

REAVERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE - SESSION SUMMARY 1/29/2012

TODAY'S EPISODE: MONSTER ISLAND PART 3

Our heroes are on Monster Island (Nal-Kashel), two miles off the Sallow Coast in Cheliah. They have just finished fighting phase spiders in the Observatory. Off camera is another team of NPCs, charged by Captain Sindawe with locating a soft, rich pirating target on the Sallow Coast's north end. And reportedly their ship, the *Teeth of Araska*, is anchored on Monster Island's north-eastern side.

Our heroes today are:

- Captain Sindawe H'kilata Narr, the fist-punchin' Mwangi monk (Chris).
- First Mate Ref "Serpent" Jorensen, the staff-bashin' Ulfen druid/ranger and his snake Saluthra (Paul).
- Gunnery Mate Wogan, the pistol-packin' celibate cleric of Gozreh (Patrick).
- With them are the pirates Slasher Jim and Gareb. Del and Spee had originally come along, but both have met monstrous fates.

Back on the *Teeth of Araska* are:

- Hatshepsut, monk and high priestess of a lost civilization who doesn't savvy much Common and her cobra Naja.
- The rest of the crew, some 20+ souls consisting of:
 - Survivors from the ship's previous pirate crew
- Samaritha, the wand-blastin' serpentfolk wizard in the guise of a pretty half-elf.
 - Ex-slaves escaped from their Chelish owner and recruited from their castaway island home
 - Various other recruits, some willing, some not.

The away team consists of:

- Bosun Tommy Blacktoes, the staff-slingin' sneaky halfling rogue (was Kevin, now NPC).

- Lavender Lil, a buxom, tiefling ex-prostitute.
- Crewmen:
 - Kahina, ex-slave
 - Sevgi, ex-slave
 - Little Mike, ex-Chelish Navy
 - Rolf, who killed an owlbear in Zincher's Arena

THE OBSERVATORY

The plan to leave the mentally broken Gareb outside is abandoned when the pirate declares in a traumatized voice, "I can't stay out here. Let me come along. I won't slow you down." The other pirates look dubious but agree. A short time later Gareb is back to his old self leading several to believe he's tanked up on a hidden bottle or chasing the dragon. No one cares enough to ask, because another warm body fighting monsters is greatly appreciated.

The pirates return to the Observatory to examine the ground floor again. The Orrery continues to rotate, producing random rays of light which still cause the pirates to twitch nervously. Yet nothing happens. The pirates relax a bit as they continue searching.

Wogan examines the floating steles. He thinks the writing is Azlanti, which is very clear on several but partially obscured on most by salt and sulfur (thanks to the sulfurous water of Hellmouth Bay). Even the salt/sulfur damaged steles can be restored thanks to the amazing Azlanti metallurgy and the raised letters.

Not being able to read Azlanti is proving frustrating, so Wogan decides he needs The Watchers! He pulls a weasel from his *Master of Beasts* coffer and throws it toward Serpent. "Kill it?" asks Serpent. Wogan nods just after Serpent smashes the

weasel to mush. But The Watchers do not appear. Wogan decides that only dying "real" life is attractive to them.

By this time all of the pirates are heartily cursing the Azlanti and blaming them for their plight: ship gone, mutations, a monster packed island, no loot, and no rum. And where are the women?

Sindawe asks, "Maybe the books we got at the library hold the clues."

Serpent replies, "There were books? I don't remember that."

Wogan points out, "You were playing that 'ball in the cup' game you love so much." Serpent smiles as he pulls out his boliche (a favorite past time in Riddleport) and begins playing.

Sindawe and Wogan inventory the books taken from Monster Island's Library:

- ♣ A copper plate showing an arcane formula. When touched the plate breaks into the individual glyphs of that formula and orbit the user's head.
- ♣ Individual engraved copper plates that form a book or guide to the island, including illustrations of the buildings, denizens, and monsters (OK, Azlanti pets). Of course, the island barely survived the cataclysm that destroyed Azlanti, so much has changed.
- ♣ Two other "books", also of the copper plate variety.

"We should look more closely at these. Maybe they contain clues. And maybe wearing the necklace helps." Wogan and Sindawe move off a little from the Orrery to examine the books.

Meanwhile, Serpent plays boliche while Gareb and Jim look at an instructional "ball". An armillary passing nearby is struck by a beam of light. It lights up like a disco ball. And one of those beams strikes Serpent and Jim. **AND IT BURNS!**

(Searing Light). Both pirates are burned but survive. The trio move away from the Orrery, then Serpent begins healing their burns.

Wogan spots the seemingly random firing. Thanks to an active Detect Magic, the Necklace of Alivis, and the desperate nature of the pirate's situation, Wogan thinks that maybe, just maybe he understood that the burning light was going to fire before it actually happened.

Wogan decides to sit and observe the moving Orrery for a while, hoping he can guess its operation and predict the beams. He notes an instance where an orb seems out of alignment, so a beam should be emerging over there? AND ANOTHER BEAM EMERGES. Wogan shouts out a warning to Jim, "Jump back!" The pirate does so with alacrity, then observing nothing dangerous says, "From what?" Wogan replies, "Another beam of light." Jim nods, seemingly unimpressed, and returns to cleaning his fingernails with a knife. But his eyes dart around nervously.

Wogan decides to try the copper plate of formulas with the Necklace of Alivis. When touched the copper plate breaks into the individual glyphs of the formula. And those glyphs fly about the invoker's head like a flight of razor blades. He notes one glyph is brighter than the others. Eventually, he determines that this glyph matches the Sun globe in the Orrery. He concentrates on that glyph, thinking, "Beam of Light!" A Searing Light shoots out and lasers thru the side of the building. A short time later it ceases. The pirates are very happy to have not been in the path of the beam. Gareb spits on the burning seam.

Serpent declares, "You can shoot lasers! In a very confined area."

Wogan explains what happened. Sindawe says, "You can see when a light is about to go off?" Wogan nods.

Sindawe offers up a plan: Someone will venture into the center of the spinning Orrery looking for clues. Wogan will "spot" for him. The others will remain near Wogan keeping an eye out for the remaining phase spider.

Wogan declares, "I'm not going into that thing."

Sindawe looks at Serpent, "How about you?"

Serpent declines, explaining that the monk (i.e. Captain Sindawe) is superior to a barbarian/druid (i.e. Serpent) in all of the categories this situation calls for. His argument is based on the Pathfinder game mechanics.

Sindawe decides he can't argue with the facts. He declares, "Good point. I am the better man. I'll go."

Gears

Wogan hides behind a sturdy looking interior wall, peering out at the Orrery. The other pirates gather around him, ready for anything.

Sindawe enters the Orrery, avoiding the rotating spheres. He arrives at the center and begins looking for controls and clues. He doesn't find controls, leading him to think, "What? The Azlanti didn't place the controls at the center of their spinning death machine? Maybe they're not a bunch of murderous mad scientists after all".

But he does find a goodly bit of shattered crystal on the ground. Lacking anything else of interest he begins gathering it up until Wogan yells, "Jump!" Sindawe leaps away and one of many lights passes thru his previous location. Nothing overt happens. Sindawe returns to gather the broken crystal. Once finished he looks

overhead for its origin. He thinks it might have fallen from high up, probably higher than the central gear shaft. He comes out of the Orrery.

Wogan observes a collection of lights converge in place, which is right in Sindawe's exit path. Wogan thinks, "That's strange," and forgets to give warning. Luckily, Sindawe side-steps an orb which saves him from an arc of electricity that flies between two other orbs. Wogan decides from observing the disruption of the lines of magic that life-force moving around inside the Orrery causes the lights to misbehave more often.

Sindawe explains what he found, showing the bag of shattered crystal. The pirates are disappointed.

Serpent, "I wish Samaritha were here. She understands this stuff."

Wogan, "Yeah, she's smart. Did you try your snake call?"

Serpent playfully tries a few snake calls for comic effect before declaring, "Snakes don't have calls!"

Gareb, following the conversation but not its entire meaning, utters, "Whoot! Women love the Serpent!" Jim nods sagely agreeing, "Yes, women better love the dick."

The 3rd Floor to the Steeple

Serpent, holding the bag of shattered crystal, declares, "I can't mend this." So, the pirates head up the stairs hoping to find the shattered crystal's origin. They arrive on the 3rd floor and look around.

A shadow passes overhead. Everyone ducks and pull out weapons. Then they realize it is a steeple, possibly from the Observatory. Yup, that steeple is the right

make and shape to fit onto the top of this third floor. It was probably ripped away by the Orbital Current (an Azlanti air-defense system). It is 80' up and moving at 40'/rd. The pirates discuss trying for the steeple. Wogan, thanks to his experience with the Necklace of Alivis, guesses from the angle of its elliptical orbit that it will return to us in about 10 minutes.

Serpent declares, "I will use one of the Levitate potions to enter the steeple and investigate." Wogan and Sindawe discuss the logistics with him. Not only is it floating at 40'/round, it is also tumbling. Serpent decides to float above its flight path in order to provide the most options and the least risk.

Nine minutes pass. Serpent drinks a Levitate potion and floats upward. A short time later the steeple returns. He grapples it handily and climbs inside. Serpent finds that he has to climb around inside thanks to the constant tumbling. This strikes him as oddly familiar causing him to reminisce, "The last time I did this I was also fighting tentacle dogs. I like this much better." Inspired and provoked the GM rolls for a random monster encounter - but there is none. Everyone jokes about Serpent finding a dizzy, vomiting monster begging for death.

Serpent finds a room with three floating lens, each the size of a medium shield. He grabs for one, thinking "These must be the lens that keep the Orrery from shooting dangerous lights! Or maybe they make it worse." The lens shocks him severely, but he maintains his grip. The lens ceases floating, now weighing 50lbs. He straps it to the outside of his pack. He decides two would be better than one and grabs another. He takes another shock, and this time his muscles spasm and force him to let go before he can pull it from its magical mount. A second try nets another shock and a successful lifting of the second lens. This one is carried under his arm.

Serpent has to make three climb checks to make it out, each at a higher difficulty due to the extra weight (100lbs!). His levitate is nearly exhausted, so he opts to descend immediately rather than braving an 80' drop onto the Observatory. He levitates downward, landing between the Aquarium and the Ever Growing Tower which are some distance from the Observatory. He begins heading back. The pirates at the Observatory see him jump and rush to find him.

Everyone is worried that hungry monsters may have spotted the dropping Serpent and decided, "Meal time!"

A New Section of the City

The pirates link up. Wogan has time for just a few cure spells on Serpent before a woman comes running out from a nearby building. She is being chased by three flying, moaning creatures seemingly made of seaweed (enveloping moaners?). Her screams are cut-off when one leaps suddenly and engulfs her. They are bed sheet sized (large) when performing this maneuver. The pirates quickly decide that a live woman might produce some useful intel; they rush to the rescue.

Sindawe rushes up to the woman and pounds away at the seaweed engulfing her. He quickly realizes his punches are also hurting the woman, so he switches tactics. He rips the woman free of the chewing enveloping moaner, revealing a villager from Blackcove who is an advanced stage of the warping. The monster counters with a nauseating moan, which reduces the woman to vomiting.

Another enveloping moaner rises up and moans even louder. The sound panics Serpent, Slasher Jim and Gareb. They run away dropping everything hand held, including one of the lens (everyone is happy when it fails to shatter). Wogan casts

Remove Fear catching Serpent and Jim in the effect. The moaner switches to another sonic attack, which impedes all of the pirates (-2 to hit and damage, no save. It is now official - pirates really hate these critters!) The creature continues its endless moan. Luckily, this also keeps it from fighting the pirates directly.

The third moaner bites repeatedly at Serpent. Serpent returns the favor by carving into the creature with his silver scimitar (rarely used but always hanging from his hip). Serpent remembers something, then yells out, "Hey, where's Saluthra?" He spots her fleeing the moans.

Wogan shoots the main moaner with a pistol, then runs to retrieve Serpent's staff. Moments later he throws the staff to Serpent who catches it like he's a member of a crack ROTC drill team. Wogan pulls his double-barrel pistol, sights on the main moaner, and pulls the trigger. The creature is struck by both the bullet and a Stinking Cloud. But the damned thing flaps effortlessly out of the cloud and tries yet another sonic attack. This time Gareb succumbs to stupor.

Sindawe drives off one of the moaners, then gives chases until it retreats into a nearby building.

At long last the sonic attack dampening the pirate's attacks ceases. And the murder begins! Serpent beats his attacker unconscious, then attacks the one Wogan has been shooting at. The creature disables him with its nauseating moan. Slasher Jim, Wogan, and Sindawe finish the creature off when it attempts to retreat.

Serpent says, "Good job" in between sessions of vomiting.

Gareb asks, "When did you eat corn?"

Wretched Escapee

Serpent recovers. Several pirates make sure the two downed moaners are dead, then Wogan uses his last healing burst. And Serpent does a bit more healing from his Cure Light Wounds wand.

Sindawe suspiciously asks her, "What's your name? Are you married to our friend, Gloop?"

She blinks, "Sarah. I am married but not to this Gloop you speak of."

Wogan asks, "Who are you married to?"

"Jaren."

"Why are your people digging the channel?" *At first they fought, but recently the fight went out of them. Guards are not even required now. They dig as if nothing else matters.*

"There are guards?" *The guards are true fish people.*

"Like you?" *No. They're completely inhuman. Gerloch told me he met them on one of his trips out here. He was seeking secrets to help his alchemy reverse the change.*

"What happened when?" *Gerloch has been to the island many times. Then we came out on our honeymoon. Guards took some of my neighbors away. Later, I saw them talking to a silver man. (The pirates assume this would be the dead Black Cove villagers they found at the graveyard of silver pools).*

"How did you escape?" *Some of us were held separately.* Her voice trails off. Several of the pirates believe she is withholding something, probably something awful.

"Where is Gerloch?" *I don't know. He is working with the fish-people. Sometimes he came to the other place.*

Wogan examines her with Detect Magic and determines that she is still warping. The Blackcove villagers definitely mutate more quickly and evenly than the pirates.

Sindawe tells her, "Lead us to the place where you were held. We'll recon it, kill the evil fish-men, free your people, and murder Gerloch."

Wogan corrects, "We'll question Gerloch, then murder him."

Serpent corrects both of them, "We'll torture Gerloch so he'll answer our questions, then murder him." Everyone agrees upon this fine plan.

Sarah listlessly replies, "Can't go there... they take your mind... there is no hope."

Sindawe says, "Fine. Show us where it is on this map."

She does so, and indicates that she won't go back there, but that she'll take her chances with the sea. Sindawe tells her she's coming with whether she wants to or not, and she passively accepts her fate.

Serpent declares, "I risked my life for these lenses. We should use them first." The other pirates agree. They walk back to the Observatory, dragging Sarah along with them.

Eye Masters! Where Does the Lens Go?

Where does it go? There are multiple housings without lenses in them. Yet, Wogan is able to determine the correct one. And it can't just be dropped into place. It has to be dropped into place when the Orrery is correctly positioned.

Sindawe climbs onto the Orrery. Wogan spots and directs the lens placing. Serpent helps with the timing. Sindawe has it positioned, then feels it pulled out of his grasp. The newly seated lens focuses an increasing amount of light, then grows dark. Wogan notes that the energy lines are diminished.

The officers climb to the third floor to see what other things have happened. Maybe the evil fish-men will come to investigate. In the distance, they observe folks running around in a seemingly confused manner. That would also be the site of Sarah's imprisonment.

"Ambush them here?" asks Wogan.

"Let's kill them over there!" cheer the other pirates as they rush down the stairs.

Serpent is the only one to notice that Sarah is not following them back down. He turns and sees her standing on the edge of the eighty foot tower. She looks over his shoulder and meets his eyes, and says "Tell Jaren I loved him." Serpent is horrified to see her step off the edge. He charges up the steps and lunges but she's gone, narrowly missed by Serpent's desperate grab. The pirates rush down the stairs to find her horribly smashed body.

Gareb declares, "That's messed up."

Wogan laughs and replies, "No, THIS is messed up!" He casts Detect Magic then checks her corpse for valuables. Her wedding ring is magical (Loot: Ring of Swimming).

Serpent looks up from his boliche and asks, "What now?"

Several pirates scream, "Kill the fish-men over there!" Everyone heads 'over there', eager to kill a fish-man.

The "Mating" Grounds

A short time later the pirates arrive at the site of Sarah's imprisonment. It is less a prison and more a collection of ruined buildings, incapable of holding anyone with an iota of desire to escape. Unless an ancient Azlanti magic had burned hope and self-respect from their very brains. Luckily, that thing has been turned off.

A group of three women burst into view, then split off running in separate directions. Their garb and mutations indicate that they are from Blackcove. Pursuing them closely are eight fish-men, clearly members of an aquatic race or representatives of a truly advanced stage of the mutation.

Sindawe leaps atop a debris pile and yells out, "Ladies! Come here, so that we might murder these evil fish-men for you!" Wogan catches their attention more so by shooting a pistol.

Two of the women turn and run toward the pirates trailing most of the fish-men. Sindawe moves past the women, leaps and critically hits the lead fish-man, breaking its leg with a Kentucky Shin-Stomp (10pts, plus 4pts to Con and Dex). Wogan blasts another with his blunderbuss, the blast flinging the fish-man bodily ten feet backward to the ground, where it never moves again. Gareb and Slasher Jim cut into a third fish-man.

The fish-men counter-attack with trident, bite, and claw and deliver minor wounds to several pirates. Several fish-men throw tridents. Luckily, none of them are a Brick Tamland. Sindawe moves through the immediate knot of attackers, leaving them to his crew, to attack the second approaching group. Wogan sees the

third woman pull free of a fish-man, which he shoots. Another fish-man stabs Gareb viciously with a trident. In turn, Serpent and Jim kill the fish-man.

Sindawe goes monkey-butt-nuts and kills several fish-men with a Flurry of Blows. Wogan blasts another fish-man. Slasher Jim and a heavily wounded Gareb fight a fish-man together. Then Serpent steps up and critically hits it with his staff (Momentum hit! 17pts!). Fish-man brain matter splatters Gareb. Sindawe kills his last opponent.

The last fish-man rushes Wogan, stabbing with his trident. Wogan knocks the blow aside and says, "Here's how it is done!" and stabs back with his own trident.

Gareb moves to help Wogan then stops when Jim says, "5gp on the cleric!"

Gareb replies, "I'll take that action!" They eagerly watch the fish-man and Wogan facing off with their tridents and begin humming the "Amok Time" theme music.

Serpent spoils their bet by running up killing the fish-man himself. The fight is over. The women approach. Two cling to each other, crying. The third is hard-eyed and walks right up to the pirates. She asks, "Who are you?"

Serpent replies, "I'm Serpent! Who are you?" *I'm Madge.*

What happened? *We were mentally dominated, but something happened and we all snapped out of it. There were four of us but Sarah got away earlier. Two other ladies were brought here then taken to the ziggurat by Gerloch.* Serpent and Sindawe believe those two ladies were Samaritha and Hatshepsut.

Sindawe orders the fish-men looted. Gareb and Slasher Jim looked confused, "What? Again? We already did that, boss." Sindawe lauds their initiative as Wogan and Serpent look after healing the wounded.

Sindawe asks Madge to accompany his crew while they rescue the other villagers. Madge shakes her head explaining, "I need to get these two away from this island. The fish-men used us cruelly. These two didn't stand up to it very well. I'm tougher; this was almost a picnic compared to my marriage."

A trident is pressed into Madge's hands. Sindawe shows her his map of this island and points out Wedding Rock. "Our boat is there. Take it." Trident in hand, Madge leads the other women away.

The fish-men corpses had no valuables. Even their tridents are completely mundane. Serpent decides to check one more closely, spotting some usual swells under its skin around the neck. They feel like metal plates! The pirate cut one plate out - the other plates comply by oozing out the same cut to form a ball. Serpent picks up the ball but it refuses to adhere to him until he removes his necklace. The metal plates grant the wearer Natural Armor +1 (Loot: Amulet of Natural Armor +1).

Serpent decides the item is "too Metal" for his tastes, so Slasher Jim and Gareb dice for the item. Slasher Jim wins.

Time to Rescue the Girl Friends! To the Ziggurat!

The pirates begin walking toward the ziggurat. Serpent notes, "Madge is pretty tough to bounce back like that. Her husband must have been a real bastard."

Wogan, "Or maybe he was so hideous that fish-men were an improvement."

Soon all of the pirates are offering explanations and proving themselves a right group of bastards:

- ♣ The fish smell was so much better than hubby's cheese breath.

- ♠ The fish-men are so much nicer than my husband. They only beat me when I did something wrong.
- ♠ I never had to look at the fish-men during sex. I even got some reading in!

The walk to the ziggurat passes quickly and soon the eastern entrance is in sight. A bedraggled male villager comes staggering out. The pirates move closer, looking around suspiciously. Serpent heals the man once with a Cure Light Wounds wand before he changes shape into a CHUUL. The chuul grabs Serpent up in a claw. The pirates are suitably surprised and impressed.

The chuul tries to stuff Serpent into its mouth tentacles. Serpent fails a Fort save versus its paralytic secretion. The remaining pirates attack. Gareb charges it and screams, "Nobody eats Serpent except us!" The others, somewhat hesitant in the face of that battle cry, also surround the beast. But precious little damage is delivered thanks to many, many poor die rolls. Serpent decides to spend a Fate point to break the chuul's hold and the paralysis; he transforms into snake form and slips out of its tentacles. Disappointed, the chuul claws Sindawe (16pts).

Jaren the Jinx emerges from hiding, rushes forward, and stabs the chuul (16pts). (He is only a little mutated, in line with the pirate's mutations.) Sindawe pummels it (21pts). Serpent hits with his staff (6pts). Wogan heals the heavily damaged Serpent. The chuul grabs Sindawe (13pts) and shoves him towards its mouth tentacles. The pirates slash desperately at the chuul; Slasher Jim finally crits and kills it.

What are You Doing Here?

Jaren asks, "What are you doing here?"

Sindawe stares at Jaren, then explains in an accusing tone, "We came to Blackcove looking for you. I wanted information on a voyage we're about to start. Within hours of arriving tentacle masses attacked us. Those things and a storm chased our ship away. The villagers were useless. We came to this island to find our ship. Our guide mutated and flipped out on us. We've fought monsters many times today. We've been shocked, burned, bitten, and mutated. And we still don't have our ship. Or a cure."

Jaren's smile fades a bit. "Uh. Sounds different."

Wogan mutters under his breath, "I hate this guy." Then he asks, "Jaren, what have you been up to? Why did you come to Blackcove? How did you end up here?"

Jaren explains, "I came to Blackcove to set up a new operation. The place was more of a fixer-upper than I was expecting, but hey, I was here already so I stuck it out. I married a local girl several weeks ago. We swam out to Wedding Rock for the honeymoon. We were jumped by the fish-men. I killed one, escaped, and have been hiding out until now."

Sindawe tells him, "Your wife is dead." He watches for Jaren's reaction.

Jaren says sadly, "Darn it! That's the fourth one."

"Fourth one?"

"Yeah, you remember my third wife; you met her before she died at my tavern back in Palin's Cove. I keep getting married but they keep dying on me!"

Slasher Jim says, "I have that problem too!"

Serpent, "The fourth one? Maybe you should do women a favor and stop marrying them."

Jaren, "Nah... One of them will stick."

Wogan asks, "We heard you were living under boats before you got married. What happened to your fortune?"

Jaren shrugs, "I'm a pirate. Living under boats is part of the job."

Sindawe is suspicious as hell of Jaren's sudden appearance. At a minimum the pirate has been hiding out until Sindawe and his crew dealt with most of the problems. Worst case Jaren is working with the fish-men. He asks Jaren, "What have you been eating? You've been on the island for nearly three weeks."

Jaren explains that early on he encountered a plant that emits a sweet smell to lure in prey, then eats them. He narrowly escaped the plant himself, then came back regularly to scavenge off of its leavings.

Jaren asks, "Does anyone have a drink?" He ignores the offered water skin to grab Wogan's belt flask. He takes a long pull, then hands the flask to Gareb who drinks and passes it along. Each pirate takes a long drink before the flask is returned to Wogan.

Wogan stares daggers at Jaren again muttering, "I'm going to torture him, then kill him." He trails off with, "I'll start with the fingernails..."

Descent into the Reverse Ziggurat

The pirates enter the ziggurat, but find no one inside. Wogan offers up, "Maybe there was a second cache of Levitate potions? And Gerloch took the girls

down the reverse ziggurat." With little explanation to Jaren, the pirates prepare to make the descent via Levitate potions. Gareb is sent to pull the lever, while Serpent, Sindawe, and Slasher Jim each guzzle a potion. They in turn carry Gareb, Wogan, and Jaren piggyback style. The pirates set off the edge and into the reverse ziggurat.

They pass thru illusionary floor, down the organic pipe, and into what they are certain is the belly of some hideously large subterranean creature. They land in chest high water at the bottom of the belly. The very large room is organic in appearance, though a collapsed section on the far wall has exposed bedrock.

The pirates have barely started toward the only non-collapsed tunnel out when they are attacked by eels: three electric and one moray. The electric eels shock the pirates, attempting to stun their prey, biting when the opportunity presents itself. The moray eel nearly gnaws Jaren to death; he is only saved by Wogan's Cure Moderate Wounds spell and a hasty, tearing escape artist trick. He leaves large bits of flesh inside the moray eel.

Note: The players take a brief break to research and discuss underwater combat in Pathfinder. The GM makes several rulings that favor the players enough to avoid TPK.

Two of the electric eels are driven off. The third one is killed by the pirates. A vicious combat ends the moray eel but only after it has eaten several pounds of pirate flesh. The pirates quickly exit the chamber.

One Tunnel Out

Serpent stops to examine himself. "I think that stuff back there was stomach acid!"

Wogan points out, "No one's melted yet, so it's probably just water."

The pirates continue through the tunnel. They pass a collapsed tunnel. A short distance later the tunnel has raised enough to put the pirates above the water.

A side room is located. The pirates enter to find net-entangled villagers, some dead, some wounded, eight in all. Wogan moves amongst them stabilizing the dying. Serpent and Sindawe move about cutting them out of the netting. (The GM calls for Will saves.)

Serpent and Sindawe begin to think the villagers are not really there.

Serpent excitedly declares, "Illusions! And that means aboleths! They're too powerful for us! We have to leave here now!"

Sindawe replies, "We're stuck down here. Remember? We levitated down. There's only one of those potions left. We have to press forward." Then, "What's an aboleth?"

Serpent mumbles, "I don't know, but they're probably bad news."

Several pirates begin to leave, but the others start arguing. The wounded villagers beg anew for help.

Sindawe yells at the illusions, "Shut up! We know you're illusions!"

The villagers scream back, "The Master knows all!" And then the ceiling collapses.

The collapse hits Wogan and Slasher Jim the worst. Wogan is dug out first, coughing but alive. The pirates find Slasher Jim next, or rather his hand jutting from a pile of rubble. Wogan stabilizes Jim thru his the exposed hand. While Jim is dug out, Wogan and Serpent begin healing everyone from a pair of Cure Light Wounds wands.

Surprisingly, the pirates spend this brief down time having a discussion on the power of belief and illusions.

Serpent claims, "Samaritha once explained to me how belief in magic makes magic work, which in turn makes people believe in magic. But if people don't believe in magic then everything fails starting with the magic itself. Then the world ends." He goes on in this vein for awhile, confusing everyone with Samaritha's circular logic. Even Serpent seems impressed that he understood as much as he did.

Sindawe thinks for a moment then says, "Was she trying to convince you that the world would end if you didn't go down on her?" Several pirates snicker.

Gareb speculates that two sexy, hot illusions can believe in each other enough to become real. And then have babies. But that ruins their hot sexiness, which might endanger their belief in each other.

Wogan offers, "Life is an illusion," and goes on from there.

Sindawe says, "A woman known as the Scarlet Witch married a Golem man that she loved very much. She wanted children, but the Golem could not father them on her. She bedded him repeatedly and so great was her love and want that she bore him twins. Yet her love had only generated the illusion of healthy twins. When she realized she had tricked herself she went nuts and killed a bunch of people."

"No one would ever believe that story," says Serpent.

While making air quotes Slasher Jim says, "My mother called her time of the month *The Scarlet Witch*."

The Last Chamber (for the evening)

The pirates move cautiously down the tunnel, which continues to lead upward. They find another side chamber, which they enter. It contains pools of deep water choked with seaweed. The pirates spread out to search for loot. And clues. And an aboleth? Serpent pokes at some seaweed lying on the main pool's edge. A moaning enveloper explodes outward, bites Serpent in the helmet (not the head) and stuns itself stupid. Another moaner further out in the water rises up and begins its uncanny moaning.

Serpent counter-attacks, only slightly hampered by uncanny moaning. Jaren, Jim and Gareb run to help Serpent. Wogan shoots the one further out. Sindawe joins in on the land side moaner, landing a critical hit. Serpent crits it again. It moans FEAR sending Wogan and Gareb fleeing. More blows are landed finally ending the creature's life.

Serpent shoots arrows at the remaining moaner while Jaren and Slasher Jim shout encouragement. Wogan and Gareb continue fleeing. Frustrated, Sindawe swims out to the creature. More arrows fly. The moaning continues. Jaren swims out too. Slasher Jim begins looking for rocks.

Sindawe swims down looking for another exit. Instead, he finds a fossilized skeleton and a spear. He carries them back to shore with Jaren's help. Serpent continues shooting at the creature. And then the creature moans the *stupor moan* taking Serpent and Slasher Jim out.

Jaren says, "What now?"

Sindawe yells back, "Shoot the bow. I'm throwing spears."

Sindawe connects with his electrical shock spear, jolting the monster. It keeps on moaning. Jaren struggles with Serpent's bow but it is rated for an 18 STR user; it

is too much for him to use. Sindawe throws the spear recovered from the water; it kills the creature instantly!

Sindawe recovers the spear and looks at it closely. Its shaft is mineral encrusted, while the head shows a motif of Seven Entwined Columns (Loot: +? Spear of Aberration Bane). Sindawe scratches his head in puzzlement. The other pirates recover from the numerous moan attacks.

CLIFF HANGER

The pirates are far beneath the surface of Monster Island wandering tunnels and chambers seemingly made of organic material. They cannot retreat. Their rum is dangerously low. Forward!