

Reavers on the Seas of Fate - Session Summary 01/09/2011

In the wake of a tsunami hitting Riddleport, the heroes have been recruited by Salvadora Beckett to investigate the deaths of several townsfolk and some gendarmes by an invisible monster. Our heroes are:

- *Wogan*, the pistol-packin' celibate cleric of Gozreh (Patrick)
- *Tommy Blacktoes*, the staff-slingin' sneaky halfling rogue (Kevin, out sick today)
- *Sindawe H'kilata Narr*, the fist-punchin' Mwangi monk (Chris)
- *Ref "Serpent" Jorensen*, the staff-bashin' Ulfen druid/ranger and his snake *Saluthra* (Paul)

With us are:

- *Hatshepsut*, high priestess of a lost civilization who doesn't savvy the Common (NPC)
- *Salvadora Beckett*, the half-orc member of the God Squad (NPC)

Keepers and Lurkers and Pirates, Oh My

So far we've found out that six cultists calling themselves Keepers accidentally summoned a monster, which they refer to as the Lurker at the Threshold. Information gained from an occult book called the Pnakotic Manuscripts indicates that the Lurker is now going around trying to kill all the Keepers to absorb their power. The Lurker has so far killed two of the Keepers, Baskerwell and Marshan. We have killed two of the Keepers, Myre and Hyve, to prevent the Lurker from doing so itself. We call it "the pirate solution to the problem." Two Keepers remain: Crooge and Crove. Hyrum Crooge runs the local dump, called the Boneyard, and Waldur Crove runs an Crove Asylum, located on the ridge bordering Riddleport to the east. Riddleport is devastated by a tsunami so traveling around is neither convenient nor safe. We do so anyway.

Bring Out Your Dead

At the end of last session, we had been fleeing from the Lurker at the Threshold with the poisoner Keeper Hyve as our captive; Sindawe finally killed the man and the presence paused and then ravaged off towards the east. We breathe a sigh of relief and begin to discuss heading for the asylum when Tommy suddenly swoons and faints in the rainy street. We stop to examine him. Wogan finds that he has a nasty green rash that smells like compost. He is massively weakened. We decide to take him back to the Gold Goblin.

On the way, we come across the body of a young prostitute being gnawed on by several of Riddleport's cat-sized centipedes. Wogan blasts at the centipedes with his gun to drive them away. "We should take this woman's body to be burned, it would be wrong to just leave it here." Serpent doesn't necessarily see the point, but he picks up the woman's body and carts it along.

We are now carrying a sick halfling, Keeper Myre's corpse, and a dead prostitute. "Surely there's a marching song for this occasion," says Sindawe. Salvadora gives him the hairy eyeball.

We arrive at the Gold Goblin and hand Tommy off to the staff. Hans and Beyar look nervously at the diseased halfling as they come in through the front door. Wogan stays with Tommy to give him relief from his disease while Sindawe, Salvadora, and Serpent head off to take the bodies to the burning pyres. Wogan figures out that light seems to make Tommy's disease worse, so he puts Tommy in a dark room and gives him Sindawe's magic heat rock to keep him warm. Hatshepsut goes to her room to clean up.

The burning pyres are down near the docks; they roar heartily despite the rain. Gendarmes stand around enforcing the burning of bodies as a public health measure, sometimes separating corpses from their loved ones with the help of some butt-strokes from their muskets. We witness a group of gendarmes gunning down a reefclaw that comes out of the bay to investigate the bodies. We toss both bodies into the flames as Salvadora confers with the other gendarmes.

The group heads back to the Gold Goblin. Sindawe looks around for the boy Durt, and gives him some coins to find some friends and go retrieve the books from Keeper Myre's monster-ravaged lair. Salvadora points out that the boy might get shot as a looter.

Sindawe asks Salvadora to write a note to allow Durt and his friends to bring back the books without getting shot. She accedes, but adds, “We'll see if the gendarmes bother reading the note before shooting him.”

Landfill Ho

We head off through the city going toward the asylum. As we get near the Cut (the road that passes over the ridge on the eastern side of the city), we see a screaming dwarf running toward us. He has a gas mask like the ones the dwarves working the Gas Forge wear, but it is askew. His body is covered with gashes. “Help me!” he cries, “they're after me!”

Wogan climbs up on the trash mound nearby, looks around and sees two loping blubbering undead creatures: ghouls! “Guys! Ghouls incoming!” he cries. Serpent quickly casts *barkskin* on himself.

As the ghouls come clambering over the garbage, a wall of stench assails us, but we fight back our gorges. The ghouls bite at Wogan and Sindawe but do not hit them. Sindawe gives the ghoul in front of him a savage beating and it collapses. Salvadora and Wogan shoot at the second ghoul but only Salvadora hits. Serpent and Hatshepsut step up and finish the second ghoul off together.

The panicked dwarf tells us that he was part of a party of dwarves from the Gas Forges fixing the gas line in the Boneyard when they were overrun by ghouls. We stand around discussing whether we should go see if we can save the dwarves (or at least slay the ghouls in retribution) or keep going to the asylum. When we hear that the gas line goes to the incinerator Hiram Crooge runs in the junkyard, we decide we should go take care of that now.

We go into the Boneyard. The valleys between the trash runs with glistening dark sludge and the stench rises like heat waves from the trash. Hundreds of seagulls wheel around and the dump has hot and cold running rats and roaches. Sindawe and Salvadora both become nauseated from the stench.

Serpent and Sindawe both spot a ghoul spying on us. In Aklo, Sindawe says to the group, “There are ghouls spying on us.”

Serpent says, "I don't know what he's saying, but there's a ghoul over there." He points over at the hillock of debris and the ghoul's head disappears behind the trash.

"I was speaking Aklo because they understand Common!" says Sindawe.

"Well, they probably understand Aklo too!"

"Really? Well, I guess we'll never know, will we? You scared it away."

We spot the incinerator building and smell gas. We also see a few dwarf corpses littered around. We're concerned they may be ghouls, and stop to have a conversation about how ghouls are made.

"I think it happen when you get bit by a ghoul."

"I heard that if you eat human flesh, you just turn into one eventually."

"No, it happens when you charge someone too much interest on a loan."

As usual, a lack of consensus emerges on how exactly the world works.

"Don't use any fire!" requests Serpent. "It'll blow us all sky high."

"Okay, I'll just use my guns!" Wogan responds.

When we walk forward toward the incinerator, Wogan starts to succumb to the effects of the gas-laden air. He casts *delay poison* on himself to help overcome the effects. We come to the dwarf corpses and look around carefully. Sindawe says, "I think the coast is clear," just as a ghoul leaps off the building on top of him.

Seven ghouls leap out of the building to attack us, but we mostly manage to dodge their attacks. Serpent pummels one, Sindawe pummels another. Saluthra slithers up and bites one ghoul, wrapping it in her coils and crushing it. Hatshepsut uses her serpent-style kung-fu to viciously beat another ghoul. Wogan calls on the power of Gozreh to clear the air, doing positive energy damage to all the undead. The one in front of Hatshepsut collapses.

The ghouls counterattack. One of them bites a big chunk out of Sindawe's cheek, which bleeds profusely. Another ghoul claws Salvadora, and another claws Wogan. Wogan becomes paralyzed from the touch of the ghoul.

Salvadora wounds a ghoul with her sword, and Sindawe downs another ghoul with a flurry of blows. Serpent sends Saluthra after the ghoul that paralyzed Wogan and she crunches it. Hatshepsut moves to pound the ghoul that is attacking Sindawe.

The gas begins to get to the rest of us and we all become sickened. Serpent gets bitten by a ghoul. He slams the ghoul in return and Saluthra takes out yet another ghoul. Sindawe also takes out the ghoul facing him.

By now there is only one remaining ghoul. It bites Hatshepsut. Serpent beats down the last ghoul with his staff.

We try to salvage the gas masks from the dead dwarves to fight the effects of the gas. Sindawe drinks a potion to heal his bloody cheek wound. Wogan notices an oddity on one of the dwarf corpses. His joints and spine seem to be swollen and are growing tiny eyes and mouths. Another of the dwarf corpses' flesh is running like candle wax. We drag the corpses away from the gas and burn them. Wogan uses a fan feather token to blow towards the gas first so we don't accidentally set off an explosion.

What a Wonderful Smell You've Discovered

We approach where Crooge's hut used to be. It has been washed away by the tsunami, revealing a cave into a cliff face no one knew existed. We go in. The narrow cavern slopes up a bit to the west. Large mounds of filth are all over the place and insects swarm on the walls. We press on, making sure our dwarven gas masks are firmly in place.

Suddenly, an otyugh bursts out of a mound of trash. It has three legs and three barbed tentacles; one of the tentacles has eyes. Serpent and Saluthra run forward to attack it.

Sindawe spots a second otyugh hiding in another mound of trash. He calls out, "There's another one!" and runs over to it to deliver a South Alabama Shin Stomp to it, stunning it. Hatshepsut moves to help Sindawe. Wogan moves over to Serpent and imbues his staff with the power of Awe.

The first otyugh bites Saluthra and flails at Serpent and Wogan. One of its barbed tentacles wraps around Wogan and lifts him into the air. "Squeeeeeee!" he says.

Salvadora enchants her arrows to be baned against aberrations and slams two arrows into the first otyugh, killing it. The flailing Wogan splashes down into the muck. Serpent runs to help on the other otyugh and hits it with his staff of Awe. Sindawe finishes it off with his Aroma of the Golden Knuckle Punch.

We look around the trash. Sindawe finds a skeleton that had been previously eaten by an otyugh. It has a curiously intact eel-skin belt pouch. Inside is 20 pp, which he shares out among the group. He keeps the pouch. “Great! We’ll be able to identify your body when you’ve been eaten by something!” says Wogan.

The next cavern is cut in half by a river of flowing seawater, with an improvised bridge across it made of nailed-together doors and scrap. At this point, Serpent notices that Saluthra has been afflicted with some kind of disease. Wogan diagnoses it as the same slimy green disease that Tommy has.

We go down a side tunnel and into a chamber that appears to be made of garbage. The roof has been braced with lumber and metal. The floor is covered with semi-liquescient goo.

As we walk forward the floor shifts and the garbage collapses beneath us. Serpent goes tumbling down into the garbage sinkhole. He ends up 20 feet down in a passageway that opens into another cavern. He notices that there is a big pool down here and something seems to be rippling within.

Up top the characters hear the noises of many rats heading toward them. Sindawe throws down a rope for Serpent. “Throw me the idol!” he bellows down at him.

As a pack of dire rats surge toward the rest of the group from an adjacent cavern, Serpent sees three ghouls emerge from the water below. Serpent cries out in rage and charges one of the ghouls. Sindawe begins trying to kill rats.

At that moment something slams into Wogan from behind so hard that it sickens him. He discovers the thing that hit him is a javelin. Wogan summons a thick mist to block the direction the javelin came from and summons a dog to attack the rats. Hatshepsut kills two rats, and Serpent finishes off one ghoul. Salvadora kills a rat with her bow. Wogan shoots another rat with his pistol, and Hatshepsut kills three more rats with her serpent-style kung-fu. Saluthra slithers into action and eats another rat. The rats beset the two monks; Sindawe gets bitten on the hand but by and large they avoid serious injury.

Serpent avoids the claws of the ghouls and finishes off a second ghoul. Above, Sindawe finishes off the last rats. Wogan sends his celestial summoned dog down to aid Serpent. Serpent, still enraged, finishes off the last ghoul.

As Serpent calls back to the others about what he sees down here, he suddenly is narrowly missed by a javelin that comes arcing out of the darkness. He calls up, "Someone is throwing javelins down here!" He does not see who threw it.

Wogan sends his summoned dog to sniff out the javelin-thrower as Serpent scrambles up the rope to the upper level. Wogan says, "So you got attacked by the garbage yeti too?" It seems that Wogan got a peek at the javelin-thrower: it was a large guy who might have been Keeper Crooge.

Wogan calls out, "Keeper Crooge, come out! We know all about the Lurker at the Threshold!" No one answers him.

We head out through the rat warrens, finding some pink baby rats along the way. Wogan puts the baby rats into a bag and takes them with him. "Waste not, want not!" he says cheerily. Everyone else is concerned about this turn of events.

Sloth Love Chunk

As we go along, the tunnel slopes down. Sindawe slips in the black slime and goes sliding down a waterslide-like slope down a tunnel and emerges with a splash into a big pool of muck. Two huge slimy creatures that look like piles of excrement emerge from the slime at the bottom and move to attack. Sindawe yells, "Poo!"

Serpent says, "I better find some Goonies in here!" and throws himself down the slick slide after Sindawe. As he reaches the bottom, Sindawe slams one of the poo monsters and it seems to die, but Sindawe takes acid damage as his fists begin to burn. The second poo monster tries to envelop him but he dodges. Serpent hits it once with his staff and the staff almost gets destroyed by acid. He refuses to attack it a second time. "My flesh can heal, but equipment is forever!" he blubbers. The ooze creature tries to envelop Sindawe again but he finishes it off, taking yet more acid damage in the process as the others come sliding down and splashing slime around. Hatshepsut casts *create water* to wash the acid off him and Wogan casts *cure light wounds* to mitigate his burns.

Traveling further, we find a broken discarded wall that originally belonged to a small shrine. Examining it, Salvadora decides that it is a shrine to the exotic Eastern goddess Sarenrae. Wogan searches around and finds a hidden stone that conceals a small

golden statue of Sarenrae. He hefts its twenty pound bulk speculatively and calls, “Serpent!”

We travel on and we see a big stone statue on the floor, also of Sarenrae. Part of it is battered and chipped away. Sindawe believes that someone has been deliberately chipping away at the lower half of the statue. Serpent thinks it’s as if they were trying to reshape it into a statue of Urgathoa (Urgathoa, goddess of undead and disease, looks like a woman on top but is a skeleton from the waist down).

While traveling through the next cavern, Salvadora spots something and yelps. We rush back and start searching the corridors, but can't find anything. Salvadora, shaken, says she saw someone with a horrible scary face. While searching around, Sindawe and Hatshepsut come across a big ooze that begins slowly slurping toward them. They throw alchemist's fire at them and retreat back to the group.

Salvadora recognizes the ooze as an ochre jelly. She warns that sharp weapons will cause it to split into more jellies. The fire seems to be working though, so Serpent uses a wand to summon *2 flame blades* and faces the jelly. He gives his last three alchemist's fire vials to the two monks to use. Between the fire, the flame blades, and Wogan's icicle blasts, we take the ooze out swiftly.

The Lovely Bones

While attacking the ooze, Wogan gets hit by another javelin from behind. We spread out and begin looking around for Crooge, but can't find him anywhere. When we return to the statue room, though, Sindawe discovers something else. A body of a woman, who has had all the flesh dissolved off the lower half of her body. Salvadora inspects the body, she seems freaked out. She says, “Oh shit, he's the Rotgut Ripper!”

We recognize the name as being the popular pseudonym of a serial killer who hunts in the Rotgut District. She tells us, “The Rotgut Ripper has been responsible for a number of murders in the Rotgut District. The bodies were defiled in a specific way and then left in place. The victims have been mostly fancyboys, boy prostitutes dressed as girls, and were partially disembowled and their legs mutilated. Given the Urgathoa angle, maybe the ones we found were his rejects. He's killed a lot of people, dozens that we know about.” The normally unflappable Salvadora looks scared.

Conclusion

We leave off deep in a cave of garbage under the flooded Boneyard, hunting and being hunted by a demented serial killer, trying to get to him before a horrific monster from the Dark Tapestry arrives to suck out all our bodily fluids and possibly our souls.