

Curse of the Crimson Throne Session Summary – 5/3/2009

Attendance

Bruce (Valash Not-Gurelle, demented sorcerer) has finally returned! He lovingly details his character's new spooky powers and disabling phobias. Then he leaves again about an hour into the session. Sigh.

Ernest (Annata Vieri, priest of Sarenrae) lovingly details his character's new crusader powers, mainly to tactically coordinate with Malcolm.

Chris (Malcom Zirkus, Korvosan Guardsman) lovingly details a new character he's creating called "The Grapist" based on a "Whitest Kids You Know" sketch, whose special ability is to "grape people in the mouth!"

Patrick (Thorndyke, Sable Company Marine) lovingly stays real quiet.

Tim (gamer groupie) lovingly shows up for lunch. He's not really a groupie, but a gamer that's not in this campaign. He waxes philosophical about standardized testing.

Bring Out The Gimp

The party pokes around in Scarwall Castle, accompanied by their three groupies from the Brotherhood of the Bones (aka "The Cenobitches"). In the interest of not having to remember what spells they used last time, having Valash rejoin the party, and in making use of their new level 13 abilities, our heroes head out to the gatehouse to nap. A raspy voice whispers in the party's ears. "Free me!" demands *Valash*. Apparently his isolation treatment has gotten him to a functional level, and his close relationship to the dark forces of his soul has given him many an additional spell.

"Valash, it's good to see you!" gushes *Annata*.

He babbles creepily about how *Thorndyke* looks blue. "I've been practicing not blinking! Do you know how much you don't see in the moments that you blink? The spirits come out then! It's an entire hidden world. But I can see it!"

"So, I don't think we're changing our watch rotation..." says *Malcolm*.

Valash demonstrates how he's mastered his elemental nature and can turn his body into elemental air now. "You look oddly like Dame Judy Densch when you do that!" comments Annata.

Noticing that he's severely undergeared, Annata gives Valash her Ring of Protection +1. We ask our Varisian spirit guide and/or Valash to identify the magic loot. Valash IDs:

- +3 magic chainmail
- Staff of necromancy (28 charges)
- +2 mithril full plate
- Belt of giant strength +2

Zellara IDs:

- Ring of protection +1
- +2 thundering warhammer

We bag them up for later disposition.

Ghost Hunters

The next morning, we climb back into the keep and head for the donjon. It has a tarnished bronze door. After a token effort to open them, we realize that the door has been sealed by stone shaping around it and filling the door crack in with lead. This concerns us. Is it sealing in some fell force? Or maybe some poison gas?

Valash uses his massive magical powers on the doors. First he considers using *stone to mud* to drop the doors of their hinges, until he realizes that won't work on worked stone. Then he tries to use *prying eyes*, until he determines there's not a space to get the eyes in. Then he tries to use *detect poison* until he determines a coating of lead blocks it. Finally we just have Malcolm break it down.

This reveals a foyer tiled in blood red marble, with an altar consisting of a chain wrapped skull. It's obviously an altar to Zon-Kuthon. There's also a basin of stagnant water. Valash detects a magical curse in the room. We interrogate *Shadow Count Sial* about Zon-Kuthonite temple entry protocols. He says "Usually you go cut yourself and bleed on the altar, then wash in the water, then enter." Thorndyke, who was a homeless

guy eating out of dumpsters on the streets of Korvosa just months ago, rejects this plan as too icky.

Put Back The Gimp

Valash wreaks his arcane magic upon the curse. It works, but the effort takes a lot out of him. He begins to gibber and freak out. It's time for him to go back in the box, so he dimension doors back to the safety of the bone tower and his holding-chest.

Mummy In My Pocket

We investigate a couple of rooms in the donjon that have the star tower as one of their walls. Shadow Count Sial tells us that the star towers are the spikes that hold together the World-Wound created when Rovagug was imprisoned in the earth. This upsets Annata a little as Rovagug is definitely the “Big Bad” of Sarenrae's religion.

We go into a room and it's filled with writhing shadows. A ten foot figure stands in the shadows. We step back and Annata puts *Life's Grace* on Thorndyke and *Death Ward* on herself and Malcolm. She puts *Light of Venya* on herself and Thorndyke casts *Resist Energy (fire)* on Malcolm.

Annata creeps up to the figure – it looks like a big skeleton with chains coming from its eyes. It doesn't move – it's a statue. But suddenly, a smaller figure steps out from behind the statue! Annata lets out a little shriek. The figure is dressed as a high ranking priest of Zon-Kuthon and is all withered, with his teeth filed to points, and it claws at Annata, wounding her. Annata lets out another little shriek. Thornyke approaches but as soon as he can see it, he's paralyzed with fear. Malcolm moves up, resisting the urge to let out a little shriek himself.

The figure lets out a croaked prayer to Zon-Kuthon and reaches out to touch Malcolm. Whatever it cast, it's bad, but the death ward blocks it entirely. Thorndyke manages to land a scratch on it, but a full attack routine from both Annata and Malcolm fails to faze it.

“Come talk your dead buddy down!” Annata yells back at the Boner Squad. She misses with a *Flashing Sun* maneuver but channels energy, searing it a little.

The undead priest smites Annata with dark power; a collarbone cracks. Thorndyke gets some good shots in on it. Malcolm bludgeons it with his heavy flail. Annata uses *Divine Surge* and lands a mighty blow on the undead priest, shearing it in two!

On it, we find:

- Magical half-plate +2
- Magical cloak of resistance +2
- Bloodstone-set ring of minor fire resistance
- Brooch of Shielding (max)

I'll Swallow Your Soul!!!

We go down some stairs and find a big ol' hallway that circles the entire bottom floor of the donjon. Some massive double doors open into an obsidian-floored cathedral. Pillars made of skulls with Christmas lights in the eyes line the place. A black marble altar has a gem-inlaid skull with a chain-eyed statue looming over it. We walk over to the altar, Annata prays to Sarenrae for her to protect her comrades.

Thorndyke picks up the skull, admiring the preciousness of the gems. The skull suddenly animates!

“Oooh! It’s the remains of Bishop Xav-Ravinka!” says *Laori*. The skull begins to float and tries to drain levels from Thorndyke, but his *life’s grace* blocks that. Annata builds up a ball of flame on her scimitar blade and launches it at the demilich, burning it! Thorndyke hits the floating skull three times, but to very little effect; it has some kind of hellacious DR. Malcolm cracks it around a couple times with his undead baned flail.

Then Annata’s soul is drawn from her body into one of the gems on the skull! Her body falls into dust.

Thorndyke slays the demilich and retrieves the glowing gem holding Annata’s soul. The aura of evil fades from the castle.

They consult with the Brotherhood of the Bones and determine that breaking the gem will free Annata’s soul, but not restore her to life. For that they need a resurrection. On the altar lie:

- Spiked chain +2 of speed
- String of beads – prayer beads, greater

Clean-up

The group decides that while their anti-undead buffs are still in place, they should immediately go and try to waste the central boss. They peek in and the chain spirit has no skulls on his chains and no specters with him. They buff up, Malcolm drinking a *haste* potion, and go in to take him!

The two warriors bum-rush the spirit. It lashes out with its chains and scratches Thorndyke, but the protection of Sarenrae is still upon him and he's immune to the ability drain.

Malcolm and Thorndyke lay into it. Despite its incorporeality, it can't hurt them meaningfully so it's a matter of three rounds until they waste it. As Malcolm's final blow lands, it turns into a man whose flesh is being stripped away repeatedly. "Ewww!" they say.

"Where is Serath-teel?" Thorndyke asks the guy. He says we must retrieve the sword to thwart Kazavon. A fragment of the curse is still in the star tower, Kazavon's old lair. Count Endachi, now freed, fades away.

The party *Shadow Walks* back to Kaer Maga to find resurrection for Annata. \$11k is spent!

She's practicing scimitar katas with Sunlord Thalachos when a resurrection request from a priest of Nethys comes in. "I'm sure it's my friends... My work on the material plane is not yet done." She returns to her body. They hand her a robe after giving her prone, nude body a good ogling. "Oh, thank you boys," she says weakly.

We get a room at the Convenient Alibi for the night. Annata gives Malcolm and Thorndyke a hug and goes to her room for a long nap.

The next morning, she casts restoration to rid herself of that pesky negative level. It's time to distribute treasure and cash in. We find the most gullible merchant ever and Annata bats her eyelashes at him. We sell all our loot, and after the three-way split it's 49,750 gp per head!!!

The group relaxes and has dinner and drinks in the Convenient Alias. Laori misses her chance to hit on Annata while she's had a few.

We shadow walk back to Scarwall. It's decayed a hundred years worth in a couple days.

Into the Spike

Thorndyke uses Herbie to ferry us to the top of the Star Tower/spike. There's a blockhouse at the top with another chain-eyed skull dude as a door. Annata asks the Shadow Count, "If you were a Zon-Kuthonite blockhouse on top of a spike in the worldwound, what would your password be?" He speculates one of the faithful of Zon-Kuthon might enter. He puts his hand through and it shimmers and lets him pass. We all hold hands and pass in. Stairs lead us down to a huge chamber filling the center of the place.

The walls look like black, decaying flesh with veins and stuff. There's a shaft full of blue mist going down, and across the shaft, a gargantuan shadowy bat-creature lurks. It spreads its wings out to a forty foot wingspan. "Finally, a new curate has appeared. I grow weary of this plane. Who will take my place as guardian of the spire?" We all immediately point at the Shadow Count, Paranoia-style.

"What? Who? No, not me!" He points out Laori. "You've betrayed the faith to the outsiders! You should do it to atone for her sins!" They come quickly to blows. The big bat thing hangs out and watches in amusement.

Asyra lashes her chain out at Laori and hits her. Annata tries to dismiss Asyra to her home plane. That fails, but she follows it up with a mighty channeling of holy energy that sings her. "Leave her alone!" she insists.

Malcolm also strikes at the chain devil, bonking her with his flail three times. Laori steps back and calls down a flame strike upon the Shadow Count and Asyra. Malcolm and Annata are close enough to get singed, but jump back to avoid the flames. The Shadow Count paralyzes Laori.

Thorndyke scratches Asyra but her DR largely preserves her. She lashes her chains at the *held* Laori. Annata channels again and strikes her with a *foehammer*! Malcolm strides forward and downs Asyra and then the Shadow Count with two mighty

blows. As he falls, he says “Don’t let them kill me... Take me as your curate...” The huge blackness in the shape of a bat swoops over and takes him up. Malcolm grabs something off the Shadow Count’s belt for a trophy, and it turns out to be his bone tower. We all laugh like Beavis and Butthead.

Good Bat, Nice Bat

Annata asks the bat dude about Serath-Teel. He says that the Midnight Lord has sent him visions that we seek it, and that we have nothing more to fear from Zon-Kuthon. The sword is in the clutches of the Children of Rovagug, deep below the star tower. He offers to take anyone who wants to go see that Midnight Lord’s court with him. “Not us!” we say, but Laori decides to go! Annata gives her a big hug, wishes her well, and says “Look us up if you get back soon!” Malcolm and Thorndyke quietly fantasize as they embrace.

“Don’t forget to kill your parents!” the bat says as he flies away.

Rovagug? Oh Yeah, He Sucks

Annata says that these “Childen of Rovagug” are probably aberrations, and to give no quarter. She explains to them about how rovagug wanted to destroy the universe, and the other gods, most notably Sarenrae, cut open the world and imprisoned him within. She shows them the passage in the Book of Light and Truth where Sarenrae says “Show mercy to all, except those Rovagug bastards. Nail their asses to the floor!” Malcolm is impressed by the accompanying illustration of someone getting stabbed in the butt.

We leap down through the blue mist and it deposits us 1500 feet below the earth in a room with a polished floor and a single stone door. Malcolm and Thorndyke push it open to reveal a twisting tunnel covered in gleaming mineral deposits.

We wander until the tunnel opens onto a beach. The odor of decay and wet fur fills the cavern. Four domed hovels, twenty feet tall, sit on a ledge. A single point of light is out on the lake. Mutated giants come out of the hovels. Huge toothed maws split

their head from top to bottom. Each arm has two forearms and claws. “Oh. I get it. RovaGUG. Are we to be attacked by ‘rovas’ too?” asks Annata.

Thorndyke runs forward and slashes at one of the gugs, missing. Annata cries, “The light of the Dawnflower has come to cleanse you, foul beasts!” Her blade bursts into flame. Malcolm comes up and launches a devastating blow at the nearest gug, belting it.

The two closest gugs rip into Malcolm and Thorndyke horribly with their full attacks. One of the two outliers runs up and takes a chunk out of Annata too. The heroes see the way this is going and withdraw into the tunnel; Annata channels to heal and casts *righteous wrath of the faithful* to buff the group. Thorndyke rips into the one that approaches and Annata finishes it off with a burst of fire from a *fan the flames* martial maneuver.

We retreat into the tunnel where they can only come at us one at a time, but their taste for Malcolm’s flesh means they rip into him again and again. Annata has to do nothing but heal to keep up. Thorndyke critically wounds one and Annata leaps forward and terminates it with a *divine surge*.

Thorndyke again steps forward and cuts into one, but puts himself in range for two sets of full attacks. He and Malcolm are just about hitting 100 hp damage in a round consistently while full attacking and buffed. Eat your hearts out, mages. Annata puts a *protection from evil* on Malcolm, who leaps forward to join Thorndyke in the attack. He smacks it. It doesn’t fall, until Annata reminds Malcolm of his damage bonus from the *righteous wrath*, and then it falls. She does the little happy victory jig of Sarenrae.

“These things smell like when my dog rolls in dead rotted birds,” notes Thorndyke. He tears up the last one and then Malcolm moves up and terminates it.

We are left with four dead gugs and a dark lake, leading out to an island lit by something. “Let’s tie the gugs together to make a raft!” says Malcolm. We check out their huts; a dead svirfneblin is gnawed in one, along with a +3 aberration bane light pick! And 19 gemstones worth 250 gp each. Thorndyke snarfs up the pick.

Annata casts *heal* on Malcolm and then uses her prayer beads to cast wind walk on the party. We move across the lake to the island. We set down on a stony island that

has a sword embedded in it. Thorndyke pulls the sword out easily and it turns into a rapier! It empathically hugs him. It is the fabled sword Serith-Tial.

Serith-Tial:

- +4 holy Zon-Kuthon bane sword
- treated as cold iron and silver
- glows (controllable)
- changes to form of blade the wielder prefers
- Cure moderate wounds 3xday
- Zone of truth 3xday
- Wielder gains death ward and freedom of movement against all attacks from a Zon-Kuthonite

Lair of the Poorly Illustrated Worm

The sword glows brighter as something writhes to the surface of the lake. Thorndyke recognizes it from his vision; it's a bloated humanoid body with an 80 foot long rotted worm body with dozens of spiky legs. Row after row of razor sharp teeth line its mouth. Thorndyke leaps at it and wreaks a lot of damage on it with Serith-Tial. The beast vomits acidic blood out upon the group, sickening us. Malcolm tries to move up on it and it lashes out at him – it hits, and lays out huge penalties of various sorts on him.

The beast lashes out at the one holding Serith-Tial. It jacks Thorndyke up bad. Annata hits him with a *heal*, removing all his damage, ability damage, and weird worm penalties. He immediately lays into Jabba with all of his multiple attacks.

It hits Thorndyke again, wounding him, draining his strength, and giving him penalties again. “What is this thing?!?” cries Annata. She hits Thorndyke with a *resurgence* and he throws off the penalties. Malcolm misses it totally and Thorndyke hits it a bit. Malcolm brings it down to critically wounded and Annata misses with a *divine surge*. Thorndyke digs the holy sword and aberration-bane pick into it but it just won't die.

It breathes acid-blood again. This time Thorndyke and Annata evade it but Malcolm still takes it on the chin. Annata uses a *restoration* to get rid of the 8 points of

Strength damage on Thorndyke, and, newly invigorated, he drives his blades into the creature's dark heart.

"I declare this place... clean," says Annata. We walk out of Castle Scarwall with the sword we need to defeat the Queen!

This Is Different From My Usual Dreams How?

Vencarlo and the seneschal come to us in our dreams, courtesy of a hired wizard. They are going back to Korvosa to rendezvous with the resistance. He says to meet us under the citadel of Pharama in the Gray Quarter. "We'll be there, Vecnarlo!" says Annata breathlessly.

We go to Kaer Maga and gear up to return to Korvosa and take on the Queen! And, we advance to level 14.