

Legends of Steel Session Summary 06/21/2009

Attendance

Everyone is quite surprised when *Chris* (Singh) rolls down the car window and cries out, “Doggie!” The fact that a car with a dog hanging its head out a window just passed by makes his response only slightly more sensible.

Bruce (Baba Ali) celebrates by telling a story about some strange gaming supplement involving a snake 350 kilometers across. Everyone else decides to forget the whole incident.

Paul (Oka and Kura) saves the day by describing his experiences watching lots of old *Star Trek* episodes of various generations. Much of his experience seems to revolve around a Ferenghi customs officer and a Walloon who speaks for the Founders.

Chuck is confused, “How did a French-speaking inhabitant of Belgium manage to get such an important position? They’re so poorly educated, and they have such poor hygiene!”

Paul shoots back, “Hey! My favorite *Star Trek* episode of all times is one that features both Ferenghi looting the ship, and the drop-dead gorgeous engineer running around for almost the whole episode in nothing more than his underwear.”

Georgina grumbles, “I don’t understand how you can like *Star Trek* more than *How I Met Your Mother*. After all, it shows how we’re all going to have lightsabers in three to five years!”

Paul decides to lighten the mood by pointing out, “I have taught geometry and calculus, so now I’m an expert in them! Ask me anything!”

Bruce asks, “There is a circular clock on the wall. Write down the equations to describe the apparent X and Y dimensions of the clock as a function of your position in the room.” Paul stares at him skeptically.

Chuck offers, “I have a geometry question! Where’s Belarus?” *Everyone* stares at him skeptically.

Paul decides to ignore both of them by burying himself into a ThinkGeek catalog. “Look! A Bag of Holding! And the Eight-Bit Dynamic Life Shirts! And a handheld device that can run old Nintendo cartridges!”

It is at this point that *Tim* (Kaitamo) arrives, towing *Matt* (Max Harkness) in his wake. Tim exclaims, “I shall eat lunch! Lunch composed entirely of dead plants and funguses! Because my ethics are superior to yours!”

Matt groans. Why does he always have to ride with the Vegan? Besides, he’s only recently learned the rules to rock-paper-scissors-lizard-Spock and he’s eager to try it out. His problem so far? Apparently everyone always chooses Spock.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Concept and Notes</i>
Oka	Paul	Tarzan-like native, accompanied by his panther Kura
Singh	Chris	Thuggee assassin
Manoj	Ernest	Sikh warrior
Kaitamo	Tim	Mongol archer
Max Harkness	Matt	Escaped pleasure slave, along with his love slave Yanto
Baba Ali	Bruce	The bumbling Sufi monk with a penchant for bestiality

Are We There Yet?

The characters are in the western reaches of the Great Forest, north of the city-state of Belsa. Half of the characters are preparing the pirate leader *Jobert* for transport while *Oka* and *Max Harkness* accompany a caravan staffed out with the remaining pirates on a loot-selling expedition.

Oka grumbles, “I can’t believe I slept with you.”

Max Harkness blushes. *Oka* is surprised that *Max* still has the ability to blush.

The pirates have already learned that their two newest recruits bicker like an old married couple at the drop of a hat, so they only barely pay attention.

When the pirate caravan makes it back to the wreckage of the pirate camp they find *Singh* waiting to greet them. It doesn’t take long to arrange the transfer of power: *Singh* proves that he has defeated *Jobert*, which makes him the new boss. The pirates are quite practical-minded about this sort of thing.

The next-ranking pirate personality is *Fat Ethel*, the cook. The characters set back and wait while she sets up her cauldron and launches into stew.

The Bear Clan Is Restless

Later that evening, while the characters are enjoying their Miscellany Stew, a group of local natives approach. The natives are buckskin-clad and quite reminiscent of Northeastern American Indians. *Baba Ali* suggests, “They look like Wampanoags!”

Singh disagrees, “I think they’re more similar to Iroquois.”

Max Harkness agrees, “Yes, very much like the Black River Iroquois. Not so much the Broken Rock Iroquois.”

The native leader introduces himself, “I am Chief Bearclaw of the Bear Clan. You are the ones who have defeated Jobert. Are you to take his place?”

The characters all indicate that they intend to take Jobert away, rather than to replace him.

Chief Bearclaw explains, “We do not understand the ways of the city folk, but Jobert has an obligation to us. I see that you have the payment there already.”

Singh suggests, “We may take on this obligation. Please describe it to me.”

“The Stone Wolf Clan was once the ally of the Bear Clan, until a star fell from the sky...”

Kaitamo blurts out, “...and mutated them into horrible monsters?”

The Chief continues, “The star-stone changed the son of the tribe’s shaman, turning him monstrous and evil.”

Kaitamo exclaims, “Can I call it or what!”

The Chief ignores the Mongol savage, who is currently redefining the term “savage” down. “Yes. The Stone Wolves have become touched by evil. They have stolen many of our wives and children, and made alliances with foul city-dwellers. We had made an agreement with Jobert to deal with those members of the tribe who remain. Few of them remain, but they are quite strong. Their change to evil has caused them to fight amongst themselves, thinning their numbers.”

Singh asks, “And your missing tribespeople, will we need to rescue them?”

Chief Bearclaw answers, “I regret that it is too late for them. I believe that the Stone Wolves kill and eat them. They have become savage and relentless in their hunger.”

Singh asks again, “Where can we find them? And we will need a couple of native guides.”

“The Stone Wolves are deeper in the forest to the north, in the foothills of the mountains. You will be escorted by my daughter Puna.”

The others do not realize that Kaitamo is not listening to the Chief. He is back in one of the tents with Puna, as they have found love in each other’s arms. She is attracted to him because she sees him as the least barbaric of the characters. The others *also* do not realize that *Kura* is not at Oka’s side, as she has also found love in the paws of Puna’s panther. When Oka eventually does realize this, he mourns, “Their yowling will keep us awake all night.” Baba Ali chuckles and cracks his knuckles. Max Harkness shudders.

Singh Defines the Plan

Singh looks around at the pirate band. There are eighteen survivors. He tells them, “Congratulations, guys! You’re going to be rich, and we have a plan! There’s a star-stone that fell amid this tribe, and it’s valuable. That means it’s treasure! Equal shares for all!”

Oka whispers, “Wait, didn’t the star-stone make the tribesmen into evil mutants?”

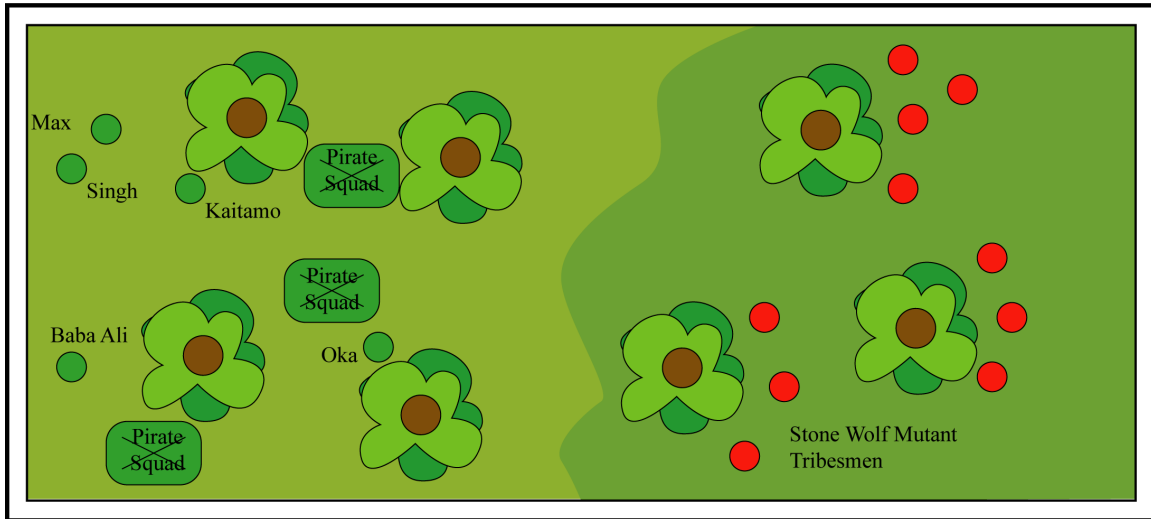
Singh elbows him to quiet him down, “Ush-hay! Don’t let the ictims-vay know that they’re alking-way into certain oom-day!”

We Meet the Stone Wolves

The characters are moving into a wooded grove when Puna cautions them. “There are Stone Wolf braves ahead, waiting to ambush us! But they are not so crafty as we are!” The characters immediately order their three squads of pirates forward into the battle. Oka and Kura lead the way, intent upon inspiring bravery in their minions through direct example. The mutant tribesmen answer the human wave of pirates with devastating archery, shooting down three pirates with their first volley.

Kaitamo answers the tribals’ arrows with his own, pinning one of the savages to a tree by the head. He howls out, “I am a dead shot! A *dead shot!* Do you understand me? You will feel my true-fledged wrath!” The tribals appear to be too insane to be intimidated. He follows up by shooting three arrows into another tribal’s guts, collapsing him like a broken water balloon.

First Encounter With the Stone Wolves



Oka wades in to the mass of tribesmen, spearing them one after another as he clears the way for his companions. The characters, observing the number of fallen Stone Wolves, feel quite confident. They move deeper into the forest, making some comments on how much like a side-scroller game the map looks.

The Crazier Tribesmen Appear

As the characters clean out the remainder of the baseline tribesmen another group moves in to the battle. These are scruffier and wilder than their brethren, armed with stone axes. Big, hulking, stone-colored wolves accompany them. Oka howls out, “They’re berserkers! Ber-serk-ers!”

Baba Ali tries to shoot one berserker down, but his sling bullet fails to even mark the tribesman as it bounces off his rounded head.

	<i>Parry</i>	<i>Toughness</i>
Stone Wolf Brave	5	6
Stone Wolf Berserker	7	7
Stone Wolf	6	9

Singh brandishes his scimitar at a berserker, catching the glint of the sun along the blade and reflecting it into the tribal’s eyes. The partially blinded berserker is unable to stop Singh’s swift slash and falls.

Oka sees that Kura is in danger from one of the wolves. He swiftly pulls down several clumps of rules and proves that the wolf has already been defeated. The wolf is surprised even as it dies. A berserker slashes wildly at Oka, but his fear of being slain by legislation dulls his attack.

Singh launches himself into an acrobatic assault that completely confuses his target, but his follow-through is poor and the pirate remains standing.

Oka observed, "WOLF is FLOW, backwards!"

Three savages volley arrows at Puna. She flings herself safely out of the arrows' path. Two wolves savage one of the surviving pirates. And *Yanto* distinguishes himself by cutting down a berserker.

Baba Ali pushes his pirate squad forward, supporting them with a barrage of sling bullets that mostly bounce harmlessly off the berserkers' heavy torsos. One particularly ugly berserker with gruesome scarification down the right side of his face leers at Baba Ali and promises horrible vengeance. Baba Ali calmly responds by putting a sling bullet cleanly through the berserker's throat, sending him down choking upon his own blood.

Puna finally moves into the conflict, ordering her panther forward against one of the wolves. The panther grips the unfortunate wolf and tears with its long teeth. The wolf howls in agony. The panther shakes and snaps the wolf's throat. The limp body dangles in the mighty cat's jaws.

Kaitamo calmly draws an arrow and fires in one elegant motion. Far across the field, a tribesman falls stricken an arrow through his eye. Another tribesman sees Kaitamo and returns fire, shaking the Mongol archer.

Stay Still While I Sew You Back Up

Baba Ali, Puna and Oka round up the six walking-wounded pirates and stitch them together. It takes them about twenty minutes to bring the pirates back around. The pirates are grateful to be healthy again, but none too sure about the next things they're going to have to do.

Did We Get the Guy?

The characters pick through the bodies. Singh asks, "So Puna, did we get their chief?"

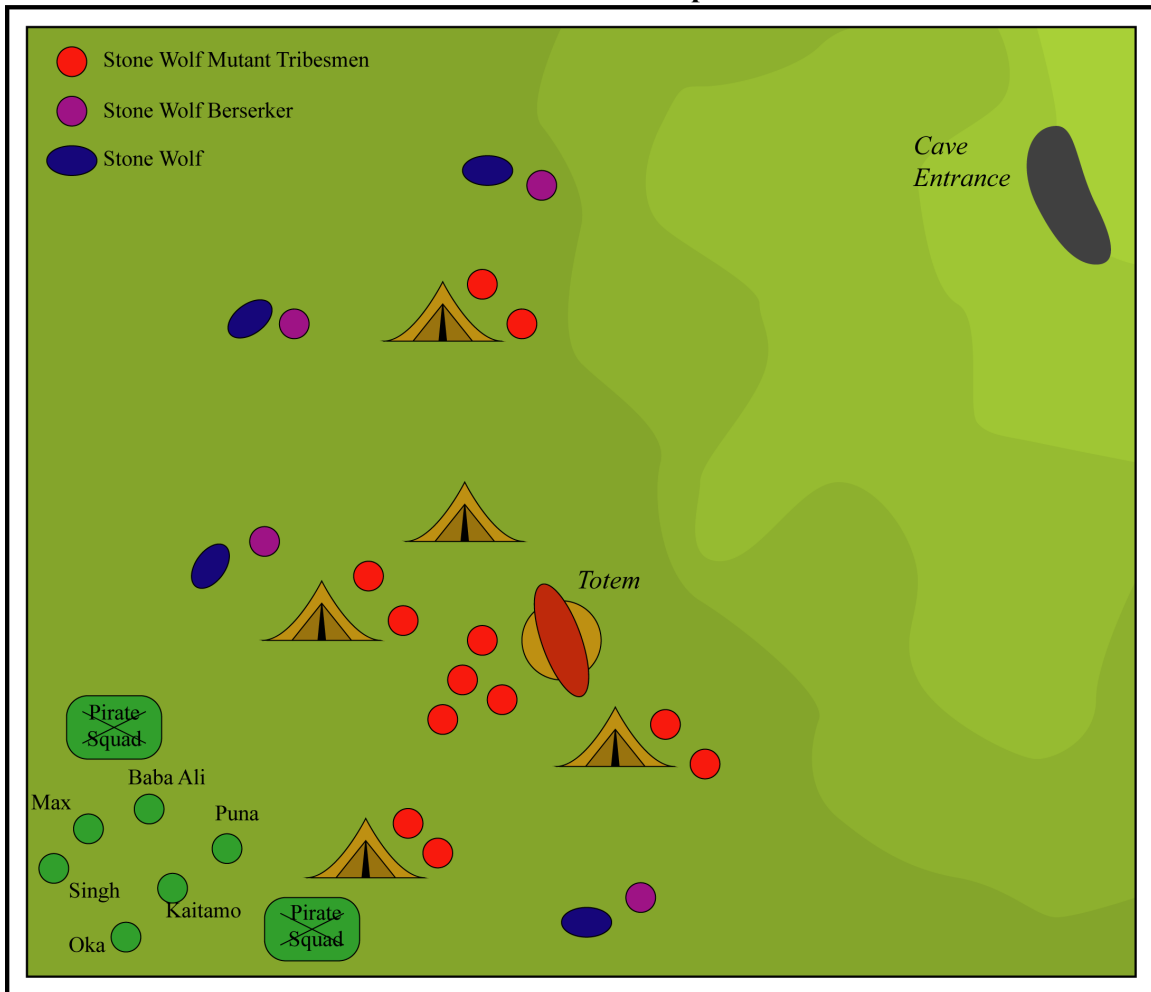
She disappoints him by answering, “No, this was just a raiding party. There’s nobody important here.”

Kaitamo notices that one of the berserkers is wearing a necklace made of human fingers. Another has earrings made out of ears. A third has no ears. Oka comments, “This makes sense! Not only do you have an attractive necklace but you also have a snack!” The other characters edge away from the savage.

The Stone Wolf Camp

The characters continue on and in short order find their way to the outskirts of the Stone Wolf camp. Oka scouts the area and reports several hide tents sited around a totem placed at the base of a hill. There are both Stone Wolf braves and berserkers among the tents, along with several more wolves. There is a cave entrance up at the top of the hill.

The Stone Wolf Encampment



The characters debate tactics, a project made more difficult by Baba Ali's insistence that he will not be able to locate any "napalm bushes" nearby. Oka and Kaitamo eventually decide that they would like to fire arrows wrapped with poison ivy into the Stone Wolf fire pits. Their hope is that the noxious fumes from the plants will bring at least some tribesmen running out of the camp to be slaughtered more easily.

After a few false starts, Baba Ali comes up with some poison sumac, which he hands over to Yanto to make into four wrapped arrows. Kaitamo takes the arrows and shoots them into the camp. The tribesmen stamp out the arrows, but clearly have no idea where they came from. Two of the wolves are more alert and run at Kaitamo. He draws one of them back to the rest of the characters, who slaughter it.

Oka listens to Kaitamo's description and comments, "So these tribesmen are still sitting in their camp getting blinded by fumes? Because the arrows no doubt came from the arrow god of the skies? Why did the Bear Clan need our help with these guys again?"

The others really don't pay attention. They're too busy organizing the pirates up and heading out to the camp.

Battle Is Jointed

The two reorganized pirate squads lead the way. They march loyally into a berserker charge and an arrow barrage that kills only a single pirate. Kaitamo answers the attack by sending Puna and her panther forward, then shooting down one of the wolves. Max Harkness moves up and deftly cuts down another wolf with his longsword. Kura pounces on a berserker and makes him into tribesman bits.

Max realizes that he is standing exposed at the front of the line. He moves to put Yanto and a couple of pirates between him and the archers, proclaiming the start of something called "Operation Meat Shield." Baba Ali strongly suspects that Max is describing something deeply inappropriate, something associated with loose morals and laxity. Whatever Max is thinking, his plan is enough to eliminate a berserker.

While Max is congratulating himself, Yanto finds himself engaged by three foes: two wolves and one berserker. They fall upon him, leaving him both shaken and badly wounded.

As the characters bear up underneath another volley of archery, a tall robed figure bearing a long twisted staff steps into view in the camp. His staff is tipped with a misshapen stone that glows with a sickly green light. He is accompanied by a massive wolf. The characters quickly understand that the Stone Wolf Clan shaman has just appeared.

I Can't Believe It's Not Human!

The characters clean their way through the lead echelon of wolves and berserkers just in time to see the Stone Wolf Clan shaman call his massively misshapen son up from the cave. Baba Ali gasps, "That was some star-stone! The shaman's son must be twelve feet tall!"

Kaitamo responds by sending a carefully aimed arrow at the shaman's son. His aim is true and the arrow strikes home, but it inflicts only a trivial wound. Kaitamo starts to understand just how hard stopping the shaman actually will be.

Puna and her panther decide to ignore the incredible obstacle posed by the shaman and his son in favor of cutting and stabbing her way through the workaday cannibal tribesmen. Singh murmurs, "Rock lobster... rock lobster..." though none of the others really know what he's talking about.

Three tribesmen shoot arrows into Puna's panther, wounding it terribly. The shaman's son picks up a massive rock and flings it at Kaitamo. Kaitamo gasps and collapses a lung under the impact, but turns out to be okay in the end. He explains to the others, "I've got two lungs. Besides, this game is easy if you draw only jokers."

Baba Ali and his pirate squad turn their attention to the Stone Wolf braves, killing three of them. Baba Ali muses, "For a guy whose primary ability is healing people, I'm doing great at slaughtering nameless spear-carriers!"

Singh offers, "Actually, they do have names. We just don't care."

Max Harkness decides to change the tenor of the combat. He explains, "I'm going to use my comely wiles to seduce him..."

Baba Ali fails to understand, "You're seriously going to try and express your eternal love for a twelve-foot misshapen mass of mutated muscle?"

Max answers him, "No, he's too far away."

All the blood drains out of Baba Ali's face.

Max notices that the mystic is on the verge of collapse from shock, so he explains that he's *actually* trying to express his love for Yanto, to inspire him and (perhaps) draw him out of danger. Baba Ali gasps and agrees that this makes a bit more sense.

Max pays the mystic no heed as he encourages Yanto to fling his spear in a fantastic bank shot that leaves two tribesmen shaken. It takes little more effort to clear away the remaining tribesmen, leaving only the barrage of huge stones from the shaman's son to deal with.

Singh, Oka and two pirates move in on the shaman and his wolf ally, shaking it. Everyone is feeling pretty confident about their progress against the shaman until he casts a *Fear* burst over most of the pirates and half of the party. Then the shaman's son stomps down the hill and uses his Whomping Sweep attack to clear out three of the surviving pirates, crush one of his own tribesmen, and injure Oka.

Max calls out to *Grendor* the son, "Your father has betrayed you! How do you think we found you? We know your weaknesses inside and out! If you want to be angry with someone, be angry with your father who mutated you and ruined your entire Clan!"

"Grendor not fall for little pretty man trick! Graargh!"

Max curses, "Cursed wound penalties! I would have had him if not for those!"

Oka does his best to pull away from Grendor, but takes a hit from the giant's club again, leaving him staggered at the creature's feet. Grendor steps over to the last two pirates intending to slaughter them, but they duck underneath his wild swing.

Kaitamo decides that his best choice is to deal with the shaman. He sends an arrow straight into the shaman's lungs, forcing him to spend several bennies to remain healthful. Kaitamo curses.

Yanto moves up behind the shaman and flings his spear. The shaman expends his very last bennie to no avail, leaving him wounded and shaken. A cheer goes up from the battered characters.

The Ancient Rite of Positional Advantage

It is at this moment that Singh attempts to call for a parley with the shaman. He delivers a short prepared speech: "You know, there's several points I'd like to make. The

first thing is I'm really sorry about killing your entire tribe, but I think you can really do well if you try to recruit. I mean, your son's a real looker there and I think he'll do really well with the ladies as long as they have good, wide hips. And besides, you've killed a lot of our guys too. And really all this would be so much simpler if you'd just pick up and head out of the district. That'd really be excellent."

While Singh talks, the other characters move around to find better positions for when the talks fail and the violence breaks out again.

Take the Cave! Take the Cave

After a few moments of edgy waiting, Max Harkness pulls a whistle and a baton out of his shirt pocket. He turns to the others and says, "Boys, when we go over that trench wall we all know that Jerry's going to be waiting for us. But I know that you'll give it everything you've got, because you're fighting for the Queen's honor! You may hail from all manner of strange Mohammedan provinces, but you have English iron in your souls! And we all know that the spirit and bravery of the cavalry charge will always defeat the cowardice of the machine gun! Huzzah!"

The others aren't totally sure why, but they find themselves cheering alongside him. In the back of the group, Baba Ali reflects, "Harkness has clearly been possessed. Besides, we don't have any horses. And if he's thinking the shaman's name is Jerry, the fellow clearly doesn't have a machine gun (whatever that is). He's only got his monstrous twelve foot tall son Grendor. I am outta here..." Baba Ali creeps off, resolving to do his best to sew up the casualties after they are bodily flung out of the cave by the mutant.

On signal, everyone else storms the cave. Max, Yanto and Puna corner the shaman and swiftly dispatch him with spear and blade. Kaitamo shoots out one of Grendor's eyes, giving Singh and Oka room to flank him, hamstringing him, and stab him through the spine. Singh mops some of the blood and fluid from his brow and surveys the scene with satisfaction. "That's the way to clear a cave, if I do say so myself. Now, where'd that miserable little mystic get off to?"

Oka has no attention for Singh's fancy words: he is too busy dragging Puna over to his panther Kura. He looks anxiously at the tribeswoman healer, "She's really, really

hurt! Can you save her? Can you?" Puna gently assures him that she will do all that she can. As it turns out, she's good to her word: Kura will live to pounce another day.

A couple of hours afterward, while the others pick through the shaman's goods and make camp, Kaitamo reflects, "I think the shaman had a big wolf pet too. It looked really dangerous, but I don't see its body anywhere around. I wonder where it went?" He doesn't hear the howl from the distant hills.

The End of the Session

Each character gains three experience points, even the sniveling Baba Ali.