

REAVERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE - SESSION SUMMARY 3/25/2012

TODAY'S EPISODE: TAMMERAUT'S FATE

Our heroes are aboard their pirate ship the *Teeth of Araska*. They are fleeing the Chelish town of Hollobrae after a successful raid. They 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).
- ♣ Hatshepsut, monk and high priestess of a lost civilization who doesn't savvy much Common and her cobra Naja.
- ♣ Samaritha, the wand-blastin' serpentfolk wizard in the guise of a pretty half-elf, and now Serpent's wife!
- ♣ Bosun Tommy Blacktoes, the staff-slingin' sneaky halfling rogue (was Kevin, now an NPC).
- ♣ Lavender Lil, a buxom tiefling ex-prostitute, and Tommy's girlfriend.
- ♣ With them are the pirates of the *Teeth of Araska*, some 20+ souls consisting of:
 - ♣ Survivors from the ship's previous pirate crew
 - ♣ Ex-slaves escaped from their Chelish owner (Martino Marcellano) and recruited from their castaway island home
 - ♣ Various other recruits, some willing, some not.

SAILING AWAY FROM OUR CRIMES

The *Teeth of Araska* sails west onto the ocean. Wogan decides he wants to make a Wand of Cure Light Wounds during the voyage so he recruits Samaritha's help (she has the Create Wands feat). Samaritha agrees.

Day 1: Lots of rain, varying wind speeds from different directions. "The tiny ship was tossed" all day long. But the ship is not lost thanks to the ship's crew (and some really good Profession: Sailor checks). Wand Creation is postponed.

The cabin section of the ship is slightly more crowded with the additions of Daphne (the sorceress dominated by Samaritha) and Lil and Tommy's new slave/servant (an elf woman captured at Hollobrae), bringing the occupant count up to nine.

And our GM reveals that Jaren the Jinx knows something about the Azlanti Islands, thanks to his days of sailing with his father Black Dog.

Day 2: Olhas spots a ship several points off of starboard. Via spy glass the ship is seen as ragged and foundering. There is no crew in evidence. Captain Sindawe orders a course to the ship.

The ship is Chelish in design (two masts) though there is no flag. The name plate reads *The Adventurous*. Serpent's expert eye picks out burn damage on the sails in addition to weather damage from yesterday's storm. And what might be cannon shots in the hull and deck. These signs of humanoid on humanoid conflict make him feel better than "monster attack". The rest of the crew grows noticeably more alert when Serpent announces, "The ship's crew probably wasn't killed by monsters."

The ship is grappled and the command staff crosses over. They find blood stains, mostly washed away, bullet holes and other signs of hand-to-hand fighting. Wogan thinks the ship might have been drifting for 2-3 weeks.

Currently only the lower deck is under water. The upper deck has shallow pools of water that shift with the gentle rocking of the ship. Everything looks thoroughly looted, including the captain's cabin where the door has been smashed in. Sindawe orders more crew across to scavenge and search. Meanwhile, Wogan and Serpent search the captain's cabin. They find a slightly mashed model of *The Adventurous*. On the bottom is engraved *Captain Roofus Longwater*.

Wogan asks the crew, "Anyone know a Captain Longwater?"

Tanned Hank offers, "I heard some stuff about the *The Adventurous*." He goes into great detail about the ship's unusual construction history. It has a flexible hull design something unheard of by the other pirates. The flexible hull requires skilled carpenters that would allow the internal workings to be "free floating" (i.e. flexible). The resulting hull should be lighter than a traditional hull but just as strong in most instances of ordinary use (e.g. sailing, weather). And possibly offer slight increases in speed. Sindawe and Tanned Hank study sections of the hull not entirely under water, making sketches where possible.

Serpent speculates, "Whoever took this ship killed the entire crew and threw their bodies overboard. Or scraggs climbed aboard afterward to eat the dead."

Sindawe counters, "Or the survivors fell to cannibalism to survive. The eaters grew to regret their hunger and took their own lives."

Several pirates look uneasy at these explanations. Wogan says, "Cannibalism is a sure way to become a ghoul."

Someone asks, "I thought getting bit by a ghoul was how people became ghouls."

Wogan, "Well, that or cannibalism will do it."

Serpent says, "Some lycanthropy works the reverse of that. Wererats are rats bitten by humans. By day they are rats, by night they grow to human size and rampage amongst their rat brethren." Several pirates chuckle.

Jaren, indicating *The Adventurous*, "We should fire it. It is a navigation hazard."

Wogan, "But the smoke plume would give away our position."

The pirate officers decide to sink it via gunnery practice. Three teams are organized under Stoke, Orgon One-Eye, and Delmer (he once worked with gunpowder!). The winning team gets an extra rum ration. The ship maneuvers around the wreck allowing both sets of guns to be worked. The three teams take turns. The practice proves that skilled gun crews are worth their weight in

gold. For a long while the relatively inexperienced gun crews miss or inflict minor wounds upon the wreck. Finally, it is Orgon's crew (including Sevgi and Olhas) that succeeds in sinking the wreck either thru luck or emerging skills. The winning team enjoys their extra rum.

DINNER AT THE CAPTAIN'S TABLE

Ori the cook prepares a special meal. A makeshift table is set on deck for the officers and the other high-level characters. They dine using mismatched utensils and dishes, purchased or stolen from a dozen ports. Jaren is asked about the Azlanti Islands. He begins.

Fire Watch Island is a way point to the Azlanti islands. It has a monastery to Gozreh sitting between two peaks, one 300' tall, the other 100'. It is a true island unlike many of the islands further west. Those islands are pillars, possibly Azlanti buildings, jutting from the depths. Many are surrounded by ribs of land. The pillars and ribs sometimes form valleys or mini-lakes. All of these combine to make the area very dangerous to unwary ships.

Ships usually stop at Fire Watch Island for several days to rest up from the long passage and get information. The Mordant Spire elf skimmers patrol the islands aggressively, sometimes making appearances at Fire Watch Island to scare off would be trespassers. The elves dislike outsiders poking around their Azlanti Islands. The elves aren't willing to say why- they just attack or chase interlopers away.

Serpent asks, "How do you avoid the patrols?"

The skimmers are slower than regular ships on the open sea. But they're sneaky and maneuverable which are huge advantages amongst the islands' many obstacles. They lack heavy weapons and have small crews, forcing them to rely heavily on spell-casters and surprise when dealing with larger vessels.

Serpent is unimpressed by Jaren's information, "So run if they spot you. Fight if they catch you. That's no different than any other naval encounter."

Little else of value is known about the islands, so the conversation turns to life at sea and retirements. Jaren observes, "It is good to be back at sea despite my age. I've tried to retire three times. The Laughing Badger Inn was number 2. Black Cove was number 3."

Sindawe, thinking of his own miserable time at Black Cove, asks, "Why would you want to retire to a shit hole like Black Cove?"

Jaren replies, "It was on the coast, so I could see the ocean every day. And no one from my pirating days would ever find me because ships almost never stop there."

Sindawe grimaces, "That town has only one redeeming quality: there's a relatively short path to the coastal road. A man can walk away real easy like."

MORE SAILING - HARSH WEATHER AND LESS BAD WEATHER

Day 3: Harsh weather, which the experienced crew handles well. A shipboard fire is prevented by Gareb, who finds the galley stove door open and hot coals on the floor.

Later that day after the weather has calmed considerably Bojask announces, "I'm renting out my slave."

Sindawe replies, "No."

Bojask explains, "Men get frustrated at sea. I just want to share the wealth so to speak. And they resent the guy who's getting IT on a regular basis."

Sindawe, doubting Bojask's compassion, replies, "The answer is still no. Your fellow crew are understanding types. I'm sure they're happy for your good fortune."

Bojask, "I'll cut you in. Coins or trade."

Sindawe, "I am convinced that you prostituting your slave will give me problems that I don't already have as captain. I'll not lose crew or control so you can earn a few coins." Bojask looks grumpy and heads off to beat and rape his elf slave.

Day 4: Another storm, lasting most of the morning, hits the ship hard. Wogan captains them thru with little difficulty. Later that day, after the weather, he and Samaritha complete the wand.

Ori confides to Wogan, "Someone stole a knife from the kitchen."

Wogan shouts, possibly in response to that, "Damn pirates!"

Ori continues, "Would you tell the captain that I secured the galley stove? Someone else was at it while I was helping with the ship."

Wogan nods.

MORE SAILING - HARSH WEATHER AND LESS BAD WEATHER

Day 5: The dreaded quiet day at sea - the ship is becalmed. Sindawe stares at his crew lounging about working on their tans. He remembers, "I hate sloth. Time for some make work."

Sindawe asks Wogan and Serpent, "What exercises do you want to run today?" Both pirates stare blankly at him.

Sindawe thinks a bit and says, "OK. What exercises SHOULD we run?"

Serpent considers, "Fighting. Too many of our guys are getting cut down rushing into combat."

Sindawe, "So they need to be cautious?"

Serpent counters, "Defensively! They need to fight defensively."

Wogan offers, "I can summon a monster for them to fight."

"Done!" A small team is put together to fight the summoned creature. They prepare their weapons while Serpent tells them to fight defensively and Sindawe tells them to use team work.

Then Wogan summons a celestial pony. The team members laugh and begin to relax... until the pony kicks Little Mike in the chest. Then the fight begins.

Several other fighting scenarios are put together including a "pirates vs Cheliax marines" with Captain Mace Venjum providing the leadership/expertise on the marines. None of the pirates are eager to be on the marine side. Minor cuts and bruises are had by all.

DAY 6 - THE CRAZIES

At about 3 PM, Olhas spots a ship. Just like day 2. It is a ship of rough construction without sails. Orders are given to sail "that-a-way". The ship is a cog. Its crew are milling around on the deck. They give no sign of recognizing that a ship is approaching.

A suspicious Sindawe commands, "Siren alert. Get out the bee's wax candles!" Pirates stuff wax into their ears; most do a decent job of it having had two previous encounters with siren type things.

Once the *Teeth of Araska* is close enough signal flags are used. No response, until one shirtless pirate pulls off his pants and waves them about seemingly in mockery. Then he takes a dump off the side of the ship. A boarding party is assembled of officers and volunteers: Svegi and Tommy. As the boat approaches Tommy says, "I hope that guy's emptied out by now."

Sindawe and Serpent board first, ready for a fight. They find nine crewmen on deck - intent on a variety of activities including playing with their genitals and talking to the mast. More "crew" can be heard below. And there's an incredible stench from human waste. The pants-less pirate is questioned. He offers a salute then alternately claims to be the cabin boy and the captain of *The Bilge Rat*, the best Taldan Corsair to sail. Ever!

Taldor is a country east of Cheliox on the Inner Sea. Sindawe asks, "How did they get past the Arch where most of the Cheliox navy is camped out?"

Serpent says, "Easy. They just pretended to be a merchant vessel." Sindawe's head spins, remembering the many occasions where saying, "This is a merchant vessel" and proving it are two hugely different things - Chelioxians love their paperwork.

The investigators move below deck. Wogan is propositioned by a man dressed as a woman. He says, "No." Then, suspecting disease might explain the crew's behavior, offers to examine (wink, wink) the man. The man eagerly agrees. Wogan's medical examination reveals nothing physically wrong. Arguably. Though the other pirates definitely consider the man's obvious excitement "wrong."

The ship's crude manufacture is even more obvious below decks. The compartments are fewer and less specialized than a typical vessel. It is as if containers or small buildings were nailed together. The crew are more numerous below decks, yet just as irrational. Each one seems to have their own specialty: they scream at unseen things, spread filth on walls, bang their heads repeatedly, catatonic trances, gibber in unknown languages, and make exaggerated claims.

The pirates continue to search, but find nothing of interest beyond the "crew". They speculate on the ship's origin while returning to their own vessel. The possibility of disease, magical or mundane, makes all of them twitchy. They sail off, leaving the asylum ship to its own devices.

MORE WEATHER

Dead calm. Serpent uses his magic to provide enough wind for a slow speed.

That night Wogan hears shenanigans in the cabin next door. As if there are more than the usual participants - Lil, Tommy, their elf slave, and someone else(s). He bangs on the wall, "Some of us are trying to sleep off a hang-over."

The next day the weather is calm and the sailing goes well. Little Mike tells tales of faraway Sargava.

The following day is another dead calm until Samaritha's wind magics gets the ship up to slow speed.

MORDANT SPIRE ELF SKIMMER

The next night Wogan is on the 2 AM watch. Lavender Lil comes up on deck. She stretches in a manner that enhances her already ample chest. Then she pretends to have just seen Wogan, and asks, "May I have a drink from your flask?"

Wogan hands his flask over, his hand hovering to snatch it back as soon as Lil finishes. Wogan guards his rum greedily. While she drinks deeply Wogan observes, "I haven't seen you on deck in a long time."

Lil replies, "Tommy and I have many distractions down below. Especially with the addition of our new slave. She's very entertaining. Besides, the sun is harsh on my skin." She looks past Wogan and asks, "Are we going to hit that?"

Wogan looks around quickly but sees nothing. He asks Lil, "Where? What? How?"

"Over there. Boat, ship, thing. Dark vision. Tiefling. Remember?"

Ignoring the unhelpful remarks, Wogan orders Lil, "Go wake Sindawe up." Then he casts Light and begins frantically looking about. A short time later there is a thump. Wogan quickly finds the source; a burnt Mordant Spire Elf skimmer, more wreckage than ship.

Ori the cook, who was awake anyway, comes on deck. "What's going on?"

Lil has to pass thru Samaritha and Serpent's cabin to get to Sindawe's room. Serpent awakens as she passes quietly thru. The two argue about how to wake up Sindawe - Serpent argues

for quick and loud, while Lil argues for "slutty". Serpent wins by banging on the wall until Sindawe answers.

On deck, Wogan grapples the skimmer allowing it to drag along behind. Sindawe looks at the wreck, then says, "Good job on spotting it, Wogan."

Wogan, wavering not an iota, replies, "Thank you, captain."

Sindawe orders the rest of the crew awakened and the ocean anchor dropped. Sleepy, bitching crew emerge on deck. Sindawe organizes the worst of the whiners into a more definite grappling effort. The rest are sent back to bed.

When the grappling is completed Sindawe and Serpent swim over to investigate. They find a scorched elf skeleton and a Mordant Spire elf mask (very similar to the masks from the TV mini-series *The Martian Chronicles*). And little else. They even examine the wood and carpentry using light supplied by Wogan's magic. They return with their meager loot.

Wogan asks, "Why did you bring back the skeleton?"

Sindawe, "We can have a funeral. And you cast *Speak With Dead* on it."

Several pirates complain, "Bringing dead people aboard is bad luck." One adds, "It will bring the Fire Wraith down upon us." Sindawe decides to not ask, "What the hell is a fire wraith?" More than a few pirates declare that this will lead to hauntings.

Serpent mocks the superstitious pirates as he describes the lameness of an elf haunting. The elf would flit about haughtily moaning about our puny short human lives, correcting our use of the common tongue, and demanding that we bathe more often. Wogan declares, "I think you would call that haunting by *Ghost Fancy Boy!*"

Gareb not really grasping the mockery element of Serpent's ghost story, complains loudly, "First women! Then elves! And now its ghosts! Next we'll be letting devils on board!" At that Tommy gives Lavender Lil a conspiratorial wink.

The next morning Wogan casts *Speak With Dead* on the elf skeleton. The head demands, "Who awakens Captain Quintilein?"

"It is I, Wogan. How were you and your ship destroyed?"

Angrily, "Slain in combat by a human ship of interlopers!"

Wogan asks, "Was it the *Black Bunyip* under Captain Morgan Baumann?"

The head replies, "Some hyuu-mon woman captained the ship." The elf spirit takes obvious delight in mispronouncing the word "human".

"Where?" *Off the Posts of Prius!*

Sindawe asks, "Jaren, does that mean anything to you?" Jaren shrugs, "There are some pillars that come in pairs."

Later, Pirro complains to Wogan, "Strange things are happening. This ship is haunted."

Wogan asks, "By who?"

Pirro, without humor, replies, "That elf you talked to! *Ghost Fancy Boy!*"

"GHOST CHASERS" OR "LAW Ff ORDER - SHIPBOARD"

Samaritha and Daphne take a walk on deck. The beautiful women draw many admiring glances and comments from the crew. The officers shrug - as long as no one gets out of line.

Bel approaches Sindawe and says, "My folks are getting edgy. Something is up on this ship. Maybe sabotage." When asked what has happened Bel goes down a list:

- Coal fell out of an open galley stove. Ori strongly claims that he secured the stove, so someone else was responsible.

- A dagger went missing from the galley two days ago. Noticed by Ori.

- Whispering in elvish during the night, overheard by Pirro.

- Little Mike felt unnaturally hot when there was no reason. This happened while he slept in a hammock just before his watch. Felt real hot like hot summer day - the heat woke him up.

Wogan ventures, "Maybe the crew is getting stir crazy."

Sindawe orders, "Serpent and Tommy, search your quarters for the missing knife. Your 'guests' might have pocketed it."

Serpent's search turns up a large collection of small cutlery, typical for a pirate PC. But not the missing knife. He returns to Sindawe to report, "No knife." Sensing a chance to rub a friend's nose in his good fortune, Serpent grins and continues, "It took awhile to search. My beautiful wife has a lot of stuff. And Daphne's living in our cabin too. Yeah, it gets crowded in there with two really beautiful women. Hard to get any sleep. Did I mention we sleep in the same bed?"

Sindawe snarls, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, we all got problems." He stalks off to find the long absent Tommy and Lil. He finds them in their cabin enjoying a *menage a trois* with their slave girl. Sindawe demands, "You couldn't stay on task for ten minutes? Did you find the knife?" He throws a sheet over the writhing (and distracting) females. Tommy slowly replies, "No. No knife."

Sindawe goes to the brig where Bojask keeps his elf slave. She is bruised and her clothing torn, yet is capable of glaring silently at Sindawe with her uninjured eye. Sindawe asks her several questions that go unanswered. He even phrases one question to indicate that her owner/tormentor Bojask might be executed for disobeying orders, if she gave the right answer. Still the elf continues the silent treatment.

Fearing that Bojask has cut her tongue out, Sindawe enters to examine her. The woman loses her composure upon being touched. She scratches with desperate fury and screams. Alarmed by the screaming, Bojask rushes in. He demands, "You got to pay."

Sindawe replies, "I was looking for the missing knife. Nothing happened."

Clearly unsatisfied by this answer, Bojask decides to let it go.

Day 13: A hard rain falls. The ship lurches violently as it scrapes across a submerged piece of real estate - 9pts to one hull section.

The sails are dropped to allow Serpent to swim down and investigate the hull damage. He then swims back looking for the culprit. He finds a single spire jutting up from the inky depths. He returns to the boat and reports. Tanned Hank reports he can make temporary repairs to the damage. The ship takes off after the repairs are completed.

Sindawe has an odd dream of an orca caught in a fishing net. He senses rather than sees sharks circling in distance. He awakens questioning why his patron goddess must be so damned cryptic.

Wogan is on watch. He spots a lone rock covered in sea gulls. He orders the ship steered clear of the hazard. He reasons, "If there are gulls, then more land must be nearby." The watch is increased to keep a sharp eye out for islands.

Later that day Fire Watch Island is spotted. It is a narrow, long island, measuring hundreds of feet wide by thousands long. At either end are peaks, one standing 300' tall, the other 100'. In between the peaks lies the monastery. According to Jaren there are no navigation hazards nearby.

They tack and cross by to check for other ship's lying in wait or anchored. None are found. The *Teeth of Araska* anchors near the island. The monastery bell rings out while the ship's boat is prepared. Jaren spots the flying creature first, asking, "What's that?" The pirates watch a large, bird-like creature swoop down into the bell tower; the bell ringing ceases.

The ship's boat is launched. The officers, Samaritha, and Daphne are aboard. They tie up at a pier coming off the gravel beach and follow a path up to the monastery.

The building is walled and three to four stories tall. The pirates follow the path up and thru an open archway in the wall, emerging into a garden area that includes stunted apple trees. The monastery itself is covered in vines. Near the eastern stair well are gardening tools. Directly ahead are the front doors, which were recently broken open, then barricaded shut. Knocking at the doors draws no response.

Serpent, who just happens to be looking at the ground, sees a shadow pass over Daphne's; it takes the shape of Daphne's shadow when it emerges. He looks up to see the large bird from earlier. It has a bird's wings and a stag head complete with antlers. It is a peryton.

Samaritha blasts the peryton with Ray of Enfeeblement (wand). Sindawe pulls his spear and moves to cover Wogan. The creature swoops down on Daphne goring her on its antlers, then flies back up and away. Daphne counters with Glitter Dust, blinding it. Wogan shoots it with his blunderbuss. The peryton climbs, veering away from the peaks to pass up and over the monastery. Serpent curses the creature's accurate spatial understanding! Samaritha and Daphne hit it with Magic Missiles. Wogan shoots it again. Serpent shoots it with his bow. At almost 400' Samaritha hits with her Fireball. Despite its many, many wounds the peryton continues flying south over the narrow island and out to sea. The monastery blocks further attacks by the pirates. Wogan heals Daphne.

The pirates circle the monastery finding some out buildings but no other entrances. The place doubles as a fort. They do find a short tower next to the monastery, accessible by stairs. The short tower turns out to be a brewing operation - copper tubes, vats, and what might be wine. Wogan tries a huge gulp and is immediately overcome by the nauseous brew - it is very much a white lightning product but seems to have been brewed thru the socks of Asmodeus himself.

The pirates spot a trap door overhead. Sindawe hoists Serpent up. Serpent finds a guard room - arrow slits facing north, east, and south. The west wall has been knocked out to form a

entrance to the monastery interior, bridged by a wood walk way of poor craftsmanship. The far end is a wooden balcony overlooking a dining hall. At either end of the balcony are knocked down walls. The whole affair is obviously a late addition completed by the semi-skilled.

One at a time, the pirates are hoisted up and sent across the walkway, over the balcony and into an interior hallway. No one trusts the sloppy additions to hold more than one person at a time.

Regrouped, the pirates venture down a flight stairs into a large room. It contains a wash tub, lye, scrub brushes, and some furniture. The wash tub is full of dirty water and broken crockery. Dried blood is on the floor. A set of false teeth lies on a plate in the tub. The set is made of real ivory! One of the pirates pockets it.

The pirates push down another hall. Several of the doors have had their handle/locks torn free. Serpent searches for tracks, finding a half-dozen humanoids foot prints, encrusted in salt.

CLIFF HANGER

Who attacked the monastery? Are any of the monks left? What axis of evil includes perytons and salt-encrusted humanoids? And will our innocent pirates be blamed for it all?