4/18/2026 - A Blighted Beginning

I awake from a deep slumber in a bag of holding. Everything is hazy, but I think I inspired the team a few times. Time to start back on our journey. Gudger left us a map with notes in the margin so we can maintain our path. I don't think it's a good idea to part with the Emberglass, especially since it's keeping our wise, saturated Monk alive. Thankfully, we're all in agreement that we need to create a decoy to return to Jorick, rat bastard.

Agnes finds a tiny, spice box that is ornate enough to pass. Eggie says he can create an imposter glowing shard. We set off on a normal pace towards our destination with nothing but fields of dead crops, must have been a farming community. Barty is leading the charge and I'm sticking to the back to keep vision on everyone/thing, fuck you scarecrow, I ain't scared of you!

Agnes and Barty observe the town we're walking towards is populated, but the people within are solid statues. All in various poses/actions, it looks as if they were all frozen in time. Curious.

Let's move closer, but quietly. Barty is a heavy foot, but he's just recently come back to life… I think his mug runs dry. Agnes can see. The statues are all various colors without noses, and the eyes are deep sunken holes, the mouths seem agape although non-existent.

Rustling in the crops behind me, I turn to an outline of someone moving? Focus, Ken. Oh, it's just a stupid scarecrow. Bringing up the rear starting to make me more paranoid…

Elandra and I want to inspect these pristine gloves; donned by a decomposed corpse. He doesn't need them anymore. We creep closer to send out Mage Hands to retrieve these gloves. My hand retrieves the arrows that the hands are clenching, and Elandra removes the gloves. Obsidian black gloves with blue lines that look like veins that trail all the way to the fingertips and turn a stunning blue. She almost put them on, but her bird did that weird, red-eyed thing. This bird is a puzzling creature, I'm still not convinced it's even a bird. Elandra puts on both gloves, and is immediately enamored. As Agnes is examining the gloves, her peripheral vision notices that statues have now turned and faced our group. Have they multiplied? This feels wrong.

Eggie moves closer to examine and move an arm of a statue and as he looks up, he sees the head of the statue is now staring right into his face. Click, click, click, click. Clicking around us, and now there's more of them. Perfectly still, but closer and larger in number. Are they surrounding us?

Circle up, back to back, it's time to get out of here safely. Elandra gives Emonie the gloves, but she loves to dual wield, so I volunteer to don them. Maybe I can lure that bird of Elandra's. But for now, we need to get out of this town before we become some Scary, Starey Statues. We start to leave

all in a circle, with our heads on a swivel to keep eye contact with them, we reach the edge of the first circle of them. How many more layers of them must we go through before we leave?

Agnes Banes the 3 that are closest to us and then successfully turns the undead. I have never seen such power. They flee with speeds I am thankful are running away from us instead of towards us. We mark this area on our map with a big X and in the margins scribe “Stay the FUCK OUT!” I wonder if Gudger knew about this spooky town…

We continue down the path on our way, and soon we see in our view, a large farmhouse. Probably used to be run by some rich landowners. But now, it’s deserted, no one there, not even those creepy statues. The sun is starting to set, and we will not be trekking in the dark. Maybe this house could serve as a safe house, even just for tonight. Agnes and Barty walk up the front steps of the farmhouse; rocking chairs on the porch that look weathered by time and the elements. To avoid being rude, Barty abides by some invisible code and knocks on the door. Emonie circles the perimeter of the house, and it seems ok. Noticing only a shed in the backyard, with a door ajar.

Barty pushes the door open to try to investigate; looks more like a stable than a shed. Horse corpses lie within their stalls. They don’t look slaughtered, maybe starved, but the decomposition is far too dense for us to really tell, even with Agnes’s proficiency with medicine. This stable seems benign.

Focusing on the farm house, we head to the back door. Emonie skillfully unlocks the door with her lockpick. It smells musty and dusty but we head on inside. There’s a long table with 6 decaying individuals sitting amongst what looks to be a dessert course with multiple plates and a pie dish.

With our investigative eyes, we search the kitchen. The kitchen has two bottles of wine, one is a Durellan red and the other is some shitty rose. Barty stows them in his pack. Scattered around are some half empty bottles, plates and bowls from the baking, and off to the side is a note.

> *“We will not be processed.”*

We move onwards to the living area to investigate some drawers. A coin purse with 12 silver coins, 360 gold coins, and 60 copper pieces. Next to the coin purse is a note, “*NOT ENOUGH”*

The penmanship looks the same as the other note, but legible and neatly written. Agnes finds a glass bottle full of yellowish liquid, the same as the other bottle we found before. Who lived here? Wealthy yes, but noble? Doubtful. A local map in their office reveals they may have been more in the property gaining business and not the farming business. Was this family going to buy out the rest of this area? We see familiar landmarks, the hut we met Silas (we’re coming Addy!) and it’s several miles out from here. Looking further, this map also highlights BIG circles marked in black as if they tried to obscure it. One of those big circles is not only the biggest on this map, but it’s also in the exact direction we need to head to retrieve Addy! It’s almost like our gods want us to walk into trouble. For the sake of the lore?!

Agnes uses her calligraphy skills to review the indentations under the big circles in black over the location we are heading. She reads: *“Processing”, “Cage”, and “Bribe”* We find a top drawer (locked), an abacus, and a healing kit with two charges. Elandra finds an ornate dagger, mainly just

for show. With the downstairs cleared, we ascend to the 2nd floor. The 3 rooms are all bedrooms. One likely of the 2 adults and the other two look like rooms for children. Elegant robes for Elandra, good thing since she couldn't keep the gloves.

Time for a long rest, as I drift off to sleep, I can hear Barty trying to get comfortable and his rhythmic moans and groans lull me to dream land. As we wake, we feel peace, except for Barty, he seems like he wrestled all night to find comfort. Time to get back on the path to Silas and Addy. The land is blackened from a wall of fire. We see tons of cages all filled with corpses that had been set ablaze. Beyond those are flimsy, cloth tents and more corpses of what looks to be soldiers.

Historically, we know when the Blight first hit, so did hysteria and paranoia. Family turning on family. Friends betraying their loved ones. It's clear this area was being used for processing and it looks like most of these corpses weren't infected. Ignorance and paranoia is what brought them down, not the Blight. It's as if they set it a flame. Resistance? Extermination? Who knows. One thing I can say with full confidence is chaos fueled this insanity. Upon further investigation, we see House of Valkenmar banners. This is clearly a government sanctioned area. Mounds of mass graves line the area; and we come across the largest one. Filled with bodies and Agnes can see movement within the dirt and muck. It's like it's bubbling and something is rising…it's. a. Blasphemy!

The rate at which this Blasphemy is summoning other squish gooheads, it's just blasphemous! I tried keeping track of the hits we took with the abacus we found. But I don't think I can recall everything about them like I had hoped. Elandra's force, Agnes's radiant and my psychic damage seem to be penetrating it fully, but the actionable slashes, stabs and bludgeoning doesn't really full at all..half at best?

The battle is epic, and we are managing some great hits that are stopping these monsters in their tracks. We are taking some deep hits on our side as well. Agnes and I are very weak after several deep cuts from the Blasphemy. Emonie shines through to bring down a Blaspho from nearly taking Agnes out. Eggie beams Sanctuary over Agnes and then takes down another Blaspho! Bart takes out the final one, almost tripping into the head of the last one. We barely survived. Agnes is down to 2 MAX HP and Ken is at 8 MAX HP.

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