

City of Sigil Session Summary 07/01/2007

Attendance

A fell curtain of light falls from the sky to oppress the land. *Bruce* (Angaff) stirs, unwilling at first, to meet the day. He muses, “Would anyone truly notice if I just wrote this section ahead of time, without any referent to what might actually be going on?”

Miles away, huddled in a dank cavern to escape the bright, *Chris* (Bone Gnawer) growls out, “This has gone too far! He must be stopped!” *Ernest* (Dakani Night Scream) cries out, “Hear hear! Hear hear!” A viscid string of putrescence escapes from his misshapen maw.

Chuck (Skellish) mutters, “Not even reality does he acknowledge now! How long until he does not even bother to keep track of attendance?” Losing all sight of the others, his voice ascends into a shriek tainted by the fell depths of madness: “Ended must the contagion be!”

Paul staggers into the cave, ghastly and burnt. “We are all lost! Lost I say! There is nothing to be done!” He tells the others that forbidden horrors have already consumed *Tim* and *Matt*, and that they are sure to be next.

At this point *Patrick* (Doctor Cid) steps in. He blinks a bit and asks, as usual, “Hey, what’s with all the death in here? And would it kill you guys to buy an air freshener? Guys? Guys?...” The light fades. There is the liquid sound of cracking bone. A terrible voice whispers, “It is lunch-time...”

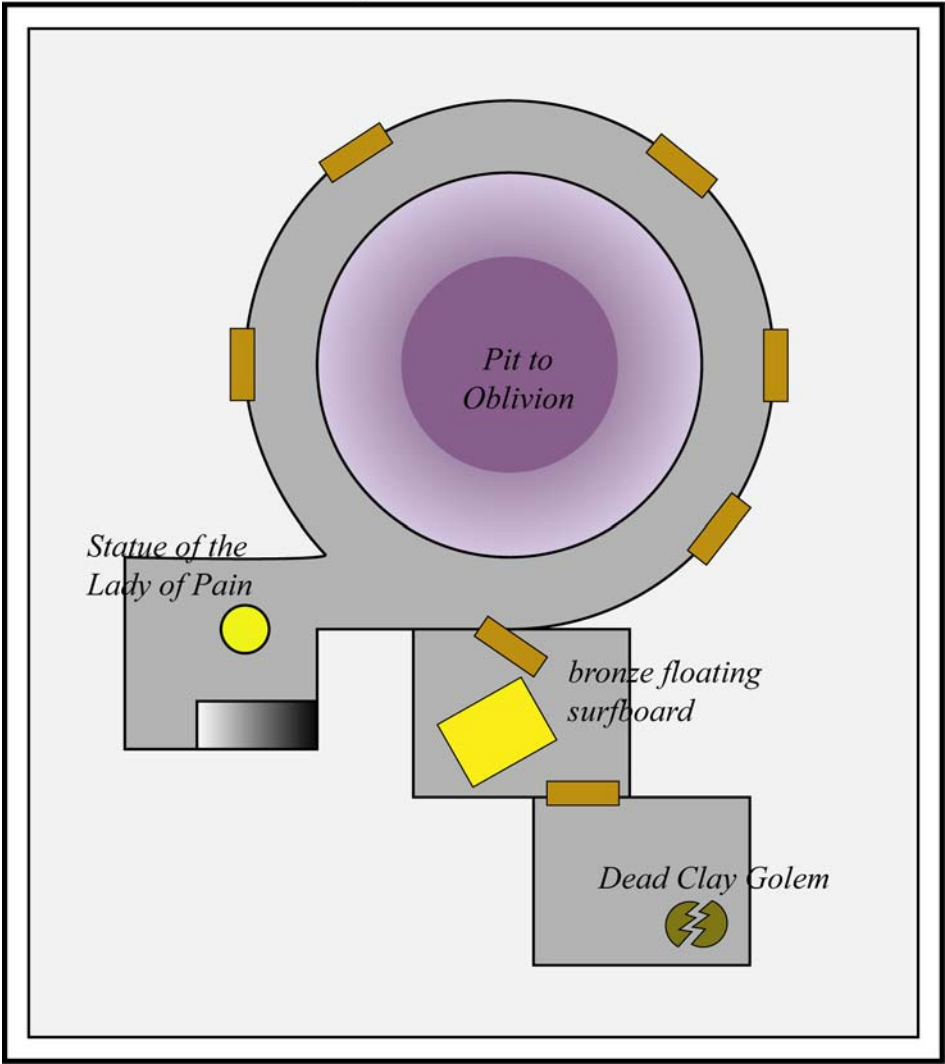
<i>Player</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Home Plane</i>	<i>Race/Class</i>
Bruce	Angaff	Beastlands	Fire Genasi Evoker 5 / Fighter 1 / Eldritch Knight 2
Chris	Bone Gnawer	Prime Material	Troll 9
Chuck	Skellish	Prime Material	Spellscale Sorcerer 8
Ed	Ray	Prime Material	Pixie (7) / Favored Soul 4
Ernest	Dakani Night Scream	Acheron	Bladeling Rogue 5 / Swordsage 3
Matt	Beilorveildothyx	Prime Material	Red Dragon 8
Patrick	Doctor Cid	Prime Material	Human Paladin 6 / Hunter of the Dead 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 7

The Shaft of Oblivion

The characters find themselves still buried deep in the Mazes, standing in a circular chamber dominated by a huge statue of the *Lady of Pain* and a shaft into oblivion. The chamber is ringed with doors that glow with a blue light. The walls of the shaft aren't particularly climbable, but ledges with doors appear every fifty to sixty feet down on average.

Entry to the Bane Heart



Dakani Night Scream investigates the one door that is ajar. He finds a large, levitating bronze plate in one. He tries using it to levitate down the shaft and is just a bit disappointed to see it fall far, far down. He moves further in to the next room and finds evidence that someone got into a very grim fight with a clay golem a long time ago.

Dakani Night Scream continues opening doors. He finds a room containing a blackened winged skeleton hanging upside down on a crucifix. He lets it down and it rejuvenates itself into an angel who admits to having been locked up after accidentally leading a demon into Sigil and causing a minor disturbance. The characters question the thing on its life philosophy and conclude that it unhesitatingly serves whatever force of Good it finds most convenient to serve at the time. *Angaff* muses, "Aha. An opportunist of good."

The entity indicates on questioning that its name is *Calin* and that it is an Astral Deva. It provides enough information that *Angaff* could summon him later on, should he ever learn *Greater Planar Summon*.

The characters consult with *Yaeshla the Dagger* to learn where the last part of the *Staff of Warding*. It tells them that the last piece is down in the pit.

We Keep On Opening Doors

The characters try opening another door. A great wind rushes out, inflicting horrible images of pain and torture on the characters as it passes. *Skellish* offers, "Great. We just let out some kind of evil air demon. At this point, we're just letting evil things out. I think we need to stop."

Dakani Night Scream comments, "Hey, Doctor Cid! Could you *Detect Evil* around to see if that thing is still around? And hey, let's open up some more doors!"

Bone Gnawer tries the next door. A sickly gray fog flows out and starts to consume his memories. Dakani yells, "Slam the door! Slam the door!"

Bone Gnawer leans on the door and shuts it down. He growls, "Good idea... whoever you are..." He drinks a *Greater Magic Fang* potion and howls something about, "I'm going to destroooy it!" None of this impresses the fog, which continues to seep out the edges of the door.

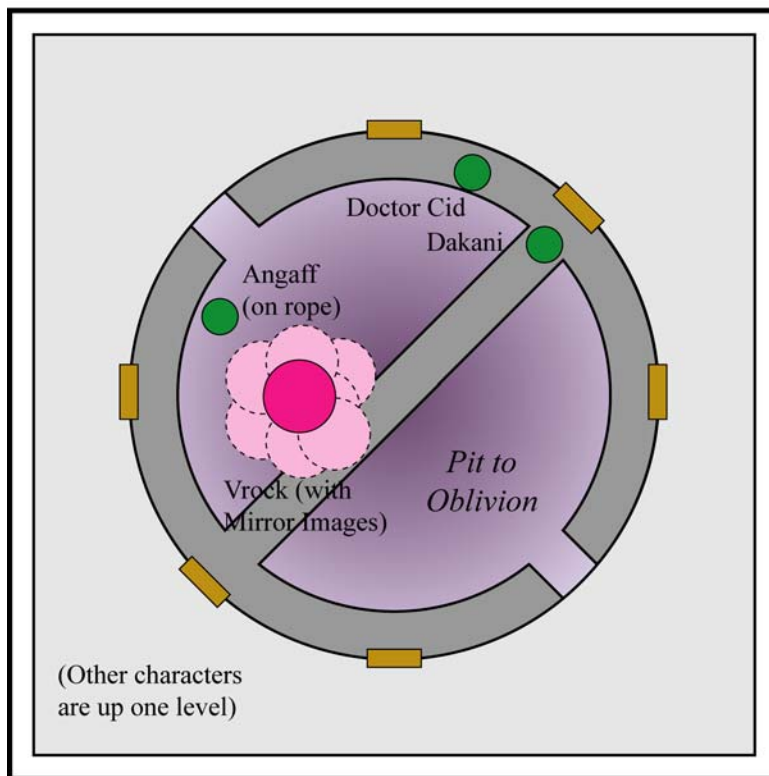
Dakani Night Scream decides that the best plan is a forward retreat. He rigs ropes to get the characters down to the next level of the shaft.

Party Goes Down the Hole!

Dakani Night Scream heads down first, leveraging his Climb skills. Doctor Cid, Skellish and Angaff are lowered down, and Bone Gnawer brings up the rear. Things are going okay until the characters head to the second level of doors. It is at this point that a vrock flaps up and utters a disorienting call that leaves half of the group stunned. It exploits the situation further by massacring Angaff as he hangs helpless from the rope rig. And, as a further bit of insult, he inflicts Angaff with *Demonic Spores*. Angaff feebly stirs through his pouch, looking for some aspirin.

Dakani Night Scream observes this process and calls out, “Watch out for the lightning sperm! And I bet he doesn’t call in the morning!”

Inside the Bane Heart Shaft



One of the four Sons of Mercy casts a quick *Bless* that disposes of the demonic spores. Then Skellish flings out a barrage of *Magic Missiles* that wipes away four of the vrock’s *Mirror Images*.

Bone Gnawer drinks down a *Blood Wind* potion and attacks the vrock at range. He notices with some distress that the creature appears almost completely unhurt, though it does eliminate some additional images.

Dakani Night Scream flings a tanglefoot bag at the creature, slowing it down. Angaff tags it with a *Ray of Flame*, then yells out, “It’s a vrock! It’s eight feet tall and weighs about 500 pounds! They serve as aides and servants to more powerful demons! In groups, they can do a dance to inflict massive damage in a hundred foot radius! They have spores and stunning screech! Plus mirror image, heroism, teleport and telekinesis! And like most demons, they can only be hurt by good weapons! They’re also immune to electricity and poison, and are resistant to everything else!”

Skellish is just impressed that Angaff is able to yell all that out so quickly at the same time as casting a spell. Bone Gnawer mumbles, “Uhh... What?” Dakani Night Scream suspects that Angaff is making up the part about the dance that does terrible damage.

Angaff’s reply mostly consists of horrible screams as the vrock chews his gizzard out. One of the Sons of Mercy responds by lowering his carcass down to the lower platform. Angaff groans, “Ooooh... I don’t feel so good...”

Skellish calls out, “Don’t worry! It’ll pay attention to me in a sec!” He flings an *Orb of Force* at it. The creature staggers. Bone Gnawer decides that he wants to be a part of the aggro competition and shoots it square in the chest with a blessed arrow. And Dakani Night Scream hits it with a *Shadow Garrote* that leaves it flat-footed and wheezing.

The vrock answers this situation by slashing through Skellish. Then Skellish replies with a second *Orb of Force* that blows clean through the vrock, killing it instantly.

Vrocks Are Terrible Housekeepers

The characters peek into one of the open doors and quickly recognize that the place is the vrock’s home. The place smells of excrement and fouler things. Bone Gnawer and Dakani Night Scream volunteer to pick through the piles for valuable items. They find:

- A gold necklace set with topaz;
- A pair of silver combs;
- A silver flute;
- A gold-framed silver mirror; and

- An ivory wand

The Horrible Room of Flying Needles

On the other side of the vrock nest, the characters find a forty-foot corridor leading to a locked door. Dakani Night Scream takes point, searches for traps and manipulates the *Hand of Aoskar* to unlock the door. Bone Gnawer tromps in first. He reports back, “Penguins! Lots and lots of penguins!” The others crowd up and find that the room is empty.

Bone Gnawer moves in and promptly triggers a trap. He gets shot through by four poisonous darts. He grunts something about how poison these days isn’t what it used to be. Appropriately warned, Dakani Night Scream disables the trap.

Convinced that the place must be safe, Bone Gnawer moves forward and almost falls into a pit trap. Then he stands still while Dakani Night Scream searches the place square-by-square. He finds that the entire floor is made up of pit traps. He disables a few then tells the others that it’s perfectly safe. Bone Gnawer believes him, and falls into a trap for his trouble. Bone Gnawer curses as he turns on his *Feather Fall* token and floats safely to the bottom.

Things Get Grim

The next door is locked. Dakani Night Scream unlocks it and is promptly turned to stone. This prompts something of a problem, as nobody has a way to bring him back. As a last chance, Angaff takes a look at the ivory wand. He concludes that it is a *Wand of Cause Serious Wounds* with 9 charges left.

Doctor Cid decides that he’d like to open the door even knowing what happened to Dakani Night Scream. After an uneasy moment, he makes it through okay. The room contains a box surrounded by unlit candles. The box is magical, with an overwhelming necromantic aura. Doctor Cid confirms that it is also evil. The candles are also magical, and evil. They have a strong conjuration aura.

The characters camp out for a while as they wait for *Brakiel* to get back with a *Stone to Flesh* scroll. When he returns, Dakani Night Scream is back.

And the Other Door Ajar

The characters walk over to the other side of the platform and check out the open door there. They find that there is a big golem-looking creature standing guard over the place. The characters briefly discuss the situation and decide that they'd best avoid dealing with an iron golem. Unfortunately, the Sons of Mercy insist. Doctor Cid walks in. The iron golem stands to attention and brandishes its blade. Doctor Cid tells the Sons of Mercy, "See? It is animated. We seriously don't want to fight this thing."

One of the Sons of Mercy exclaims, "We shall surely die in fighting it, but if that is what Mercy demands then we give our lives gratefully!"

Doctor Cid rolls his eyes and attacks the golem. The golem pays him no heed. Dakani Night Scream takes the opportunity to sneak past the golem. One of the Sons of Mercy whispers to another, "Observe! By making insane, suicidal declarations we've gotten them to take risks that we'd prefer not to take ourselves!"

Dakani Night Scream creeps back to report that there is a whole Temple to Pelor back there. He brings the other characters in. The iron golem still doesn't pay them any heed. Then he starts trying to open doors. He confirms that one door is trap-free, opens it, and promptly gets blasted with sonic energy for his troubles. He deals with the problem through brute force: he just makes a save and forces the door open.

The Sword of Lies

The room beyond contains eight glowing swords floating in the air. Doctor Cid indicates that one of them is evil and the others are good. Dakani Night Scream takes the evil one. The other seven vanish as he takes the one. The Sons of Mercy say, "Well, this is the end of our quest! May we have the sword?" Dakani Night Scream leers and drools at them. He tells them, "I'm going to keep this until we get to use it on whatever thing is down at the bottom of the chasm."

The lead Son explains, "I don't think you want to use that. It has an evil, corrupting influence."

Dakani answers, "Hey, I'm from Acheron. If I think I can use it, then I can use it."

The Son points out, “We don’t really think you’ll be coming back. Let’s try an alternative plan. You seem like mercenary types, will you sell it?”

Skellish offers, “What price?” On the side, he casts *Detect Magic* and confirms that it has an overwhelming aura of evocation, abjuration and illusion. The characters bargain and finally agree upon eight *Blessed* weapons for the characters once they get back.

Another Golem

The characters pick about a bit more and find another room with a second iron golem, plus a bunch of skeletons. One of the skeletons is wearing very expensive armor, so the characters attempt to rope it in. Unfortunately, as soon as Dakani Night Scream disturbs the skeleton the second iron golem comes to life.

It doesn’t take the characters long to recognize that there is no way for them to deliver a sufficient amount of violence to affect an iron golem. They run for it. Bone Gnawer stands as a last defense while the others run. He lasts for two rounds before the golem pounds him into marshmallow. Dakani sets ropes and scales down to the next level. Doctor Cid leaps for it, using a *Feather Fall* token. And the two magicians alternately turn *Invisible* and *Fly* away.

In the process, it develops that the characters managed to actually pull the well-equipped skeleton to the edge of the platform, close enough that they can retrieve it when the golem wanders back to its starting location. The skeleton is equipped with:

- A *Longsword +2*;
- *Full Plate +1*;
- A magical spined shield;
- A gold ring with an emerald; and
- A large platinum key

The skeleton is also carrying 435 gold, which Bone Gnawer very quietly pockets. Skellish spots him doing this, and extracts 200 gold as a payment for silence.

Don’t Mess With the Dark Star

The characters descend another 580 feet before they see another open door. They follow it down a hallway. As usual, Dakani leads the group and looks for traps. He tells

everyone, “All clear!” and opens the door. And then everyone except Skellish disappears.

Skellish uneasily looks into the chamber. He sees a simple chamber lined in polished steel plates. A beautiful pendant in a starburst pattern floats in the exact center of the chamber.

Everyone else finds themselves standing underneath a beautiful starry night. Everything seems blue, from the stars to the stone they are standing upon. They are standing upon a large star-shaped area of stone. At the center of the stone platform is a bright glowing blue sapphire object. Doctor Cid walks up and pokes it with his finger. A large blue dragon emerges. It says, “Welcome to the Dark Star! I am its omnipotent ruler and you are my slaves!”

Meanwhile, in the real world Skellish uses *Mage Hand* to bring the sapphire necklace over for close examination. He determines that it has a conjuration aura. And it has the words “Dark Star” carved on it in draconic. He very experimentally tries out saying “Dark Star!” and finds that he now shares the room with all his companions, and a blue dragon.

The blue dragon appears to be surprised and terrified. It howls, “Where did my home go!”

Bone Gnawer roars in berserk rage. The dragon screams in terror and shrivels away. Doctor Cid yells out, “I’m not going to be your slave anymore!” He slams the dragon square on the head with his warhammer. The strike only barely scratches the thing, but it continues howling.

Skellish decides that he can’t bear to see the helpless dragon being beaten up. He says, “Dark Star!” again. Suddenly everyone, including the dragon *and* Skellish, is trapped in the crystal again.

Back in its element, Dark Star flaps back into the air, taking a strike from Bone Gnawer in the process, and then unleashes lightning breath against everyone except Angaff. Angaff and Skellish respond by opening up with a series of spell attacks that leave it staggered and bleeding. And then Bone Gnawer takes it out. The dragon’s body falls into oblivion.

With his last few hit points, Dakani Night Scream says, “Dark Star!” and brings everyone back to reality.

Bone Gnawer asks, “What the hell happened? First we were outside and everything was good, and then we were in the box again?” Skellish says precisely nothing.

Repository of the Staff

Somewhere beneath 1100 feet down the abyss the characters find the layer where their talking knife thinks the staff is to be found. They pick their way forward carefully into a room that looks like it was the scene of a terrible conflict a long time ago. Doctor Cid reports that the whole room appears to be *Unhallowed*.

The characters pass through into a reddish-black room consumed by a cold aura that consumes their souls. A pile of rags lies across the room. Doctor Cid reports, “Those rags are both evil *and* undead!”

The characters are suddenly prompted to think that combining the two parts of the staff that they *do* have might be useful. They find out that this is in fact true: the combined parts can be activated by expending a spell slot and can generate several spell effects: *Lightning Bolt*, *Levitate*, *Magic Missile*, and *Invisibility*. Activating each trick requires using a spell slot of the appropriate level. The characters give the combined object over to Angaff, hoping that he can launch out all manner of devastation.

Then the characters turn back to the problem of the evil undead rags. Angaff uses *Mage Hand* to pick them up. As soon as he moves them, eight wraiths appear. Angaff leads with a *Fireball* that leaves several of the wraiths looking rather singed. The wraiths react in kind, swarming Doctor Cid, Skellish, and Bone Gnawer.

The characters quickly determine that wraiths are not much of a threat any more, provided everyone makes their saves. Bone Gnawer and Dakani cut wraiths apart with grim regularity, punctuated by Angaff’s and Skellish’s *Magic Missiles*.

With all the wraiths dealt with, Doctor Cid goes to investigate the rags. He suddenly realizes that he would have been afflicted by *demon fever* and *devil chills* if he weren’t immune to all diseases. Within, he finds:

- The third portion of the *Staff of Warding*;
- A pair of magical diamond rings with black metal bands (possibly cursed); and

- A silver spear-head for a *Holy Spear* +2

The spear-head would need to be recombined with a haft by someone with the Craft Magic Arms and Armor feat at a cost of about 5000 gold. It could be made into either a short spear or a long spear.

The characters notice that the sides of the shaft below this point is covered with a fungus. The *Staff of Warding* very helpfully comments that the fungus was created by the Bladelords to sap the will of any member of a godly race. Victims become loyal to the Blade Lords. The only way it knows of to get down to the bottom and retrieve the final piece is to use a remote-controlled flying golem to pick it up. The golem may be controlled by any mortal creature, and is controlled by a special magical helm. The staff agrees to guide the characters in.

Adding the third piece to the *Staff of Warding* gives it the additional powers *Cone of Cold*, *Charm Monster* and *Wall of Force*.

The Golem Control Chamber

The characters follow the *Staff of Warding* to a chamber with six full-face helms arrayed around a low table. Doctor Cid goes first. He briefly sees the image of a twenty-foot golem. His consciousness zooms in on the golem. He instantly knows that he can make the doomwalker golem move at a speed of 30' or use a single arm. He can turn the golem's head, and breath fire for 10d8 damage (save is 15 plus the user's DEX modifier). And he can cause any object held by the golem to *Teleport Without Error* into the control room.

Doctor Cid gives up control to Dakani Night Scream. He explains the rules. Skellish mutters, "We're all fucking Voltron."

The characters spend a few minutes getting used to the various control features. It turns out that the golem has a wide variety of exciting tricks and so on. Then Dakani cries out, "Super Monkey Pirate Ninja Force Go!" and they send it out.

Fungus Wyverns!

As the Doomwalker Golem floats down, the characters see a wide variety of wyverns flying up to meet them. They are clearly rather diseased: they have fungus

growing over their skins and into their scales. Bone Gnawer guesses, “Bane Lords own them.”

Skellish muses, “What kind of loser god creates wyverns? Bill, god of wyverns...”

The Bottom of the Shaft

The Doomwalker Golem makes short work of the wyverns, then flies down to the bottom of the shaft. At the very bottom, there is a short stone tower and a large, mouldy egg. The *Staff of Warding* communicates mentally with Angaff, instructing him that the egg is integral to the containment of the Blade Lords and must not be interfered with.

As the characters look around, a huge fiendish red dragon ridden by a bugbear appears. A large angel covered with fungus and blades flaps out of the tower and calls out, “Who wakens the maleficite?”

Simultaneously, an athac, a phase spider and a lizard man show up in the control room. Doctor Cid comments, “Aha. They aren’t just random creatures! They’re the surviving Lords of the Quaam, or at least some of them.”

The End of the Session

The session ends with a cliffhanger: the characters are pressed both in the real world and the golem-world. Experience gains are:

<i>Character Type and Level</i>	<i>Experience Points</i>
8 th level, +0%	4700
8 th level, +20%	5640
9 th level, +0%	372
9 th level, +20%	4456

This is enough to ensure that Angaff (among others) gains a level. He picks up a shiny third level of Eldritch Knight and admires it from all angles before buckling it in place.