

City of Sigil Session Summary 01/28/2007

Attendance

Ernest (Dakani Night Scream) sneaks away from the rest of the group over lunch, “Because I need to purchase some... Diet Mountain Dew.” *Paul* instantly understands that nobody would ever actually voluntarily buy Diet Mountain Dew, so he knows that something is up. He explains to the others, “I too must leave, to buy *regular* Mountain Dew!” *Ed* (Minea) decides that whatever is going down it’s going to be expensive, so he leaves to find an ATM. *Chris* (Bone Gnawer) decides that now is a good time to start discussing various crimes that could be committed, in particular walking the check. *Bruce* (Angaff) immediately becomes very agitated, as he’d prefer to enter the criminal fraternity from the top, rather than from the bottom. He explains, “If I’m going to be convicted of something, it had best be something really serious. You know, like tax evasion.” *Chuck* (Tarusk Fireblade) just rolls his eyes.

Tim (Brakiel) remains quite oblivious to all this controversy: he and *April* are too busy picking through their vegetarian fajitas to find the villainous, villainous bits of meat that apparently snuck into the plate.

Patrick (Doctor Cid) just stays out of it all. And *Matt* (Beilorveildoxyx) manages the trick of showing up late enough that all the ad hominem attacks have already been cast, leaving him unscathed. This week.

<i>Player</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Home Plane</i>	<i>Race/Class</i>
Bruce	Angaff	Beastlands	Fire Genasi Evoker 1 / Fighter 1
Chris	Bone Gnawer	Prime Material	Troll 3
Chuck	Tarusk Fireblade	Acheron	Bladeling Duskblade 2
Ed	Minea	Prime Material	Medusa 3
Ernest	Dakani Night Scream	Acheron	Bladeling Rogue 1 / Swordsage 1
Matt	Beilorveildoxyx	Prime Material	Red Dragon 3
Patrick	Doctor Cid	Prime Material	Human Paladin 3

<i>Player</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Home Plane</i>	<i>Race/Class</i>
Tim	Brakiel	The Seven Mounting Heavens of Celestia (second layer, Realm of Bahamut)	Trumpet Archon 3

The Troubles of the Funerary Guild

A tall man approaches *Brakiel* to confess that the *Funerary Guild* has some problems. In particular, their various undead servitors near the Madhouse District are becoming hard to control. Many of them have actually up and gone completely out of control. Even worse, some of the (dead) residents of the Mortuary are getting up and walking out into the Madhouse District, and the District appears to be expanding.

Brakiel explains to the man that while he is willing to follow this commission out of altruism, his various compatriots are vicious, selfish mercenaries who will require compensation. The man works something out with him.

Brakiel returns home (wherever that may be) and wakes the late risers with his big fuckin' trumpet. He tells them that they have a job killing undeads. Everyone else promptly runs to the marketplace, eager for a chance to shop because everyone knows that shopping is the most important part of any role-playing game. *Brakiel* stays behind because he's too obsessed with his shiny new character sheet. He calls out to the others, "Hey! At twelfth level I'll have 172 hit points! Yoohoo! Are you lis-ten-ing?"

Bone-Gnawer pays the trumpet archon no heed. He is too busy explaining to *Dakani Night-Scream*, "Holy water cost only twenty-five golds each! We can neg-o-tiate with lots of priests, someone will cut us good deal! Also, must get big clubby weapons! None of these stupid slashy and pointy things!"

The characters also arrange to buy a *Wand of Lesser Vigor* for 750 gold. They expect that the ability to induce healing will be quite handy soon.

The Gates of the Mortuary

The characters pass through the gates of the Mortuary. *Angaff* points out, "Look! They've got the walls lined with razorvine! That must be to keep the living out, or the dead in. Whichever."

Beilorveildothyx grumps, “Could you be quiet for just a second? This is a place that demands great respect!”

An attendant comes by to ask if the characters are there for a viewing. Bone-Gnawer asks, “Would you happen to have any fresh bodies available? Or even not-so-fresh? I miss lunch today.”

The attendant ignores the troll.

Brakiel explains that the characters are here to help the Mortuary Guild with their undead problems. He is embarrassed to realize that he didn’t happen to ask the name of the Mortuary Guild member who originally asked him for help. This turns out not to be such a terrible problem: the proper fellow comes along after a moment. He offers the characters 300 gold to deal with the situation.

Doctor Cid asks the attendant, “Would you be able to provide us with some healing magic?”

The attendant confesses, “That’s really not our forte, unless you’re already dead. Healing, you see, takes people further away from the perfect release of death. We believe that the proper path is to let worldly attachments go.”

The characters are directed to head towards the Gatehouse, which was once the headquarters of the Bleak Cabal. The Bleak Cabal’s central ideological point was that the material world has no value at all and that there is no meaning in the Universe. Many of them went crazy. Predictably, they were wildly popular in Sigil back in the day. On the plus side, some of them believed that the only way to find meaning was through various charitable works, so they also ran a lot of hospitals for the insane. As it happens, many of these hospitals were indistinguishable from Chapter Houses for the Bleak Cabal.

The Gatehouse

The Gatehouse is one of the oldest buildings in Sigil. It has huge gates, and nobody knows why it was built. The characters see a couple of zombies walking around nearby. *Doctor Cid*’s initial instinct is to run up and club them down, but *Angaff* suggests that the characters had best check first to see if the zombies are actually rogues, or if they’re legally contracted. Exactly how to do this isn’t clear: the zombies are just walking along, parallel to the slope of the Gatehouse hill.

Doctor Cid clubs one zombie down, but Brakiel convinces him to leave the second one so the characters can follow it. Doctor Cid protests, “That doesn’t sound like much of an afternoon, but okay.” Eight monsters and creatures fall into line behind the zombie. Hilarity ensues.

Eventually, the zombie turns off the path and heads uphill into a Sanatorium. There is a crowd of about a dozen zombies and skeletons standing outside the entrance of the building. The characters approach to about fifty feet with no reaction from the horde.

A man with burning red eyes and taut, mottled skin steps out of the Sanatorium. He cackles, “Welcome loyal followers! Heheheheh... You must be here for the Master’s great celebration!” Doctor Cid speculates that the fellow is a ghoul, an eater of the flesh of the living. The zombies and skeletons shuffle forward into the Sanatorium. The characters attempt to shuffle after them, but they’re really not sufficiently disguised as undead. Predictably, he shouts out, “Intruders! Get them!”

Battle is joined. Brakiel is beside himself with joy, because he can cast his *Girallon’s Blessing* spell upon Bone-Gnawer. Additional arms emerge from the troll’s sides with a squelching sound. Bone-Gnawer’s dismay is only temporary, swiftly dispelled by his realization that he can now claw his way through zombies twice as fast as before. The boss ghoul proves to be the toughest part of the operation. It bites Dakani Night Scream, causing him to scream rather convincingly. Dakani responds by grabbing and throwing the ghoul then standing back and watching as Tarusk Fireblade sits on top of the creature and claws it into pieces.

Angaff finds that he’s very happy fighting zombies: they are such pathetic opponents that even he is able to do a creditable job of fighting them in melee. At least until one of them gets lucky and lays him open.

The characters bemoan the odds of finding any worthwhile loot on the zombies. All, that is, except for Bone-Gnawer. He picks out the half-dozen freshest zombies and gathers himself a selection of arms and legs to chew on.

Visiting the Sanatorium

The characters carefully step into the Sanatorium. The décor is uniformly grim: black basalt walls illuminated by flaring braziers. The reeking odors of ash and death permeate everything.

Bone-Gnawer asks the others, “Should we try to capture one of the talky undeads and ask it what’s going on?”

Dakani answers, “If we can find one that doesn’t paralyze people. Are there any that don’t?”

Bone-Gnawer grumbles, “The others all drain levels. I guess we just kill them all.” He and Doctor Cid move forward to inspect the building. Once Doctor Cid is convinced that the situation is clear, he motions the others to join him. They all assemble around a closed door and investigate it. It proves to be locked, at least until Dakani opens it. It takes him two minutes, prompting several cruel comments from other characters.

The Library

Dakani opens the door. There is a bright flash. Dakani makes his Will save but feels no other ill effects. He grimaces at Doctor Cid, “Brains!” Doctor Cid cuffs him on the head.

The characters move into the library. Most of the books are in Planar and Common. A large number of titles are on the subjects of insanity and healing; they are totally worthless to anyone who isn’t involved in curing insane people. They might be worthless even to someone who *is* involved in curing the insane. The characters leave them alone.

There is a large journal on the desk in the center of the library. The most recent entry is typically ominous:

It has been several days since Nigel Blackheart passed away. Several of the healers report strange sounds from the catacombs. I fear that Nigel’s spirit may not be resting easily.

The characters find several interesting items in the room, primarily in the desk:

- A masterwork healing kit (8 uses left)
- 2 potions labeled “*Cure Moderate Wounds*”;
- 1 potion labeled “*Cure Serious Wounds*”;
- 2 divine scrolls of *Remove Paralysis*;
- 2 divine scrolls of *Lesser Restoration*;
- 1 divine scroll of *Restoration*;
- 1 divine scroll of *Dispel Magic*; and

- A small, unmarked brass key.

It develops that *Nigel Blackheart* was a powerful wizardly Necromancer. He once moved on the Dustmen, but was captured during his attempt. He was tried by the Mercykillers and adjudged to be insane. Accordingly, he was given over to the Sanatorium for confinement. He spent several years in the Day House. By the time he was moved to this building he was nearly catatonic, never moving and rarely mumbling deranged evils. When he died, he was buried in the catacombs beneath the Sanatorium.

Beilorveildothyx takes the potion of *Cure Serious Wounds*. Brakiel and Doctor Cid split the scrolls between themselves. Bone-Gnawer and Tarusk each take one *Cure Moderate Wounds* potion.

Another Bedroom

The door across the hall proves to be unlocked. Bone-Gnawer heads inside to find two beds and a chest. There is blood on the bedsheets, but no other evidence of an occupant. Dakani checks inside the chest and plucks out a small, clinking sack. It contains mixed gold and silver coins. He puts it aside to count later.

The Zombie's Ball

The characters find another room. It sounds like there are children inside, playing instruments badly. Again, Bone-Gnawer moves in. The place looks like a kitchen that has been converted into a zombie ballroom. A zombie orchestra plays mangled music. Several zombie couples dance jerkily. Intestine streamers dangle from the ceiling.

Doctor Cid, offended by Dakani's attempts to teach the dancing zombies new steps, kills them all. They put up no resistance. Then he loots the zombies' instruments, coming up with a lute, a flute, a lyre and a tambourine, each worth about 50 gold.

The Distraught Healer-Thing

The last room on the first floor is occupied by a figure in a healer's robe. As Bone-Gnawer clomps in it is holding its head in its hands. Then it looks up. Its flesh is leathery and its teeth are long and snagged. It looks angry and insane. It attacks.

Dakani Night Scream, professing a desire to “Not take it up the old colon here...” moves forward in a defensive stance. Characters pile in after him, delivering a steady diet of damage to the creature. It doesn’t last long.

Doctor Cid examines the remains and concludes that the creature was a wight. He assures the others, “They drain levels!”

Brakiel looks aghast. “Can someone explain that to me before I charge on in next time?”

The Iron Pipe Room

The characters stomp into the next room, behind Bone-Gnawer. The room is mostly empty, except for a series of iron pipes along one wall, array from floor to ceiling. It is clear that there is liquid in the pipes, but it isn’t moving very fast.

The characters decide that iron pipes aren’t valuable enough to cart off so they just move out to investigate the upstairs.

The Upstairs Surgery

The stairs up lead to a long hallway running the entire length of the asylum. There are several side corridors and doors. The characters move up to the first door. It isn’t locked, so Bone-Gnawer gets the honors.

The place looks like it was once some kind of Gothic surgery. The drains around the edges of the room explain the iron pipes downstairs. Bone-Gnawer looks around and rumbles, “This reminds me of *Saw*. Hrmmm... I just don’t want to be the one who falls into the pit full of syringes.” Then four scalpels fling themselves at him. He claws at them. Angaff winces as he imagines the possible effects of clawing at a scalpel. Bone Gnawer damages one, but doesn’t destroy it. He grumbles, “They like mosquitoes, but sharper! Hgurraugh!”

Doctor Cid grabs a scalpel and stabs it into the door. Weirdly, this works. The scalpel fights for a moment, then just goes dead.

Both Tarusk and Dakani are oddly relaxed about the prospect of flying scalpels. Where they come from, this is pretty much just normal weather. Tarusk reminisces, “I remember when we were kids and had big scalpel fights on cold Winter days after a big scalpelstorm...”

The characters eventually stomp the scalpels into uselessness, then search through the surgery. They find enough random supplies to bump their masterwork healer's kit to ten charges.

The adjacent room proves to be another surgery, albeit one lacking the animated scalpels.

Dinner Time!

The characters move further on. They find a door, and can hear the sounds of feeding from behind it. Dakani speculates, "That sounds more like trolls feeding than English aristocrats. We'd best be careful." Doctor Cid volunteers to go through first.

Doctor Cid sees four figures clustered around a stone table. All are messily chewing pieces from a body lying upon the table. One of the figures looks up at him with glowing red eyes. Doctor Cid speculates, "I don't think they're going to offer us dinner."

As usual, the characters pile down upon the ghouls. The ghouls answer in kind, though they seem a bit overwhelmed by the spectacle of eight various characters storming them in the midst of dinner. Dakani Night Scream's *Shadow Sword Technique* combined with Bone-Gnawer's relentless enthusiasm serve well to tear one ghoul apart. Angaff manages to end another with the *Light of Lunia*, albeit only after Dakani trips it and others stab it several times.

When all four ghouls are slain, the characters search the room. Nobody finds anything except Bone-Gnawer, who is drawn to the (edible) body on the table. He eventually concludes (with help) that the body has a tattoo suggesting membership in the Bleak Cabal. The body is pretty fresh, probably not more than a day old.

The Cell of Evil

The characters spread out to search the rest of the second floor. Doctor Cid identifies one room with evil in it. He informs the others, who gather up around it. It appears to be one of four cells. Dakani peers through the viewing slot and sees nothing more than a dead body, chained to the wall. This looks similar to the three other cells the characters have seen. Doctor Cid and Bone-Gnawer open the door. Doctor Cid blindly strides forth to slay the undead. He promptly discovers that the body has a very noxious stench to it.

Doctor Cid withdraws. Angaff uses up the rest of the *Light of Lunia* on it, from the safety of the doorway. The others join him in filling the body full of arrows and whatnot. Eventually, Doctor Cid verifies that the evil aura is gone.

The Pet Room

The characters find another room with a lot of open cages, each containing a dead animal. Dakani very cautiously closes all of the doors. Nothing attacks him.

The Other Pet Room

Bone-Gnawer opens up another door and has a *Resident Evil* moment. The room looks like the other Pet Room, except that here the animals are showing a lot more activity. There is a variety of rats, dogs and snakes inside, none of them looking particularly normal.

Tarusk flings a vial of holy water at three of the rats, burning them all. Bone-Gnawer takes advantage of this by charging forward and executing one of them. A moment later, he realizes that all the animals have lurched forward to completely surround him.

Beilorveildoxyx bites away at one rat, ending it. Angaff scampers up to a zombie hound and sets it on fire. Brakiel is so desperate to be able to help in the fight that he is willing to take attacks of opportunity to get into a striking position. Bone-Gnawer ignores them all: he is too busy taking out zombie dogs and snakes three at a time. Raaaugh!

The Asylum Basement

Tarusk examines the rotting stone walls and the patches of noisome fungus upon the walls and sighs, “This place reminds me of home...” Angaff rather prissily attempts to avoid dirtying his boots in a particularly nasty puddle.

The characters find that they have three choices to explore: an open room, a narrow winding hallway, or a corridor blocked by barrels. Beilorveildoxyx leads the way into the open room. He finds a door, and a lot of junk left by the original proprietors of the asylum.

Doctor Cid checks out the barrels. He finds that they're all full of blood. Bone-Gnawer is overjoyed. "At last! Glug-glug-glug!" While Bone-Gnawer drinks the barrels up, Doctor Cid spots a door in the corridor blocked by the barrels. The characters move past the barrels to examine the door. Dakani can hear something talking behind the door, but he cannot make out the words.

This time, Beilorveildothyx charges first. He finds that this place is different from the rest of the asylum: it looks like a catacomb dug directly from the gray crumbling stones that underlie all of Sigil. The characters forge onward.

Dakani sneaks around a corner to see two ghouls. They seem to be talking to someone off-stage.

The first one simpers, "I cannot wait until your army is ready, Blackheart! We will be the new rulers of the world!"

The second one adds, "The flesh of the living shall be our daily meal!"

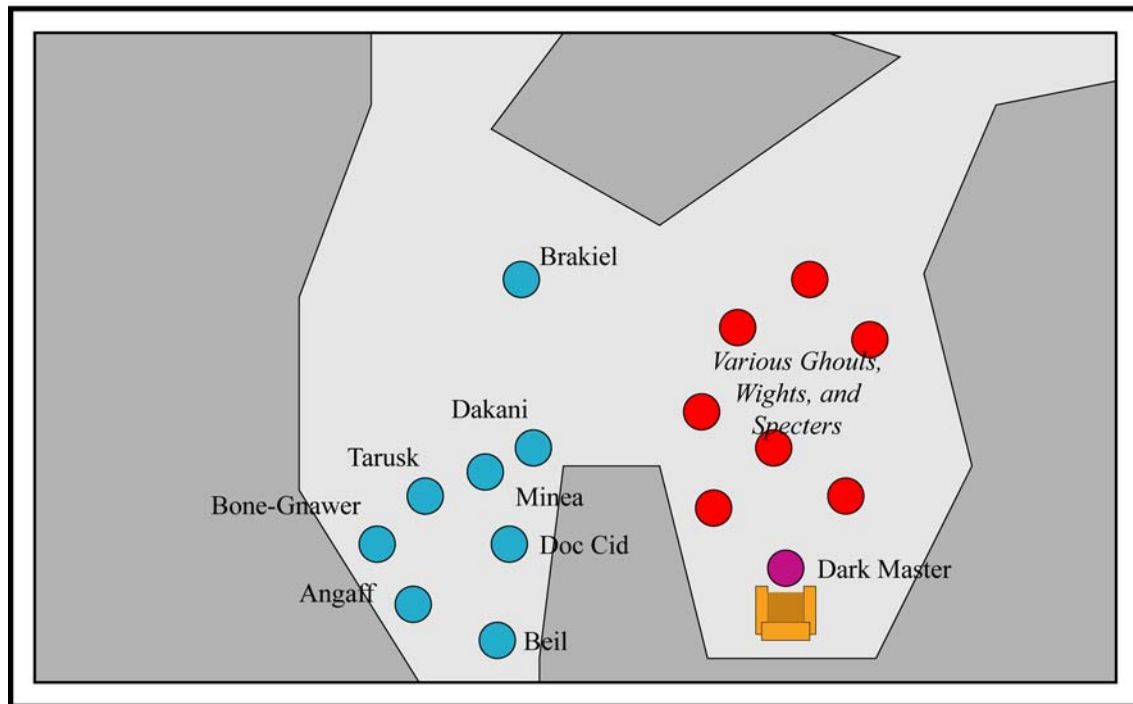
Dakani makes some gestures suggesting that he would really appreciate some buffs, fast. The other characters figure out that this is because there aren't just two ghouls. There are actually more like eight creatures in the room: an appalling collection of ghouls, ghastrs, wights, shadows and specters, plus the Dark Master that the two ghouls had been flattering.

The characters move forward and assemble a skirmish line. The ghouls rush forward, crashing against the characters' defenses. One shadow decides that he would prefer to go where the feasting is tasty and passes right through the cave wall to attack Angaff. Angaff backs up and sends two rays of the *Light of Lunia* at the shadow. The others deduce that the shadow's attack must have shaken him badly, as he misses both times. Brakiel and Minea move back to save him.

Doctor Cid suddenly yells out, "Saint Cuthbert smite thee!" and swings wildly at a ghoul. He misses, then curses, "Every time I try to use *Smite Evil* I miss!" Far away in the Outer Planes, Saint Cuthbert shakes his head in despair.

Beilorveildothyx falls upon a wight and a ghoul, tearing both of them into undead gibbets. He roars with draconic satisfaction, then resolves to buy some mouthwash later to wash the horrible taste of undead out of his maw.

Catacombs of the Dark Master



Dakani moves up towards the Dark Master. He notes that it doesn't seem that aware of what's going on. It looks like the dark outline of a human being with glowing red eyes. He moves back and loads his crossbow. Tarusk moves up and shoots the Dark Master with *Disrupt Undead*. He misses but this is enough to wake the Dark Master, or *Nigel Blackheart* as he is better known.

Nigel Blackheart casts a spell. Tarusk desperately thinks back to his lessons and figures out that the spell was *Mage Armor*. Tarusk and Dakani exchange glances. Tarusk says, "*Mage Armor*. We're clearly all doomed." Dakani nods. They form up into a new skirmish line with Doctor Cid, then charge.

After a long series of ineffectual strikes, Brakiel finally manages to land a strike on the last shadow and dispatch it.

Meanwhile, the characters are discovering that attacking Nigel Blackheart requires magic weapons. Bone-Gnawer in particular is deeply upset by the fact that he can't rip Blackheart limb from limb. Brakiel flies up and casts *Dispel Magic* from a scroll, but fails to strip away any of Blackheart's defensive magic.

Blackheart strikes Tarusk, who learns that the Dark Master's big trick is draining CON. Tarusk looks very, very pale.

Angaff hands his magical shortsword to Bone-Gnawer, who immediately demonstrates that he needs a bit more familiarity with the concept of hilted blade weapons. The troll curses the elusiveness of his semi-corporeal foe.

Nigel Blackheart takes careful attention to the fact that Beilorveildoxyx actually managed to hurt him. He strikes the dragon, drawing away 6 CON and leaving the dragon shuddering with the sudden cold.

Temporary insanity overcomes Doctor Cid. He throws a healing potion right through Nigel Blackheart's form. The vial shatters against the wall, prompting a howl of anguish from every injured character.

Tarusk manages to hit Blackheart with a *Disrupt Undead*. He explains to the others, "All I can do now is panic!"

Brakiel comments, "Watch how it is done, humans!" He executes a flyby *Cure Serious Wounds* attack on Blackheart and inflicts 11 points of damage. Blackheart flies after the angel, ignoring the danger posed by various attacks of opportunity. This allows Bone-Gnawer to cut him down with his loaned magic shortsword.

Inspect the Crates

The characters look around to find valuable items. They do pretty darn well for themselves:

- A spellbook titled *Nigel's Noxious Necromantic Natterings*;
- Three pearls worth 100 gp each;
- An emerald worth 1000 gp;
- A gold bracelet set with tiny rubies worth 500 gp;
- A potion labeled *Potion of Intelligence*;
- A magical ring;
- A magical staff; and
- A magical amulet

Angaff investigates the spellbook. He determines that it contains:

- Cantrips: a wide array, none that Angaff doesn't already know;
- 1st Level: Cause Fear, Chill Touch, Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Ray of Enfeeblement,

- 2nd Level: Darkness, Melf's Acid Arrow, Scare, Spectral Hand.

Angaff lays claim to the spellbook. Nobody else says anything.

The End of the Session

Each character gains a base award of 1560 experience points. Those characters who get a 20% bonus gain 1872 experience points.

Angaff gains another level of Evoker and rolls 2 additional hp. Tarusk goes to Duskblade 3. Dakani goes to Rogue 2, Swordsage 1. Bone-Gnawer becomes a 3rd level troll.