drugs. One particularly interesting crate has a number of magical items including four packets of dried powder labelled with crossed-out dripping blood, lightning, fire and ice symbols respectively and an instruction to “just add water!”; three runestones; and a shapeless baggy hat which Yria puts on her head despite Soril’s warning that it might do anything. Soril asks Yria if she is feeling okay and Yria says she is fine, but Soril points out the black candle that her left hand has picked up from the crate and is attempting to conceal behind her back. The party agree that the powders, bag and candle should be given to Soril for further study, while the runestones go to Yria, Yrion and Kavan.

Gwindor investigates a side-cave containing a table, chair, some papers, and a locked chest. The latter soon opens with some judicious prying and contains jewellery and coins worth about 100 imps, a few gold ingots with the symbol of the Merchant Alliance Bank stamped on them, and an accounts book.

For Yria and Yrion, the most interesting item among the papers is a letter from “**Master Ebroc**” instructing Valser to take the “paladins’ weapons” to **Sharr’s Perfumery** in Fen Street, Horizon. “There you are to arrange an audience with the Keeper of **She Who Spins in Darkness** and ask the question that my messenger will give you.” Soril recognises She Who Spins in Darkness as a minor icon worshipped by some drow communities and other underworld ancestries. He also knows that Fen Street is in the Outercity, a region of low status dwellings outside Horizon’s city wall. There is also a set of invoices from **Tesipa Dotsk** of the Freetraders’ Collective of Shadowport for “services”; a scrawled note on one of them asks Valser to kindly stop sending Merchant Alliance ingots as removing the tracing charm is very expensive. Yrion knows that the Freetraders’ Collective is one of the gangs that controls Shadowport, but little else about them.

The accounts book is written in code, but Soril immediately recognises the cipher and quickly cracks it. It lists the people to whom Valder has sold his geese and the items that were subsequently stolen from them – proof positive of his wrongdoing. They include:

- **Aldor Boskin**, Horizon. Magical paraphernalia.
- **Galdar Tallmark**, Axis. Artworks, golden utensils. (Country estate)
- **Faflin Shoaf**, Glitterhaegen. Ingots.
- Yeglin Stormbow, Golden Temple. Miscellaneous weapons.

Yria and Kavan question Glokvek, who quickly spills what he knows. The weapons arrived over several months (Old Calendar) and were stored in the cave, then Valser loaded them onto a ship and sailed away. This was a couple of months ago, shortly after the spring equinox. Valser is currently in Shadowport for a few days. The rest of the hobgoblins gradually come to. In return for some food and a promise of safe passage, they agree to leave Valser's employment and head for Direwood, where there is a hobgoblin outpost. They depart, Ankel still looking daggers at Yria.

The party decides to take the contraband back to Bladeby for the Adventurers' Guild to restore to its rightful owners. The small boat isn't seaworthy enough to make it round Long Point, but they use it to ferry the goods out to a small cove west of Malbut Head. Soril and Gwindor visit Rona, the farmer whom Soril befriended (and the wife of Embridge Clor), and persuade her to lend them a horse and cart for a few days. They drive it over to the cove, meet up with the rest of the party, load the goods and head for Bladeby.