

## Rise of the Runelords Session Summary 10/07/2007

### Attendance

*Bruce* (Hulmar Benk) tells *Chris* (Roscoe Dillon), “I don’t care about any of your feelings, so I’m going to skip lunch.” *Chris* does his best to avoid looking hurt, but *Paul* and *Ernest* (Valgrim Battlehorn) both choke back sobs. *Patrick* (Maru Maru) grabs each of them by a shoulder and shakes vigorously. He orders them, “Hold yourselves together, men! It is unto the Valley of Death that we do ride! Besides, I haven’t cared about any of your feelings for years!”

*Matt* (Prince Eyorak) groans, “Why does this always have to turn into a soap opera with you people! All this nonsense about ‘caring’ and ‘feelings’! It’s enough to make me sick! Sick sick sick sick sick!”

*Ed* (Artkel Certor) explains, “If you insist upon imitating Steerpike, you’d better be ready for the inevitable infringement lawsuits from Mervyn Peake’s estate.”

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Class &amp; Level</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Hulmar Benk	Bruce	Human	Scout 2	Chelaxian. Military veteran.
Roscoe Dillon	Chris	Human	Cleric 2	Shoanti, Skull tribe. Cleric of Gorum
Phiravno	Chuck	Human	Swordsage 1; Swashbuckler 1	Varisian.
Artkel Certor	Ed	Human	Fighter 2	Shoanti, Spider clan.
Prince Eyorak	Matt	Human	Rogue 2	Shoanti, Sun clan
Maru Maru	Patrick	Human	Monk 2	Shoanti, Sun clan
Valgrim Battlehorn	Ernest	Dwarf	Conjurer 1	Fascinated by all manner of unusual creatures.

### Shopping Against the Quasit

The characters return to Sandpoint having learned that mundane weapons are worthless-and-a-half against quasits. They head directly to the blacksmith’s shop to purchase various weapons made from cold iron. *Hulmar Benk* sells his standard axe in favor of a cold iron great axe, and then buys up a quiver-full of cold iron arrows. Through the entire process, the characters’ new companion *Valgrim Battlehorn* asks a thousand thousand questions about the quasit and the pool it used to summon a sinspawn.

The characters give *Tsuto's* journal to Valgrim Battlehorn. He reads it carefully, paying particular attention to the specifics of *Nualla's* transformation from a celestial creature into an infernal one. Once he is done, he copies the whole thing into his own journal with *Amanuensis*.

Apropos to nothing, *Prince Eyorak* announces, "I want to multiclass as a druid! Nature's warrior is the way to go!"

*Maru Maru* offers, "You should go all the way and take some bard levels too!"

### *Back at the Quasit's Front Door*

The characters tramp back into the catacombs and the quasit's home territory. The characters open the door to find that the quasit has already summoned up a sinspawn and is waiting for them. It cackles, "So, you come back to see the Queen of the Catacombs of Wrath!"

The characters charge.

The quasit cuts herself again, drops blood in the pool, and brings up another sinspawn. *Maru Maru* charges forward and ducks under a sinspawn's wild strikes. Valgrim Battlehorn casts a fast *Summon Monster I* to bring in a monstrous spider. His minion spits webbing at the quasit, trapping it in place. The quasit struggles in place. *Maru Maru* rushes up and clocks the thing with a cold iron kama. "Take that! You fiendish... outsider... thing..."

With *Maru Maru* on one side and *Prince Eyorak* on the other, the quasit decides that it had best do something useful. It turns *Invisible* and flies up, trailing webbing. *Prince Eyorak* mocks it, "Hah! I wonder which square it's in?"

*Maru Maru* points out, "It's flying, so it's out of your reach, funny man."

The characters briefly lose track of the quasit, until it decides to cast a spell and becomes visible again. *Prince Eyorak* shoots it as it appears. He inflicts a trivial amount of damage. The quasit shrugs off the damage, then casts *Cause Fear* on the entire group. Half of the characters flee for their lives, only to be interrupted by *Roscoe Dillon* and his *Remove Fear* effects.

Hulmar Benk is inspired by this action to shoot clean through the quasit with his short bow. The characters cheer! The quasit simply becomes *Invisible* again. Thence

follows a rather long game of hunt-the-quasit. Considering that the quasit regenerates on a regular schedule, this is a singularly unpromising game for the characters.

Roscoe Dillon decides that he's had enough of the hunt, so he heads back to town to purchase some fishnets and poles. While he's gone, she *Shatters* Hulmar's bow. Hulmar concludes that the situation is ridiculous. The others decide to start a conversation with her on the subject of whether she or Nualla is the true Queen of the Catacombs. Prince Eyorak spends a lot of time complimenting her and pointing out the various ways that Nualla is taking advantage of her. He notices that she's wearing a tiara and has "crazy eyes". He manages a breakthrough when he claims that Nualla is betraying her and wants to kill her. The quasit explains that there is a shrine to Lammastu on *Thistletop Island*. The goblins are there, hoping to free a servant of Lammastu.

While Prince Eyorak gossips with the quasit, Valgrim studies the pool. He recognizes that its glow dims every time the quasit summons a sinspawn. He speculates that the pool is recharged by the deaths of wrathful creatures, and that only one more sinspawn might be enough to make it go dark. He decides that he's had enough of the quasit's babbling, so he pricks his finger and drips blood into the pool. A sinspawn clambers out, and the pool goes dark. The quasit shrieks, "No! No! I can't reactivate it!"

The characters butcher the thing.

*Ravno* runs over to the quasit and hits her with his *Sapphire Nightmare Blade*. The quasit responds by casting *Bane* on half of the party. Prince Eyorak thinks about running up and leaping to entangle her in his cloak, until he realizes that she is twenty feet in the air and completely beyond his reach. He sighs in despair while Valgrim shoots her with his crossbow.

Hulmar groans, "I just want to kill some goblins. When are we going to go and kill some goblins?"

Valgrim tells him, "First you have to kill your quasit. Then you can go kill goblins."

Hulmar sighs.

Meanwhile, *Artkel Certor* decides to run up Ravno's back to get himself a boost up. Ravno takes damage from Artkel's boots as the fighter flings himself at the quasit, then tumbles down to the ground as she tags him with her claw.

The quasit follows up by throwing a tiny dagger at Artkel. It inflicts a single point of damage, then vanishes and returns to her hand. Hulmar rolls his eyes as he pictures being needled to death by the most pathetic melee weapon ever.

Maru Maru decides that he's going to try the flying-grapple trick too. The difference is that he has Improved Grapple. She easily evades his hands. Ravno takes more nonlethal damage.

It is at this moment that Roscoe Dillon shows up with a 20x20 fishing net and four long poles. He tells the others, "I'm going to make you cooperate if it kills me." Hulmar, Ravno and Artkel take poles.

The quasit reacts by casting a spell. Her claws glow with black light. She flies in at Ravno, takes a mostly-ineffectual strike from his bladed scarf, and burns his face with magic. Then Prince Eyorak flings his cloak over the quasit. And Ravno. And then Roscoe and Hulmar trap the two of them under their net as well. Valgrim yells, "Everyone start kicking!"

Maru Maru runs in and starts stabbing at what he hopes is the quasit. Eventually the quasit stops struggling. The characters tie it up in the cloak and slam it against a wall until the contents turn liquid. The only items of value left on the quasit's mangled body are:

- A miniature tiara (50 gold);
- A *Tiny Returning Dagger +1*; and
- An obsidian unholy symbol to Lammashstu (10 gold)

Detailed searches of the chamber reveal that there is nothing else of value. Hulmar grumbles something about his broken bow being worth more than the various loot items. Roscoe reassures him that the *Tiny Returning Dagger +1* is theoretically worth at least 8000 gold, and the characters might be able to realize some of that money if they can find someone stupid enough to buy it.

### *The Prison Level*

The characters continue on through the catacombs.

They enter a chamber dominated by a red marble statue of a strikingly beautiful but monstrosly-enraged human woman in an intricate headdress. She carries a book decorated with a seven-pointed star in one hand and a glittering ivory and metal ranseur in the other hand. Prince Eyorak recognizes the seven-pointed symbol as identical to the mark carved into his dead brother's chest.

The characters immediately investigate the ranseur. They manage to pull it off the statue. It is well made and well balanced, proving to be a masterwork weapon. Artkel Certor takes it for use.

A door and a stairway down lead out of the chamber. Hulmar listens at the door; he hears two creatures arguing in an unfamiliar language. Artkel Certor listens and announces, "They're arguing in Thassalonian over skulls!"

Prince Eyorak, Hulmar, Ravno and Maru Maru all sneak in to attack. They find two sinspawn arguing over a pile of skulls. The chamber was once a prison: the characters enter on a raised platform, whereas the sinspawn are down beneath. The characters launch into an attack, more or less pulverizing the sinspawn in short order.

Valgrim looks through the cells. He mostly finds skeletons, but in one cell he finds a hole, apparently dug by one of the prisoners. He peers through and determines that it is an escape route.

### *The Torture Room*

The characters leave the prison behind and move on to a disused torture chamber. The characters search and uncover a series of rusty, decayed torture implements. They continue on.

The side door leads to a small chamber with three stone doors. Each door bears a carved runic symbol similar to the seven-pointed star. Artkel Certor opens one (after Prince Eyorak confirms no traps) and finds a human skeleton with three arms. The second cell contains a skeleton with an enormous, misshapen skull. The final cell contains a skeleton with a ribcage right down to its pelvis and stunted legs.

Valgrim looks around. He finds a few scraps of books and one intact scroll that detects as magical. Roscoe Dillon determines that it might be magical, but it is also written in Thassalonian.

Prince Eyorak looks around and comments, "I just want to be on record that I now agree with the scout – we should go hunt goblins now."

### *Run! It's a Vargoye!*

The other characters ignore Prince Eyorak and backtrack, then go up a long stairway to a circular chamber with a rippling pool in the center. Ravno is the only one to see the hideous reptilian tentacled floating head waiting in the shadows, so when it attacks almost everyone is surprised. Fortunately, the characters are able to execute it before reaching the bottom of the initiative order.

There is another door and a spiral stairway upwards after the circular chamber. Valgrim thinks that the stairway is still underneath the town of Sandpoint, probably near the Old Light. Unfortunately, the way is blocked by rubble some thirty feet beneath the surface.

### *The Pit Room*

The characters turn around and retrace their steps. They go back to the stairs down leading out from the prison. It leads to a large arched chamber with eleven five foot wide pits arranged across the floor. Pit covers are askew over most of them. Strange shuffling noises come from the pits. And a hideous four-armed creature armed with an axe, a sword and a dagger stands and moves on the characters.

Roscoe Dillon comments, "I bet it's going to try and knock people into the pits. Everyone be careful!" He casts *Bless*.

The monstrosity steps forward and unleashes a barrage of attacks against Artkel Certor, who responds with his new ranseur. Maru Maru steps forward to grapple, pinning the creature in place. Ravno moves in next and savages the creature. It looks nearly dead, allowing Artkel Certor to strike it down and Maru Maru to snap its neck.

The characters take the creature's dagger, hand axe and longsword. They notice that all of them look high quality. The dagger is silvered, the hand axe is masterwork and the longsword is a *Longsword +1*. The characters are very appreciative.

Investigation of the pits indicates that they are occupied by various undead humanoids. None of them looks particularly recent. The characters ignore them.

### *The Quasit's Larder*

Prince Eyorak sneaks out beyond the zombie room. He finds one circular stairwell down, but blocked, and a door. He opens the door to find a fifteen-foot radius sphere. Various items float free inside. The walls are disturbing: they ripple blackly and sometimes coalesce to display strange runes. Artkel Certor interprets the text as random comments relating to hatred.

The characters use their fishing net to pull out several items from the room. They get:

- A bottle of wine;
- An archaic, difficult to decipher scroll;
- An ancient, magically preserved prayer book to Lammastu with lots of pictures of horrible entities;
- A magical iron wand with a forked tip; and
- A very dead raven covered in maggots.

Valgrim indicates that he totally wants the book.

### *Time in Town*

At this point, the characters have managed to run through all of the catacombs. They return to town and rest for a couple of days. The two scrolls turn out to be a scroll of *Burning Hands* (CL 3) and a scroll of *Flaming Sphere* (CL 5). Artkel Certor takes the *Longsword* +1. Hulmar takes the masterwork hand axe. Valgrim takes the silvered dagger and the two scrolls. He indicates that he will try to trade them if he can manage it, and use the proceeds to buy a pearl for *Identify*. The characters determine that they can sell the ranseur for 400 gold as artwork. 100 gold goes to buy a pearl, leaving 300 in loot for the group. The hand axe sells for 153 gold. The proceeds are divided up among the characters, to the amount of 64 gold and 7 silver each.

The wand is a *Wand of Shocking Grasp* (CL 1; 28 charges). Prince Eyorak takes it because evocation is a forbidden school for Valgrim. He explains that sooner or later he'll learn Use Magic Device.

Valgrim spends some time with the magicians of Sandpoint, talking about quasit anatomy.

### *The Route to Thistletop*

The Thistle River is two hours' march away. From there, reaching Thistletop Island requires a trip through the Nettle Wood. Reaching the island by water is difficult, as the shoreline of the island is fairly steep all the way around. Getting through the Nettle Wood is only marginally easier, and is enough to persuade the characters to both leave the horses behind and put Hulmar Benk in the lead. He takes only an uneventful hour to find a path through the nettles.

Near the shore, the nettles rise up to heights of almost twenty feet. The characters search around until they find a cleverly-constructed rigid mat of nettles that functions very much like a gate. Artkel Certor and his gauntlets open it up and allow the others to go through. It leads to a four-foot-high tunnel through the nettles. The characters are squeezed through it.

Hulmar Benk leads the way, followed by Prince Eyorak. They move very carefully. The tunnel divides several ways; Hulmar leads the characters down the most-used passages. He leads them into a thistle cavern, then to the east down another tunnel.

The characters pass a goblin stable populated by four goblin-dogs along the way. The goblin-dogs start to yap as they scent humans. The characters respond by executing them. As they're doing their bloody work, a fire-pelt comes around the corner and rakes Maru Maru. Maru Maru complains, "That stung! It almost drew blood!" Ravno slices it down.

Valgrim flings a package of caltrops down the corridor. Hulmar hears someone call out in alarm. He deduces that the goblins are swarming. At this point, a goblin druid hits the entire area with *Entangle*. Valgrim finds himself immobilized, everyone else is forced to move at half-rate.

Maru Maru, Hulmar and Ravno struggle towards the goblin druid while Valgrim shoots crossbow bolts at tethered goblin-dogs. Roscoe takes a severe bite and a ghastly immune reaction from a goblin-dog in the process.

The druid strikes at Hulmar with his *Flame Blade*; Hulmar evades the strike very neatly, then slashes him. Maru Maru steps up and hits him as well. The druid responds by stepping back into the brambles where the characters can't reach him.



Maru Maru moves through the *Entangle* to see what lies beyond the fire-pelt's lair. He finds a chamber that suggests that the druid isn't a particularly good housekeeper. Hulmar advises moving along the other corridor and to the coast, as it seems obvious that the druid will be off finding the biggest collection of goblins in the area.

Ravno moves forward down the corridor. He reports back, "I see a rickety unstable bridge here. It leads to a big structure with watchtowers!" He moves forward into the sentries' line of sight, then ducks back when he realizes what he's doing. He carefully examines the goblin settlement. There are two watchtowers, though the guards are inattentive. The stockade and buildings of the settlement are constructed from pieces of wrecked ships. Some pieces still bear the names of their vessels.

Prince Eyorak examines the bridge and realizes that it is trapped to partially collapse if more than three medium-sized creatures stand on it at once. It can also be manually triggered. The penalty for falling is severe: the rock-turned waves are almost eighty feet below.

The druid gets a good hit on Valgrim with the *Flame Blade*, cutting him down. Hulmar steps in and gives the druid a respectable hit, but doesn't down him. Maru Maru steps in and grapples the druid to keep him from escaping into the brambles, then Hulmar gives him another whack with the great axe. The druid goes down.

Roscoe steps back to heal Valgrim, then the characters regroup to prepare for the attack on the island. The druid was carrying:

- Two potions of *Cure Light Wounds*;
- Two potions of *Speak with Animals*;
- Two potions of *Tree Shape*;
- A *Wand of Produce Flame* (34 charges);
- A set of *Leather Armor +1* (small size);
- A short spear (small);
- A magical cloak (small);

### *The End of the Session*

Each character gains 1157 experience points. This is enough to bring Valgrim to second level, but not enough for everyone else to gain third level. Valgrim has a little celebration.