

## Curse of the Crimson Throne Session Summary – March 1, 2009

### *Attendance*

*Bruce* (Valash Not-Gurelle the half-elf sorcerer) is yet again absent for work reasons.

*Chris* (Malcolm Zirkus) remembers that Patrick is gone this week. He had declared this several times, apparently, but in quiet-Patrick voice and thus it's a surprise to everyone else. And Chris blows his cat. He wanted me to put that in the session summary, but I'm not sure why.

*Patrick* (Thorndyke the ranger) is thus also absent, leaving us dangerously short-handed.

*Paul* (the GM) looks about, dazed, as it smacked in the face with a mackerel. Lunch at Summer Palace perks him up a bit, though their claim of "no MSG" disappoints him.

*Brandie* (Amiri the barbarian from the realm of the Mammoth Lords) has been talked into actually playing for the first time, since Bruce and Patrick are MIA. To prepare, she slams a hypo into her thigh and starts shrieking the lyrics from Brass Monkey. She is learning quickly.

I quiz her about how she prefers to disembowel people. "Up close and personal? From far away with an arrow? With magic?"

"Up close and personal!" she declares.

"From behind, or face to face?"

"Oh, definitely face to face."

I think a minute. "Are you frothing at the mouth when you do it?"

"Yes."

"OK, you should be a barbarian."

"Like Barbarella?" she asks.

"Yes, exactly like that!" we all quickly respond.

A quick fiddling around on paizo.com and we've printed out Amiri, the iconic female barbarian, at tenth level for her.

### *Amiri's Briefing*

After killing off her misogynistic village up in the Land of the Mammoth Lords millennia ago, after they sent her off on some “certain death” errand that she made the mistake of surviving, Amiri embarked upon a warlord’s life. A Thassilonian Runelord, Kharzoug, eventually froze her to become his eternal champion, to defrost and use against his enemies later, and stored her in a magical device down under the then-lively Acropolis of the Thrall-Keepers. “So you’re like Xena, but then it goes all Futurama on you,” we explain. As she’s never seen either of those shows, our analogy fails to enlighten.

### *The Rest Of Us – Minus One*

Our heroes are huddling behind a blast door as the tentacles from the deep thrash around outside. *Thorndyke* is trapped up the stairs and cannot get back through the doors. Or at least that’s the excuse I have devised to try to keep some immersion. Our Brotherhood of Bones observers *Asyra* and *Shadow Count Sial* stand by like usual NPCs, awaiting instruction. We decide that we have gone everywhere but down the green-lit drop shaft, so we tie a rope off to the statue and go down.

At the bottom is a chamber of polished black granite. A circle emits blue light upward – it seems blue down here but was green up there. Stairs lead further down.

*Malcolm* finds an odd cabinet. When he opens it, a blue light pours out and then a strangely dressed woman tumbles after it. She has a sword of truly gigantic scale with her.

“How many people are in this place!?!” cries *Annata*. For a lost ruin out in the middle of the Cinderlands, it is dangerously close to Grand Central Station around here.

We have difficulty communicating with the woman; a mix of Shoanti and Varisian gets some general ideas across. Her name is *Amiri* and she says she was frozen in here at “the Runelord’s” behest. *Annata* says “Runelords... That was from the time of the Thassilonians, but that’s like thousands of years ago.” We tell her we’re here to

thwart an evil queen, and if she'll help us navigate this place we'll help her out and to civilization, as she says she visited here often when it was operational.

Amiri tells us the stairs go down to the Golarion Globe. It's an artifact the Thassilonian wizards used to find monsters or something. It sounds like the "stone sphere" artifact we heard about, that Tanjah the Moon Clan guy went on a vision quest to find. We go down to see it.

A ten foot diameter stone sphere with a tripod attached floats in the air. The room is decorated with stars and butterflies, the symbols of Desna. Looking at the globe, the features it shows are unfamiliar – we finally find Varisia, but there are missing seas and whatnot. We decide the ancients must have been easily confused.

When Annata touches it, she feels an anticipatory shock of magic. She tries saying "Find Kazavon" but nothing happens. Amiri says (with the aid of charades) that the wizards would just touch it, concentrate, and disappear. We decide to try that. "Everyone hold hands!"

We try concentrating on Desna, but to no effect. We concentrate on the stars, and poof! We find ourselves floating out in the cold darkness between the planets. Alien things move in the darkness. "Eek!" we all say in concert. We concentrate on Golarion again, and zap back across the cosmos to our home. When we reappear outside the globe, a blue holy symbol of Desna is imprinted on the back of our left hands. Annata then uses the globe to go to see the sun as an act of devotion to the Dawnflower. It's like a big round furnace! She takes the opportunity to issue a prayer to Sarenrae and then wills herself back to the others.

The strange series of visions take their toll on Annata. She fails her Will save and takes some Wisdom damage. "Uh... Are you OK? Did you see your goddess?" asks Malcolm.

"Maybe..." she says. She acts a bit strange for a while. Our task done, we hustle out of the ruined Acropolis quickly past the now-slumbering tentacle beast.

Shadow Count Sial proposes a longer term alliance with us. We agree to avoid hurting his feelings, even though they've been totally useless so far, and because Laori seemed kind of cool and is in with these jokers. He turns out to have a big bone that grows at night, however, and that proves useful. No, really, he has a magic item that

grows in to a big skull-topped tower of bone that we camp in at night. It's like a Daern's Instant Fortress on crack. We send Thorndyke on Herbie to go... Do something, who knows. It's just an excuse for him being missing today.

All of us ride across the steppes to go meet the Moon Clan Shoanti, with our brave Moon Clan guide *Arca*. We are travelling on the second day and four leonine shapes dive out of the sun towards us. "Sphinxes?" offers Malcolm. "No, I recognize them from the tattoo on Herbie, those are griffons!" says Annata. In reality, they are dragonnes, creatures with lions' heads and sinuous draconic bodies, but without our ranger we're too retarded to know that. As they draw closer, they roar and the sand is thrown up in a huge cone towards us!

"Winds of the morning, carry our shafts to strike true!" prays Annata as she casts *blessed aim*. "Take out the green one first!" calls Amiri, as she shoots an arrow into it. Malcolm follows suit.

We are interrupted, not for the last time, by the GM's chair making a disturbing snapping noise as it suddenly plunges him a couple inches towards the ground, alarming everyone. "If only this thing would go in more than a quarter inch!!!" laments Paul. "You sound like my last wife," I retort.

The dragonnes come flapping down to attack. They pounce down upon Malcolm and Amiri, and one even comes after Annata. Malcolm and Amiri had readied melee attacks as they approached, and they smite the green one mightily as it swoops in. The dragonnes rip into the warriors, but Annata dives and rolls out of the way to avoid being crushed.

Arca leaps up and kills the green one with his starknives. Amiri rages and charges a second one, and beheads it in one stroke. Malcolm, trying not to be outdone, smites his with his heavy flail, but even with a critical hit it survives.

Annata steps back and shoots a couple arrows into the one attacking her; it rushes forward and bites the insolent priest. Arca engages it to help. Amiri slashes over and kills Malcolm's as well. Malcolm goes after the final dragonne that's trying to eat Annata, but its wing gets in the way of effective attacks. Annata sinks another two shafts into it and Malcolm crushes its skull with his flail.

“Good job you two! Especially you, Amiri!” gushes Annata. “Good teamwork!” Amiri eyes the priest warily. “Spunky” is not high on her list of admired traits.

We continue our travel and towards the end of the day, we reach the House of the Moon. It is a silvery tower standing above the hills. It has a huge ass moth carved on it. Six Moon Maidens come out to meet us, with their wolf companions in tow. We show them our marks of the Spherewalker at Arca’s urging, and they seem relieved. Apparently a many-eyed giant with sharp claws and tiny wings has taken up residence in the House of the Moon. Since they’re nomadic, the first ones back have to clear the tower, and their first wave apparently got totally owned by the thing. We agree to help out by going in to slay it.

We go up to the second floor, where a huge starknife is embedded in the ceiling. Annata blesses everyone with *prayer*, *guidance*, and *resistance* before we mount the stairs. A Red Reaver stands near a pile of animal and Moon Maiden corpses. It’s a demented variant of a grey render – it has huge red apelike arms, a vast maw, claws, many eyes, and sure enough, little bitty fairy wings. “What, does this thing play Changeling or something?” asks Malcolm. It beats its chest and roars at us. Malcolm and Amiri are shaken by its rage!

Annata cries out, “Hasten, early-rising Dawn, and grind your enemies under the flaming wheels of your mighty chariot!” The *righteous wrath of the faithful* comes upon the group. Amiri rages and charges the beast; it claws her as she approaches but she wreaks a huge critical on it with her giant sword. The reaver freaks out and grabs her with its huge apelike arms, rending her for even more damage that she did to it. Annata tries to strike it blind to no effect, and Amiri hacks into it hard again. Malcolm finishes it off with two mighty flail strikes. Annata runs up and heals Amiri, who is still leaking arterial blood.

*Tekra’kai* is the leader of this batch of Moon Maidens. They’ve been here for a few days. A bunch of Moon Clan folks are having a get-together here at the rise of the next moon (barbarian-ese for tomorrow). They all show up, to hang out, trade, party, worship Desna, and do whatever it is Moon Clan barbarians do (moon each other, we assume). We tell them we’re looking for a truthspeaker. They have one, an old man named *A’krom*. He’s all about coming to see us be devoured by the *Claneater*

*Cindermaw*. The Claneater is infused with the power of fire, and eats people. So now we are set to our heroic task of being devoured by it and cutting our way free to be symbolically reborn and win the admiration of the Sun Clan. We all agree that this sounds like a wonderful plan and we're proud to be a part of it.

And off we go to heathen barbarian location number three. Along the way, we come upon two bush tigers, lying in wait for prey. Malcolm eagerly dismounts, wanting a fight. Amiri and Annata consider pouring some barbecue sauce on him and riding around them on their horses instead. Instead, we all dismount and wait for the two charging tigers. Sadly, there are four other tigers who charge in sneakily from the sides. One knocks Annata down and another joins in savaging her. She crawls away from them, sobbing in pain. Asyra slays a tiger with her devil-chains and Amiri follows suit. One follows Annata, continuing to worry at the fallen cleric. She lashes out with a flaming scimitar and manages to kill it! Malcolm cleaves through two tigers and everyone else finishes off the straggler. Annata channels a lot of healing and develops a healthy fear of tigers.

We proceed to *Cindermaw's* feeding ground. Apparently it is a huge burrowing worm-like creature. Dune references fly fast and furious. Shadow Count Sial summons a Hero's Feast for us. We dine, and then buff up – *resist energy* on each of us. Annata casts *air walk*, *light of venya*, and *light of mercuria* to have held touch attacks on hand. We move in, and see the huge worm swimming through the rock in the distance. It is truly monstrous in size. Malcolm passes around his apple brandy. We all take a swig for courage. “The Dawnflower will bring us safely through this,” Annata says pluckily. “Amiri, are you sure you want in on this? It's not your fight.” “Wouldn't miss it for the world,” says the fierce warrior-woman. She had always wanted to gain acceptance with the barbarian tribes back in the day, and thus is apparently used to such savage rituals.

*Cindermaw* takes note of us, circles us for a while, and then burrows up underneath us. Annata casts *righteous wrath of the faithful*. As it emerges from the earth, Amiri rages and unleashes on it. Three strikes, two of which are crits, tear ribbons into the flank of the beast. More than 100 points of damage enrages the critter! *Cindermaw* emits a roar that shakes our bones and swoops down to devour Amiri. It

scoops her and about 500 pounds of dirt up in its gargantuan maw. Malcolm also smites it mightily. It writhes and appears to be very badly wounded, to our surprise.

“Doesn’t matter as it survives, as long as we get in,” Annata reassures Malcolm.

“Spoken like a true frat boy,” says Paul.

Annata casts  *blessing of the righteous*  and everyone’s weapons glow with a holy aura. The worm is actually critically wounded, and tries to burrow away and leave! Malcolm yells, “GRAB ON!” He leaps up and grabs onto the worm’s scales. Amiri comes tearing out of the worm’s belly with her glowing kukri. Malcolm lets go as the worm burrows deep into the earth to escape our peskiness. Malcolm yells, “NOOOOO!!!!” at his missed opportunity to be devoured.

We head out to Sun Clan territory. A squad of Burnriders approach us. The truthseeker A’krom tells them that we have reproduced the legend and the barbarian woman has cut her way out of Cindermaw. This gets their attention. Their camp is set amidst a field of slash-rock on the edge of a cliff. We meet Chief *Ready Klar*. Before we can talk to him, a huge figure of flame steps out of the local bonfire and resolves into a sun shaman!

A’krom recites a bunch of stories about the sun and the moon and other barbarian crap like that. *Krojin Eats-What-He-Kills* is here. The truthspeaker tells them of our prowess and how we want to become honorary Shoanti. The shaman and chief go off to talk.

Krojin glares at the group. When no one is looking, Malcolm blows him a kiss.

The chief returns and has us stand and speak our names. He declares us shamech (goyim) no more, and to be honorary Shoanti. Some of the locals don’t look happy about that. He gives us a yurt. The truthspeaker and our guide can’t stay here with the Sun Clan, so Annata blesses them, praises their bravery, and sees them on their way.

We beseech the Sun Shaman to tell us about Midnight’s Teeth. He refuses to tell non-Sun Clan about it even though we’re now “Shoanti,” even though we tell him the teeth are in the hands of a non-Shoanti and that bad things are in the offing. We ask how we can overcome this problem, and he says that if we pass the Trial of the Totem, we will be honorary Sklar-Quah and therefore OK to be in the know on secret shit.

The next morning, we are awakened by the Sun Shaman. Three Thundercallers escort us out across the Cinderlands to Bolt Rock. A path leads up to a mesa, and then a path up to an even higher mesa. At the base are three totems of clay ten feet tall, decorated with sacred sigils. He tells us about the Trial of the Totem. We have to carry the totems up to the first mesa and hold them upright for a day, then haul them up to the second mesa and hold them upright for a second day. “Done and done,” says Malcolm.

Amiri rages and carries each of the 500 pound totems up to the first mesa easily. We prop them up and hold them. Annata passes the time by telling them stories about the Dawnflower. Malcolm demands stories of sex and/or violence. Annata claims no knowledge of the former, but tells a lively take of Sarenrae and her war with Rovagug. We make strength checks every six hours to keep the totems up. Malcolm and Amiri don’t even have to roll, but Annata has to push herself (and burn action dice) to keep going.

Krojin comes up and visits us. He’s impressed to see we’re still in effect.

The next morning comes, and we carry the totems up to the next level. Annata uses lesser restoration to remove the fatigue from all of us and uses her wands to create water and put endure elements on everyone. “Piece of cake,” we declare, and get to holdin’ totems.

A bunch of land sharks’ dorsal fins appear in the distance begin to circle the party, closer and closer. Annata casts *bull’s strength* on everyone. As they approach, she casts *prayer* and *righteous might*, growing to large size. Then the bulettes erupt from the ground and pounce...

Next time.