

Reavers on the Seas of Fate - Session Summary 02/27/2011

The heroes have been split up. Sindawe and Hatshepsut are in their love grotto under the sea, while the rest of the characters are washed up on a small deserted island. Our heroes are:

- *Wogan*, the pistol-packin' celibate cleric of Gozreh (Patrick)
- *Tommy Blacktoes*, the staff-slingin' sneaky halfling rogue (Kevin)
- *Sindawe H'kilata Narr*, the fist-punchin' Mwangi monk (Chris)
- *Ref "Serpent" Jorensen*, the staff-bashin' Ulfen druid/ranger and his snake *Saluthra* (Paul)
- *Hatshepsut*, monk and high priestess of a lost civilization who doesn't savvy much Common and her cobra *Naja* (NPC)

Cast Away

Wogan, Tommy, and Serpent are stuck on a very small island in the Varisian Gulf. It is quite cold and as night deepens it gets colder. The group gets off the beach and finds some small amount of shelter and gets a driftwood fire going. The weather that night warms up a little, though, and the group manages to dry out around the fire without suffering any negative effects. They silently nurse their thoughts of their comrades' death by orca.

Meanwhile, Sindawe is starting to experience dehydration from the multiple lovemaking sessions under the waves with Hatshepsut (as possessed by voodoo goddess Mama Watanna).

She turns to Sindawe, still flushed with sex, and asks, "What's Mama going to do with you?"

"Well, if you want to send me to that island I was going to, that would be great. Oh, and maybe my friends too."

"OK, Sindawe, the fishie will take you to your friends. You don't be a stranger now."

“How do I avoid being a stranger?”

“Oh, you want to know how to call Mama?”

“I want to be able to talk to you, yes.”

“Mama will come to check on you from time to time, but if you need to talk, you need a woman to call Mama.”

She explains a voodoo ritual to Sindawe whereby a woman can call and channel Mama Watanna. It apparently requires a woman that Mama finds “acceptable” to dance and call her, and a rooster sacrifice, and some other details. They talk for a bit more, then she floats up to Sindawe and gives him a deep kiss. Then Mama is gone and Hatshepsut wakes up again in her own body, confused. They grab hold of the circling orca and it tugs them back up to the surface. The orca approaches a small island, swimming close to let them off and then submerging again.

Day One

All the characters are back together now, and Sindawe is joyously greeted by Tommy. Wogan runs out to hug them, but is let down when he realizes Sindawe lost the alcohol under the waves. Serpent greets them stoically with a grunt.

We dig out the navigational charts and find our location. Serpent can use his druid magic to force a bird to carry a message for the group, if they can attract a bird. Wogan catches a fish and strews the guts out to attract a seabird (an albatross) and Serpent casts a spell on it. Sindawe writes a nice message with a map of where we are to attach to the bird, and we send it off to the Cypher Lodge. Serpent believes that even if Samaritha is not there, the head of the lodge, Fenella Bromathan, will help us (possibly for a hefty fee, but still).

We explore the island, but it is quite small and contains little of interest. Between Wogan and Serpent, we have magic enough to keep ourselves fed and watered, and *endure elements* spells to keep ourselves from freezing at night. Unfortunately, Wogan and Serpent had only prayed for enough spells for three people to keep them warm, believing Sindawe and Hatshepsut to be lost, so Sindawe just has to bundle up tight, and Hatshepsut uses monk meditation to keep herself warm.

Day Two

The next day we pray for more protection spells. It starts to snow, a light dusting that signals the approach of winter. We dig into our new home and gather as much firewood as we can without chopping down any of the sparse trees on our islet home. We don't burn it, but prepare it so that we can start a bonfire quickly.

Serpent dispatches two more animal messengers, one again to the Cypher Lodge and one, written by Sindawe and Tommy, is a crank letter to Bojask c/o the Gold Goblin threatening him with various creative abominations by an unknown party.

Serpent reaffirms his confidence in Fenella Bromathan of the Cypher Lodge. Sindawe remembers to ask, "So is she your mom or what?"

"No, she might be related to me, but I don't think she's my mother..."

"Hey Serpent, I know your mother!" Tommy chimes in. He spins a tale of how Tommy is really Serpent's father, and his mother is a halfling too, and he turned out as a kind of mutated kid with gigantism. Then he really starts to get offensive.

Day Three

Another night goes by. We send some more birds the next morning: one with request for aid to Salvadora Beckett, and another to the Gold Goblin with even more obscene and depraved threats for Bojask. Tommy and Sindawe laugh hysterically as they compose their paeon to torture porn. Luckily Wogan has an ample supply of ink and paper, as Tommy's suggestion of "tanned human skin" as a fallback medium holds no attraction for the others.

Day Four

Wogan runs out of rum. We are quickly losing any sanity we ever had. Our diet of magical gruel is nutritious if not tasty, but Saluthra the snake grows restless and hungry. Tommy has taken to sleeping in the treetops.

Sindawe notices Hatshepsut is being unusually distant. He asks her about it but she says nothing is wrong other than our current situation. He questions her further and determines that she seems upset and confused about the whole situation under the water with the orca and Mama Watanna. He explains the situation a little, but only in vague terms. She still seems conflicted. They talk for a while more, and it comes out that she

was aware of everything that happened, and she doesn't know how to deal with being possessed and made love to as Mama Watanna. Sindawe attempts to clarify what the deal is with himself and Mama Watanna and Hatshepsut, though his take on it is largely “I get to do whatever I want, right?” In the end Sindawe does not get a serpent-strike to the throat.

Day Five

Sindawe notices an incoming sail. He assumes the sail belongs to a ship, though we briefly consider the possibility that it is a predator of some sort with a fin shaped like a sail, perhaps the result of a demented Fiend Folio-inspired evolutionary chain. We start a big fire and wave our arms at the ship.

As it gets closer we see an orca swimming alongside it. Most of us are not too happy with orcas right now, but Sindawe tries to convince us that the orcas are on our side. Tommy is nearly hysterical with objections to this concept.

We recognize the ship as the *Flying Cloud*, owned by Captain Creesy. The Cloud sends a rowboat for us. We recognize the crewmen vaguely. One of them says “Ahoy!” We ask to be rescued. They take us onboard but the crewman is a bit cagey about telling us what's going on. He says we need to talk to the captain.

Captain Creesy greets us, “Hello boys, I heard you needed a lift.” We notice that the ship seems to be a bit damaged by fire.

After we get underway, the captain comes to talk to us. They put in to Riddleport three days ago and all sorts of folks were trying to hire them, but the captain was uninterested, he was planning a speed run to Kintargo. When they tried to leave, saboteurs set fire to his ship. Luckily they got some help and managed to save the ship. Apparently some folks don't want any other ships getting out of Riddleport right now, especially to go to Devil's Elbow. Creesy is not planning on going back to Riddleport, but is willing to drop us on Devil's Elbow.

We ask who sent him to find us. He hands us a letter sealed with the seal of the gendarmes, apparently a response to our letter to Salvadora Beckett. The letter has been penned by Beltias Kreun. The gendarmes helped Creesy out with the saboteurs and sent him after us. Kreun warns us that several other expeditions have headed out to the island.

Apparently (allegedly) Clegg Zincher and his men took over a pirate vessel called the *Dark Pearl*, seizing it from Captain Harville Spue in the dead of night, and then departing with a large group of men. The Devil's Elbow is their most likely destination. If Clegg Zincher is there then Akron Erix is probably also there (Sindawe met him at the crime lord meetup some time ago). Salvadora and Kreun write that they would consider it a favor if we do not kill Erix, as that "might be diplomatically difficult," whatever that means.

We sail on. The clouds look ominous and it appears a wind storm is coming. As the wind picks up the ship begins to roll violently. Occasional heavy waves break over the deck, threatening to sweep crewmen away in a giant wash of green water.

Wogan pulls out a magical *wind fan* and uses it to help combat the wind storm. It fights the wind and creates a calmer area which helps. Unfortunately a big wave washes over the bow and almost drags him off the deck. Sindawe grabs Wogan by the strap of his blunderbuss and hauls him back onto the deck.

A line snaps, threatening to toss some crew into the drink. Serpent happens to be nearby and grabs the two crewmen at risk. Tommy throws a dagger to pin Serpent's cloak to the deck, helping him to stay on the boat.

Then the storm worsens. The wind fan is still helping, but we seem to be in the midst of a nasty hurricane-strength nor'easter. With expert sailing skill, we keep the boat from foundering and even keep it on course. The storm gradually abates and we come out alive and, incredibly, still on course.

The Devil's Elbow

Some time later, Devil's Elbow comes into view. We see a ship docked at the island and recognize it as the *All Due Restraint*, which was sent here by the Riddleport navy.

Creesy decides it will be too risky to put into port on the island in the high winds, so he gives us a rowboat and speed launches us off into the water. "Good luck!" he calls as the *Flying Cloud* sails away.

As we get closer to the harbor, we see some forms staggering on the docks in the wind. Although the waves near the shore are whipped into a high froth, our expert sailing skills see us through to the shore uneventfully.

The piers seem to be very old and dilapidated, probably dating from the extinct colony of Witchlight. Several gendarmes from the Riddleport naval vessel aim their guns at us, but we call out to tell them we're friendly.

We get onto the shore and Gravin Goldhammer comes to greet us. We had seen him earlier, he was the Dwarven head of the Riddleport expedition. "What in the Nine Hells are you doing here?" he calls.

Sindawe tells him we were shipwrecked nearby.

"We're getting set to pull out of here and head to Riddleport if you want a ride."

"Why are you pulling out?" says Sindawe.

Everyone else chimes in, "That's what she said!"

"This place is cursed. We need to go back for reinforcements. And clerics!"

"Don't be so hasty. We can handle quite a bit of trouble ourselves. Maybe we can help."

Serpent adds, "Yeah, we're worth like ten dwarves apiece!" This doesn't endear him to the dwarven expedition.

"The stories about Virashi's curse seem to be true. Although we haven't seen any ghosts, there are monsters. Some kind of low-slung beasts, very fast. They bit some of our men and they got sick. Then they turned."

"Turned? You mean they got gangrene?"

"No, they turned into some kind of mindless zombies, but with big long tongues."

We continue talking. The dwarves haven't seen the *Dark Pearl*, but they are aware that the "fancyboys" (aka Cyphermites) have set up camp on the highest point of the island, where there is a big watchtower. We can see a flare of light coming from the tower. We decide to leave the dwarves behind and press on up the island. Goldhammer warns, "As soon as the weather lifts, we're leaving, with or without you."

We start heading up a difficult overgrown trail towards the peak of the island and the witchlight tower. On the way, Serpent realizes that the party is in snake country. Up ahead, he spots an enormous nightbelly boa (big enough to eat a man). He warns the rest

of the party. Sindawe says, "Can't you talk to snakes, Serpent?" Serpent allows as how he can.

Serpent talks to the boa. It doesn't have much information. Apparently it is hungry because creatures have come to the island and have been killing or driving away the snake's prey. It doesn't eat the creatures because they are "bad." We come to the conclusion that the creatures are not native to the island but may have appeared around a week ago. The snake knows some of the beasts lair up by the Witchlight tower.

The Witchlight

We bypass the snake and continue. Soon we come to the Witchlight. The tower still stands, but the surrounding buildings are almost completely crumbled away. We see buzzards circling. We go to find what the buzzards are interested in.

The buildings used to be a small village, perched on a large steep cliff. Four corpses lie rotting against a building. As Wogan approaches to check the corpses, the four of them sit up. Each of them has a missing lower jaw, and hanging out of their mouths are big purple tentacular tongues. All four of them lurch at Wogan and lash out with their tongues. One of them hits and drains blood out of Wogan, reducing his strength. "That's my blood," Wogan screams. "I need it!"

Sindawe punches the zombie at the base of its tentacle tongue. It seems hurt, and reacts to the impact much more than a zombie normally would. "Attack the tongue!" Sindawe calls.

Wogan channels some positive energy, which hurts the zombies. Serpent moves and strikes at one of the zombies' tongues, hitting it. Tommy flanks it and drives his sword through the zombie's spine and into the tongue tentacle, causing it to fall down dead (we hope). The tentacle zombies flail at us but miss.

Sindawe grabs another tongue and rips it out of the zombie's head. The tongue continues to writhe but the zombie body collapses. Sindawe throws the tentacle off the cliff. Serpent gets two phenomenal staff strikes on one of the zombie tentacles and smashes the tentacle, taking it out.

Wogan blasts one of the zombies in the chest with his musket, but it doesn't seem to care. The percussive blast of his gun seems to weaken the already crumbling masonry,

and a wall on one of the nearby buildings falls over, right on Wogan. Wogan gets horribly mangled and buried by the wall.

Sindawe polishes off the last zombie. The rest of us dig Wogan out of the rubble and he heals himself with the power of Gozreh.

As we're regaining our breath, a voice calls out from the tower. "Serpent!"

Serpent looks up and sees a familiar half-elven form atop the tower. "Samaritha!"

Samaritha calls, "Talk to me, let me know you're alive!"

"I'm alive! See, no giant purple tongue."

Sindawe checks out the building next to the zombies. It looks like there was a battle there recently. Some of the zombies were wearing Cyphermage gear. Sindawe checks the bodies for treasure and then throws them off the cliff. One of the corpses has some kind of neat slick leather armor, and Sindawe takes it.

We move around and find a door into the tower. Samaritha opens the door. Serpent gives her a quick hug. She ushers the characters in nervously and quickly slams the door.

Serpent asks, "So why are you all so nervous? Surely those zombie things out there aren't giving the Cyphermages fits."

"No, it's the monsters." she says.

Samaritha and four other Cyphermages are inside. They all appear to be pretty wounded; two of them are so badly hurt they're disabled. One of them seems to be a 12-year-old kid. Wogan uses a healing burst to heal some of their wounds. Samaritha says, "Save some healing magic for Fenella! She's upstairs."

"Fenella Bromathan is here? Why didn't you get here in here before I started healing people?"

"Uh, she's in isolation..." Samaritha looks uncomfortable.

The Cyphermages start babbling at us, "You have to get us out of here!"

Serpent replies, "We were relying on you to get us out of here! You have teleport, we don't!"

"The guy with the teleport scroll was taken!" Further questioning reveals they don't know where the guy with the scroll went, but we assume he has become a tongue zombie. We get a description of his wardrobe so we can recognize him.

Samaritha gets the mages to simmer down. Then she says, “We need your help with Fenella.”

Wogan says, “What's the matter with Fenella? Was she infected?”

Samaritha nods. Sindawe asks the Cyphermages how the infection works.

The mages all have their own long-winded opinions, but the short answer is they don't know anything. They believe the infection comes from the bites of the “monsters” although they don't know what the monsters are. They are remarkably resistant to magic, however, which allowed them to overrun the group easily and slew half of their number. The mages who got killed by them rose as tongue zombies. Although Fenella lived, she has been bitten, which appears to mean that she is turning into some kind of tongue zombie as well.

We all go see Fenella Bromathan together. She is lying on a cot upstairs, locked in an old field hospital, and seems to be in bad shape. She is wounded and has been bitten by something. The bites seem to be fairly large, like a bite from a shark. She seems to be having a bad reaction to the bite, and she is feverish and weak. Wogan finds signs that some kind of larvae are swarming under her skin. Wogan tries a positive energy burst to damage the larvae but it seems ineffective other than causing pain to Fenella.

“It's too late for me,” she rasps.

Sindawe asks if any of the other Cyphermages have any kind of divination spells that can find the scroll of teleportation. Neither Fenella nor Samaritha know, they will have to ask the other mages if they have any spells like that.

As the characters are leaving, Fenella says, “Wait, I want to talk to Serpent. Alone.”

The other characters leave to talk to the Cyphermages. The four Cyphermages are named Jean-Jacque, Festinius the Balding, Georges Ste-Martine, and Eli. Eli is a young boy, but seems to be a prodigy. Sindawe tries to talk to them but mostly just frightens them.

The Ulfen Way

Fenella talks to Serpent in the Ulfen tongue, “Ref, your name is, right?”

“Yes.”

“I can feel this thing growing inside me. I don't think I have much time left. I know you'll do your best to bring my people back safely to Riddleport.”

“I will,” says Serpent.

“I need your help. I know none of the mages will have the courage to do what needs to be done. They are too civilized; they won't be able to accept our ways. I am a wizard, but first, I am Ulfen.”

Serpent nods. “I can arrange for a pyre, I think.”

She says, “It will be good to die under the open sky.”

Serpent says, “This will be my last chance to ask you. We are both Ulfen, and both have this unusual coloration. I never knew my mother. Do you know anything that might help me to find her?”

She answers, “I too never knew my mother. My father gave me something that belonged to her. In fact, I wonder if you could take it back to him.”

She draws a silver pendant out. It has a stylized raven on it.

“I will take it to him,” Serpent tells her. He asks her about her father, and finds out where he lives. It is off of the coast of Cheliox.

Fenella peers at Serpent, “I wasn't sure what to think. I thought our shared coloration was just some kind of coincidence, or rare Ulfen subrace.”

“Perhaps you're my sister.” Serpent says.

“Perhaps so. I would be honored to be remembered as such.”

She cries out and writhes in pain.

“Are you ready?” Serpent asks grimly.

“Yes, I can feel my mind beginning to slip. We should hurry.”

Serpent gets the others to gather some wood and any lamp oil they can find. Ulfen tradition would be to put her on the pyre while still alive. The other Cyphermites try to argue against the barbaric tradition but Serpent doesn't back down. Sindawe asks that they go along with this and then beats down Festinius when he continues to object. The other mages are cowed, and lurk downstairs, except for the child Eli, who silently ascends the stairs with us.

Samaritha tugs on Serpent's sleeve. “Are you sure this is the right thing to do?”

“Her mind is beginning to go. She will become one of them any second. It is our way.”

We build the pyre and help Fenella up to the roof. She is reeling and barely controlling herself. Fenella's last action is to put Samaritha in charge of getting the Cypherages home. Samaritha accepts the responsibility with tears in her eyes.

We put her on the pyre and light it with an alchemist's fire.

She starts reciting a prayer in Ulfen as the flames rise around her. “Lo, there do I see my father. Lo, there do I see my mother and my sisters and my brothers. Lo, they do call to me.” She writhes in the flames for a bit before becoming still. The body lurches and a small tentacle comes out of her body before also being consumed by the flames.

The child mage Eli observes silently. Samaritha clutches Serpent's bicep and weeps. The flames illuminate our faces as the sun sets.

Serpent examines the silver pendant. It seems familiar, in a distant memory from his childhood. He thinks his father had a pendant like it.

The Siege of the Witchlight

Later, we are busy fortifying the tower when suddenly Samaritha doubles over in pain. “They’re coming!” she cries. Tommy, Wogan, Sindawe, Hatshepsut, and Serpent also get sudden stabs of pain, from the locations where they have cypher-runes on their bodies. Apparently this signals the attack of the monsters.

The monsters look like hairless blue lions with twin tentacular tails. Dozens more thick tentacles quiver and twitch around their heads where manes should be. Their skin is smooth, blue, and oily looking. There seem to be at least 20 of them running silently toward the tower from the woods.

Saluthra seems very agitated at the unnatural creatures’ approach, but Serpent manages to calm her somewhat. We arrange ourselves in the tower and close the shutters against them. We cast a few buff spells to get ready.

The monsters clamber up the sides of the tower without even pausing. One of the tentacle beasts busts through a shutter and its tentacle rips the face practically off

Festinius the Balding. As if he needed another charisma penalty. Wogan blasts it with his gun and it falls off the tower, although it makes no sound.

Another beast squeezes through the hole into the tower. Hatshepsut jumps it and pounds her fist into its smooth oily blue body. It doesn't react. Sindawe pulls out cold iron punching knuckles and a silver siangham, just to have all his bases covered. Samaritha shoots a burning ray of fire out of her hand at the monster. It reacts soundlessly and melts away, its substance dissipating into shadow.

Wogan throws some healing at Festinius. Serpent moves to the shutter to attack the next beast that pops through. He pulls out a silver scimitar.

The tower begins to shake hard. Several characters are knocked from their feet, including Samaritha and Hatshepsut. Another beast tries to get through the shutter and Serpent strikes it with his silver scimitar, but it does not hurt the beast at all. Samaritha quickly dazes it with a spell, and it seems quite confused.

Tommy slings a stone at the monster, striking it between the eyes. Its eyes change color from yellow to purple and a strange black hole appears in its head. The mages fire *magic missiles* but most of them seem to dissipate upon contact. The kid aims his missiles straight at the hole in its head and makes it bigger.

Serpent drops his scimitar and uses his staff, but it still does no damage at all. Hatshepsut clubs it with both fists and destroys it. It dissipates into shadow.

Another beast crashes in through another shutter. Sindawe hits it with his cold iron knuckles but again it has no effect.

Wogan uses a *spiritual weapon* to attack the beast and pokes a black hole in it. Serpent drops his staff and tries hitting it with a cold iron dagger, but that can't hurt it either. Serpent announces, "Well, that's it. I've tried every weapon I have and nothing hurts them!"

The mages have run out of *magic missiles* and start throwing *acid splashes*, which have very little effect. Samaritha throws a *magic missile* with a wand that also has little effect.

Tommy manages to destroy another one with an expertly aimed attack with his sling.

Serpent leans out and grabs one of the other monsters and throws it off the tower. He notices that the monsters are incredibly massive. It impacts the ground with a wham! Then it gets back up and begins to climb the tower again. The Ulfen curses under his breath. Two more beasts slither into the room with no problems.

Sindawe trips the nearest beast successfully, and Samaritha shoots it with her wand. Wogan spears it with his spiritual trident spell. Tommy drops his staff and stabs at the tripped one with his sword. He hits and stabs another big black hole in it.

Another tremor shakes the tower, knocking down most of the mages. A terrible noise like endless thunder rumbles. Georges freaks out and runs over to the door and starts pulling the beds barricading it away. "We have to get out!"

Serpent yells, "Saluthra!" The snake immediately whips around the hapless mage and crushes his organs into jelly.

Hatshepsut hurts one of the monsters, Samaritha *magic missiles* it, and Wogan uses his spiritual trident spell to finish it off. He casts a second *spiritual weapon* which kills off the second one in the room. Tommy preps to stab anything that enters through the window.

Then the ground gives way under the tower. We all hang crazily in the air and bounce around as the tower begins to fall with all of us still in it. One of the walls briefly becomes the floor, then the ceiling. We are thrown around like rag dolls. The two monks run amazingly along the walls and avoid any damage. Wogan gets bashed. Jean-Jacque's neck gets broken on a bedframe and he is killed instantly.

The tower is now on its side and the window is above us. Two monsters leap on top of the tower and peer in at us.

Samaritha *levitates* up into the middle of the tower. Tommy drinks a *spider climb* potion. Serpent seeks out his silver scimitar amidst the wreckage and recovers it.

Then the tower begins to roll off the cliff under the massive weight of the monsters. Hatshepsut gets struck by debris, but Sindawe dodges it. Samaritha's magical levitation keeps her somewhat safe. Wogan braces in a doorway but his hands lose their grip and he falls into the mixer. Tommy finds a crack in the wall and climbs to the outside of the tower. Eli tries to cast a spell but he gets grabbed by a monster and wounded. Serpent runs around the tower while Saluthra wraps around a support beam and

hangs on. Saluthra gets bitten by a monster. Samaritha magically animates a rope and Wogan grabs it and climbs it. The monsters are being thumped around inside the tower like two kittens in a dryer. Sindawe grabs the child Cyphermage and tries to get him to climb the rope.

The tower finally goes off the slope of the cliff and plunges 20 feet into the water. Serpent and Wogan get beat up by the sudden impact, as do some of the mages, but no one gets knocked out or killed. Water begins swiftly rushing in through the holes. The monsters silently writhe in the salt water as it dissolves them like acid! Relieved at this turn of events, we all escape the flooding tower through various openings.

Most of the characters are pretty strong swimmers, so we all make it out of the tower and help out the surviving mages as well as the tower sinks below the waves. We are now on a tiny spit of a beach at the bottom of a huge cliff on the south of the island, in the dark. The surf pounds around us.