

## Rise of the Runelords Session Summary 07/06/2008

### Attendance

*Chris* (Roscoe Dillon) tells *Bruce* (Yenneck Grumman), “Hey, you should ask Paul about his vacation – he says he got to eat some real Southern barbecue!” Bruce guesses, “Cousin Jimmy? Nephew Charles?” *Paul* grumbles, “Actually, we ate half of a pig, chopped lengthwise. My Mom got the skin as a party favor!” *Chuck* (Phiravno) points out, “While you all were wasting time with barbecue, I was looking at feats. I’m taking a feat that lets me instantly kill anything as long as I’m using a Shadow Hand technique.” Chris offers, “That’s quite a feat... Are you totally sure that’s legal?” Chuck defends himself, “Don’t worry! It’s completely balanced – I can only use it once per round!”

*Georgina* looks around the many empty places at the table and asks, “Is anyone else going to show up? I mean, I have my iPod so I don’t really need anyone else, but still.”

Paul just looks well-fed.

Chris offers, “Ernest should be showing up soon, as should Patrick and Matt. After all, the group isn’t complete without Patrick and Matt...” It is at this moment that *Patrick* (Maru Maru) walks in. He seems well-fed too. Nobody asks what has happened to *Ernest* (Valgrim Battlehorn) or *Matt* (Vaelyn).

It is at this moment that Matt walks in. Everyone is relieved to see that he has not been barbecued. At least until they notice that his hair is different and that he’s not wearing glasses. Various theories travel around the table, notably bypassing Patrick.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Class &amp; Level</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Yenneck Grumman	Bruce	Human	Ranger 9, Warblade 3	Another Chelaxian, a Black Arrow
Roscoe Dillon	Chris	Human	Cleric 11, Warblade 1	Shoanti, Skull tribe. Cleric of Gorum
Phiravno	Chuck	Human	Swordsage 5; Swashbuckler 4; Rogue 3	Varisian. Recently killed by a lamia, hopefully soon back with us.
Artkel Certor	Ed	Human	Fighter 9	Shoanti, Spider clan.
Maru Maru	Patrick	Human	Monk 7, Tattooed Monk 5	Shoanti, Sun clan

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Class &amp; Level</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Valgrim Battlehorn	Ernest	Dwarf	Conjurer 3; Master Specialist 2; Paragnostic Apostle 1; Malconvoker 5	Fascinated by all manner of unusual creatures.
Vaelyn	Matt	Human	Gold Dragon Shaman 12	Shoanti, Sun clan

### *More Wandering in the Crypts of Gluttony*

The characters start the session in the Necromantic Crypts of Gluttony, cheered by the pleasant Dionysius motif the place's creators chose but apprehensive over the notion that the majority of the local inhabitants are likely to be horrible undeads.

*Roscoe Dillon* peers at the gilt sarcophagus in the first crypt. He determines that the sarcophagus is not magical, but there is a faint necromantic aura surrounding several of the wine-bottles stored along the walls.

Ignoring the protestations of the others, *Maru Maru* opens one of the bottles. He finds nothing but the scent of long-gone vinegar. Then *Vaelyn* enlists *Phiravno's* help to open up the crypt. They are disappointed to find nothing. They spend some time searching the thing, ending up absolutely sure that there is nothing there. They do record as useful loot for later:

- One gilded sarcophagus lid (8 hours of work to obtain 800 gold in gold leaf and gems).
- Two star sapphire eyes each worth 1000 gold.
- A dozen amethyst grapes each worth 300 gold.

### *The Crypts of Bread, Grain and Massacres*

Vaelyn seems to be overcome with an insatiable death-urge and leads the way through the next chambers. He finds another crypt, decorated in a bread-and-grain motif, but no bodies. *Yenneck Grumman* points out that if the last crypt had some 10,000 year old wine bottles then this crypt should have some 10,000 year old bread somewhere around. *Phiravno* points out that there is none in sight.

The characters visit several more empty crypts before they find a misshapen crypt scattered with decaying, shattered bodies. The corpses look moderately recent. Many

have been disemboweled or have had limbs removed. All are dressed in blue robes. Yenneck Grumman reports that the creature responsible left through the north door. Also, at one time there were far more than six bodies in the room: the missing bodies have long since been harvested.

Valgrim Battlehorn examines the bodies with a familiarity that is unsettling even to Yenneck Grumman. He proclaims that they were all human and that the organs and limbs removed from the bodies suggest that someone is working upon advanced necromantic techniques.

### *More and More Crypts*

Maru Maru decides that he'd rather put off checking out the north door. He continues around to the next crypt and finds himself in the Crypt of the Cheese-Makers. He is confounded by the original designers' choices in glorifying certain trades. Yenneck Grumman tells him, "Do not be confused! All of this makes complete sense!" Maru Maru does not believe him.

From the Cheese-Makers' crypt the characters move along to investigate the Crypt of the Butchers and the Crypt of the Confectioners. Neither is particularly remarkable in content.

The next complex in line is the Crypt of the Cannibals, which the characters have great hopes for. Until they arrive there and find that it is just as empty as the others. The only interesting development is when Phiravno finally finds a secret door made of magically treated marble leading between the Crypt of the Butchers and the Crypt of the Confectioners.

### *Wait! There Are Wraiths Out There!*

As the characters tromp through one empty crypt after another, Yenneck frets that something terrible had better happen soon, or this session summary will be both short and dull.

Valgrim Battlehorn muses upon the sorts of things he could summon to help out. Then he offers, "I do sub-specialize in transmutation. I could change one of you, perhaps to make you smarter."

Roscoe Dillon asks, “You mean like supervillain smart? Or just enough smarts to avoid dragging our knuckles?”

Valgrim answers him, “The magic can only do so much.” Then he summons up a pair of small earth elementals for scouting. The elementals report that there are lots of wraiths sitting in the rock, watching. No sooner have the elementals entered the rock than the wraiths come pouring on out. The characters make short work of them. And then go on to determine that the rest of the Crypt of the Cannibals is just as empty as all the other crypts.

The characters find that the process of searching empty crypts is quite exhausting. They make camp and rest. During this time, Roscoe Dillon stacks up a large pile of *Undead Bane* and *Revenant* spells.

### **The Flames Flicker with an Evil Light**

Valgrim Battlehorn announces, “That last fight was much too scary for me, and I have a way to do *Greater Planar Summons*, so we’re going to do something about that. I summon the *Ultroloth!* Bwahahahahaaa!” Sadly, the ultroloth isn’t paying attention and fails to appear in the circle.

### ***Through the Double Doors***

The characters finally decide to go through the double doors. They find two corridors beyond. One leads to a room containing an alchemist’s lab, a variety of interesting and horrifying books, and a group of zombies. Valgrim picks up the books, though (at 100 pounds) he needs the others to bring them out. That and *Heward’s Handy Haversack*.

The characters try the other corridor and encounter mummies. Six mummies! Maru Maru tumbles in to engage, narrowly avoiding being paralyzed by fear. He slaps a mummy around, making a variety of highly inappropriate comments about the creature’s parentage in the process. Valgrim decides that he needs more firepower, so he summons up his very favorite creature, the zak-yel fire energon. The creature drifts in to the room and commences lashing a mummy with its energy tendrils.

Roscoe decides that he's going to show the others how to deal with this kind of situation. He calls upon his god to obliterate three of them. The remaining mummies don't last long.

The characters get another set of necromantic alchemy books from the mummy room. They make a note to pick it up later on.

- Set of necromantic alchemy books, weighing 100 lb.

### *The Crypt of the King of Butchers*

The characters finally go back to the northern door where they think the lich might be hiding. Vaelyn uses his *Wand of Clairaudience/Clairvoyance* to determine that the crypt beyond is guarded by six elite armored mummies, contains a single closed crypt, and is decorated with scenes of monsters butchering cattle and pigs with axes of tangled obsidian.

The characters move in with the plan of talking to them. Or killing them. Whatever the plan is, Vaelyn leads with fiery breath. The conversation goes downhill from there. Valgrim fills the room with *Freezing Fog* that slows down the mummies and shields them from view. He explains, "It's better this way. They don't want anyone to see as they slowly freeze to death."

A brief and undramatic battle follows in which the characters disassemble mummies in detail. The only point of interest occurs when a mummy makes it out of the fog and manages to somehow paralyze both Yenneck and Maru Maru with fear. Nobody else can understand why they're so afraid of something so inoffensive as a mummy.

After the last mummy is dispatched, Valgrim waves his skin of Dwarven ale through the *Freezing Fog* and offers everyone a cold, frosty mug of Dwarven ale. Then he dismisses the spell. The characters then turn to looting:

- Six suits of *Chainmail +1*;
- Six gem-encrusted torcs, each worth 600 gold

With the mummies out of the way, the characters eagerly inspect the sarcophagus. They find it is empty. They are incredibly disappointed.

### *The Tunnel, and Then The Door*

The characters overcome their disappointment enough to search, quickly finding a door leading to a tunnel. They take the tunnel and find themselves in a room stocked with books, scrolls and manual. Various body parts are scattered across tables, including a partially dissected human torso. A creature in noble's clothing stands near the torso. When it sees the characters, it tears free the liver from the torso and eats it. It snarls at the characters.

Vaelyn attempts to negotiate with the creature. "Are you *Kazzavan*? We're looking for *Kazzavan*." It indicates that it isn't *Kazzavan*, but it will take the characters to meet him. The characters notice that the creature is drooling as it talks.

It approaches Vaelyn. "You must take my hand, and I will lead you to *Kazzavan*! You must take my hand, it is very dark!"

Vaelyn is skeptical of the creature's intentions. He levels the *Impaler of Thorns* at the creature. And then the creature rushes him at supernatural speed. The spear tears through him, but he barely seems to notice as he palms his dagger and lashes out to get some of that succulent, succulent human flesh. And as expected, the creature's wounds start to heal. It howls out that its name is *Xyoddin* and that it will happily chew and eat everyone. "The more of your flesh I eat, the faster I grow stronger!"

Vaelyn drops his spear and draws his earthbreaker. Roscoe casts *Holy Weapon* on Yenneck's *Flaming Shock Bastard Sword*. And Valgrim summons in two vor-yugoloths to deliver a tentacular death to *Xyoddin*. One vor-yugoloth rends the creature into bloody pieces. The other looks disappointed: it didn't even manage to attack. The loot turns out to be:

- *Chain Shirt* +3
- *Human Bane Dagger* +2.
- 8 masterwork daggers.
- Research notes on how to achieve various states of undeath, providing a +5 bonuses to Knowledge (arcane) and Knowledge (religion) checks involving necromancy.

There is no visible door out of *Xyoddin*'s chamber, so the characters search until they find the secret door. While *Phiravno* is searching, *Valgrim* is reading *Xyoddin*'s books.

### *Negotiating with the Lich*

The door leads to a tunnel, which leads to a room, which leads to a lich. His chambers show a certain dedication to cause. *Kazzavan* the lich is sitting on a stool in a corner, stitching together the pieces of his newest patchwork creation.

Vaelyn attempts to negotiate with *Kazzavan* on the notion that he is a servant of the Illusionary Master of Pride. This goes surprisingly well: he points out that *Xin-Shalast* is suspended between *Golarion* and *Leng*, and indicates that the way can either be opened through the *Weapons of Dominance*, created using the Items of Lust and the Items of Pride. Briefly, combine the Items in the central pool of *Runeforge* and this will allow the creation of a *Weapon of Dominance* that can open the way to *Xin-Shalast*. Once in *Xin-Shalast*, the characters will need to destroy the *Runewell* there. This will be difficult, because it will be protected by legions of rune-giants and lamia priestesses.

And then *Kazzavan* wants to know how the characters intend to find the *Gluttonous Tomes* to bring back *Lord Xutha* ("May his name be praised!"). The characters eventually agree to "help" him in the search for the *Gluttonous Tomes*. It takes *Kazzavan* a couple of hours to prepare to leave: he needs to raise a couple of zombie servants and gather up all sorts of books and resources first.

### **Stopping the Vile Kazzavan!**

And then the characters take *Kazzavan* to the summoning circle in the Halls of Sloth with the idea of killing him as soon as he gets to the circle.

*Kazzavan* walks into the circle and prepares to cast, whereupon *Valgrim* places a *Dimensional Anchor* on the whole area. He tells the lich, "I'm afraid I can't let you do that!" *Kazzavan* responds with a *Finger of Death* at *Valgrim*. *Valgrim* gasps but does not die. *Kazzavan* follows up with a quickened *Displacement*.

*Kazzavan* faces the rest of the group, "Is anyone else going to object?"

*Valgrim* responds by summoning two *amnizus* that in turn unleash quickened *Fireballs* at *Kazzavan*. And then one of them *Stupefies* him, costing him 4 points of INT. *Kazzavan* howls, "I only have 22 points of INT left!"

*Kazzavan* responds by casting *Wall of Force* around himself. The characters are stymied. *Yenneck* offers, "Well, this should be okay. We just pull out our *Sphere of*

*Annihilation* and deal with it, right? Don't tell me that we left ours at home?" The others look glum.

Yenneck and Roscoe smoke cigarettes and watch while Valgrim summons a zag-ya, a positive-energy energon, which floats through the stone under the *Wall of Force* and then attacks the lich. Kazzavan responds by turning *Invisible* and summoning a huge undead creature to attack the zag-ya. It rumbles out, "Annoying burning light-bulb! I give you such a thumping!" It is good to its word.

The characters variously run back and forth, making bets on the zag-ya's chances, snacking on rabbit jerky, and licking the *Wall of Force*, while they wait for the spell to expire. In the meantime, Kazzavan slays the zag-ya. It responds by exploding into a blast of positive energy.

Yenneck comments, "Gee, I bet he didn't see that coming."

Roscoe answers, "Actually, he probably has ridiculous levels of arcane knowledge, so I think he did." He pauses to cast *Bear's Endurance* on Vaelyn. Valgrim helps out by casting *Fly* on Vaelyn, who takes to the air and flies up into the flames at the ceiling. He is disappointed to find that the *Wall of Force* carries all the way up to the ceiling.

Valgrim summons an invisible, magic-missile-shooting burrowing weasel to dig underneath the *Wall of Force*. He explains that it can *See Invisible* and will light up the lich. It is called a musteval guardinal. Yenneck Grumman literally falls over laughing.

Then the *Wall of Force* ends. Kazzavan's undead monster turns on Maru Maru and attempts to trap his essence. Maru Maru dodges to the side then lashes out and destroys the thing.

The characters watch as Valgrim's musteval shoots the lich, then his two amnizus launch quickened *Fireballs* at the same point to kill him. The others are slightly amazed at the relative ease with which the lich was destroyed. He was carrying:

- *Bracers of Armor* +5.
- *Headband of Intellect* +4.
- *Ring of Protection* +2.
- *Contingency Statuette of Kazzavan* worth 2000 gold pieces.



- The *Staff of Hungry Shadows* (43 charges) – *Ray of Enfeeblement* takes 1 charge, *Darkness* takes 1 charge, *Vampiric Touch* takes 1 charge, *Enervation* takes 2 charges, *Summon Shadow* (as *Summon Monster V*, but summons one shadow) takes 2 charges, and *Call Devourer* takes 3 charges.
- Surgical equipment made from silver and gemstones, worth 1200 gold pieces.
- *Kazzavan's Spellbooks*.

### *The Libraries of the Necromancer*

The characters decide to go back into the library to figure out where Kazzavan's phylactery might be. Along the way, they learn that the Runelord Xutha's scheme to return to existence after the destruction of Thassilon involved breaking his phylactery, a book titled the *Tome of Gluttony*, into three pieces and hiding them in the world. Bringing him back afterwards would require reassembling the three pieces. There is some indication that simply possessing one of the fragments of the *Tome of Gluttony* would be enough to drive most mortals insane.

### *The Buried Sarcophagus*

The characters search through the Vaults of Gluttony until they find a buried crypt with three sarcophagi. Maru Maru moves quickly to one of them and kicks it open, unleashing a blast of negative energy that injures the entire party. Everyone stands around cursing at the monk until the trap goes off again. Valgrim gets blasted into a dark shadow until Roscoe casts *Close Wounds* on him. This time, everyone leaves the room before the trap goes off again.

The characters spend some time healing, then send Maru Maru back down to see if the trap is still discharging. He reports that it is not. The others are just a bit disappointed. Valgrim promises, "I know whose soul I'm offering up for my next binding..."

Phiravno goes down and looks for the trap on the second sarcophagus. He calls up, "It's a necromantic death trap!" Then he disables it and opens the sarcophagus to find all manner of treasure. Encouraged, he goes on to disable the trap on the third sarcophagus as well.

- 7000 gold pieces.

- *An Eversmoking Bottle.*
- *A Golem-Bane Scarab.*
- A set of Kazzavan's personal spellbooks.
- Eleven spellbooks that Kazzavan has claimed from enemies and fallen allies, including some unique ancient Thassalonian spells like *Swipe* and *Covetous Aura*.

Valgrim investigates and decides that the first sarcophagus is Kazzavan's phylactery. He recommends bringing everyone out so he can summon up some heavy-duty pounders to deal with the phylactery.

With the lich and his phylactery smashed, the characters go back to scrape out the gold and gems from the sarcophagus lid in the Crypt of the Brewer.

### *The End of the Session*

The characters decide that they will go into the Enchanting Iron Cage of Lust next. Valgrim and Roscoe spend some time thinking about the spells they'll bring along for the project. Eleventh level characters gain 5776 experience points. Twelfth level characters gain 4600 experience points. This is enough to grant everyone a level, one way or another.