

Reavers on the Seas of Fate - Session Summary 05/02/2010

The heroes have just taken out the attackers who tried to burn down the Gold Goblin and taken care of a few other errands (including selling loot). Our heroes are:

- *Wogan*, the pistol-packin' celibate cleric of Gozreh (Patrick, sadly absent this session)
- *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)

While *Serpent* is out selling loot from the cooling bodies that the gendarmes are just now finishing hauling off, *Tommy* approaches *Samaritha Beldusk* (former hostess at the Gold Goblin, now a cyphermage).

"Samaritha, since you're a cyphermage and everything now, you think you can help me arrange to get my sword enchanted? I have the money."

Samaritha believes she can facilitate this.

Samaritha Needs Comforting

When *Serpent* returns, he distributes money to the characters (693.5 gp).

Samaritha says, "You think I could have my old room back at the Gold Goblin for tonight? I don't feel that comfortable alone in the Cypherlodge after being abducted from my bed there."

This is double-checked with *Saul* (the owner of the Goblin) but there is no problem with this request.

Sindawe asks the half-elf, "So why are these serpent cults so interested in you anyway? Every time we turn our backs they keep kidnapping you."

Samaritha answers, "Well, before they grabbed me, I was doing research and came across some papers and a book in the Cypher Lodge written in the ancient language

of the serpentmen (Aklo). Someone in the Lodge had been recently referencing the book.”

Serpent asks, “Could it have been *Milos*?” Milos was the crazed cultist presiding over the serpent temple the first time they broke it up, and was also the former doorman for the Cypher Lodge.

Samaritha allows, “It could have been. Then that night I woke up and couldn't move. I did see a figure in my room that seemed to be searching for something, then it grabbed me and I was taken to the temple.”

Tommy asks, “So you think the serpent cult grabbed all the things you found.”

Samaritha says, “I didn't leave the book out, I hid it. The book may still be there. I want to go check, but I want protection. I don't feel very safe there right now.”

Serpent immediately volunteers to protect her.

Sindawe studies Samaritha and tries to figure out if she just wants protection or if she actually wants to be alone with Serpent...

But he decides she seems mostly just worried she might be abducted again.

I Wish I Had Ox's Girl

Iesha (Ox's crazy girlfriend) approaches Sindawe.

“Sindawe, I want you to know I appreciate what you did to Bojask.” Sindawe delivered a vicious beat-down to Saul's right hand half-orc Bojask after the fight because he'd been molesting the Gold Goblin's captive croupier *Lixy Parmenter*.

Sindawe is concerned, “Why, did he do something to you too?”

Iesha scoffs, “No, but Bojask creeps out all the girls. I need a big strong man to protect me from guys like that.” She bats her eyes at Sindawe.

Sindawe thinks about the big ball of crazy that is Iesha and tries to convince her that he sees her as nothing but Ox's girl (where can I find a woman like that?). She points out that Ox left and no one knows where he is, but Sindawe maintains that he still would never break the brotherly bonds of adventurers in such a way.

Zincher Drops By For a Cup of Sugar

Saul walks in, still dealing with the aftermath of the big fight in the Gold Goblin, “Well, that was a big to-do.”

Sindawe replies, “Yeah, what are we going to do about it?”

Saul says, “We need to figure out who all was involved.”

Tommy says, “The presence of *Braddikar Faje* would seem to indicate *Clegg Zincher's* involvement.”

Sindawe replies, “Unless he was working freelance.”

Serpent shakes his head, “He would have worn his signature armor if that was it. The only reason for him to have been dressed down is that he is working for Zincher but didn't want witnesses to know he was Zincher's capp.”

There is a knock on the door. *Beyar* opens it and it's Clegg Zincher the crime lord himself. Everyone gets quite tense. Zincher is shown to where Saul and the heroes are standing. He strolls into the casino unconcernedly without any goons along. “Nice place youse got here. Lots of space,” he observes.

Saul asks from his chair among the wreckage, “What can I do for you?”

“I'm here to invite you to a sit-down meeting of all the bosses.” he hands out a sealed envelope. “You can bring three men. It's at sundown in the warehouse district. I hope you can attend.”

Saul tries to play it cool, “I don't have anything else to do this evening. I'll be there.”

On his way out, Clegg Zincher winks at Samaritha, “Hey sweetcheeks!”

Serpent grips his staff menacingly.

Sindawe quietly muses, “How did he know her nickname?”

After Zincher leaves, Tommy asks, “How often do these happen?”

Saul replies, “I don't know, I don't get invited to ‘em anymore.”

Serpent grins, “I guess with Slyeg dead, there's an opening, congratulations!”

Saul says, “Croamarcky probably doesn't want a gang war when people try to fill the power void.”

Sindawe nods, “Maybe they're going to be splitting up Slyeg's enterprises.”

Saul is not so sure, “We're getting promoted or we're getting rubbed out. Which one it is really depends on how many crimelords want it one way or the other.”

Serpent asks, “Would it be a good idea to talk to some crimelords and try to get them on your side beforehand.”

Saul shrugs, “I don't know what I could offer them, but I'll think about it.”

I Could Really Go For a Sweetcheeks Right Now

Samaritha asks Serpent, “Are you ready to go?”

“Yes.”

“What is a 'sweetcheeks' anyway?” she asks.

Serpent looks at her strangely and answers, “It's a type of pastry.”

“Ooh, that sounds good.”

Serpent and Sindawe escort Samaritha. En route to the Cypher Lodge, the heroes pass a public bulletin board. Sindawe notices one bill that says, “If you find my lost puppy, bring it to the Dead Duck in the rotgut district.” It has a terribly drawn picture of a puppy or possibly a manatee. This is the agreed upon protocol that *Salvadora Beckett* (the God Squad member who helped bust up the serpent cult before) uses to contact the heroes. She wants a meeting.

The heroes go into the Cypher Lodge, taking a moment to chat with the glum doorman. It seems he hates his job. Inside, the lodge looks like a British explorer's mansion, all dark wood and suits of armor and animal rugs in front of roaring fireplaces.

Samaritha's room is a mess. She goes under the bed and brings out a book.

“It's still here!”

“Good,” says Sindawe. They examine the book for a bit.

“I can read,” says Serpent defensively, “but maybe you oughta help us out.”

Samaritha nods, “Yes, it's in several ancient languages.”

“Oh,” replies Serpent.

The book has pictures of the Cyphergate and the symbols on the gate, but it also has many notes scribbled in the margins, including notes about serpent men. It also has a sketch of the Riddleport Light. The notes are in Aklo. Samaritha needs time to decipher the book.

The heroes travel back to drop off Samaritha at the Gold Goblin and pick up Tommy. Saul's been discussing strategy with Tommy. Sindawe tells Tommy about Salvadora's message.

I Bet He Has a Hard Time Hanging Paper

The heroes head to the rotgut district to meet Salvadora. As usual, the district is filled with drunks and bums. Soon they find the Dead Duck; on its sign is a picture of a roasted duck with a goofy feathered head. A man is vomiting in the street outside despite it being quite early in the afternoon.

Inside the Duck, there are lots of shady looking characters. The bartender is missing a leg, an eye, and an arm. Tommy has to suppress laughter as a million jokes about one-legged, one-armed, one-eyed bartenders try to bubble their way up.

Sindawe tells the bartender, "Three drinks. And someone is missing a puppy."

The bartender stumps around making drinks. It takes somewhat longer than normal, due to his various missing parts. "*Jenny'll* take them in the back for you," he says.

Serpent wonders, "Are we being propositioned?"

Jenny, a scraggly woman of indeterminate age, takes the drinks to a back room. She tells the heroes, "If you need anything just call me or *Ball-less Bill*."

Tommy checks the room for peepholes while Sindawe contemplates his drink. "I wish Wogan were here, he'd drink this."

A beetle floats to the top of Serpent's drink. Serpent says, "Well, if this stuff will kill a beetle, it's got to be good!" He drinks.

There is a knock on the door and a voice says, "I hear someone has my puppy."

Sindawe replies, "Yes, yes we do."

Hearing a friendly voice, Salvadora comes in. She is a half-orc woman who dresses like something out of a spaghetti western. She doffs her broad-brimmed hat.

Sindawe asks, "Is this about the new snake cult?"

"Yes, kind of. It's good to see you looking well. I've come across info about your latest snake cult fighting escapades. Did this cult have the same trappings as last time?"

Sindawe nods, "The exact same items, or incredibly exact replicas."

Serpent agrees, "Yes, I thought your people took those."

Salvadora frowns, "I've been suspecting that something fishy is going on within the gendarmerie. Those items were taken to a secret storage location, they should have been secure."

Tommy says, "The snake cult lair had a tunnel right to Slyeg's home. He was probably involved with the cult."

Sindawe shrugs, "That's probably a coincidence."

Serpent tells Salvadora about the book that Samaritha found. Also about the fact that there was a drawing of the Riddleport Light in the book.

Salvadora says there were some items confiscated at the Light as well that got out after its previous inhabitant, *Gebediah Crix* the fiend summoner, turned up dead. One was the devil mirror *Father Bergen*, devil worshipping priest of Asmodeus from Staufendorf Island, had.

Serpent tells Salvadora all about the devil mirror, Father Bergen, and Staufendorf. Sindawe seems alarmed at the amount of detail Serpent is telling her, but Serpent is sure the pirates from the *Wandering Dagger* already told everyone in town anyway during their several week debauch following the raid.

Salvadora is alarmed that artifacts that are supposed to be secure are getting out.

Sindawe says, "Well, I haven't been impressed with gendarmes that I've met so far."

Salvadora seems a little put out by that comment, since she is technically a gendarme. "Well, there are different grades of gendarme, the ones patrolling the street in your stretch of time aren't the most reliable."

Serpent says, "It sounds like an internal matter. We'd help if there was some way we could help, and some way to receive compensation for said help."

Salvadora nods, "If you hear anything, please tell me."

Sindawe tells Salvadora about the crime lord meeting tonight.

Through further conversation it is revealed that Salvadora talked to the serpent priest the heroes killed (after she was dead). She was a recent convert to the snake cult. Sindawe wants to know if Salvadora can talk to the dead criminals *Angvar* and *Thuvalia* from the assault on the Gold Goblin. Salvadora says it's definitely notable that they attacked the Gold Goblin once and got out of prison to come attack it again. She'd like to know more about them.

Finally, Salvadora tips the brim of her hat, says “Watch your backs,” and slips out.

No Honor Among Thieves, But There is Punch

When Saul and the heroes get to the crime lord sit-down there isn't much security but everyone there is heavily armed. There's a U-shaped table for the crime lords. There are traditionally seven crime lords in the city of Riddleport, and the Overlord who rules above them. Each has exactly three minions with them. Tommy sits with Saul, Sindawe stands behind Saul, and Serpent tries to mingle but no one is going for it.

Looking around at the crime lords and their men, they are:

- Saul Vancaskerkin, with Serpent, Sindawe, and Tommy backing him up.
- Clegg Zincher has three men with him: a big dark-skinned man named *Akron Erix*, an arena fighter named *Belorin “Redlash” Rank*, and a goon named *Moose*.
- *Shorafá Pamodae* (high priest of Calistria), *Lavender Lil* (Tommy's favorite prostitute), another extremely sensuous courtesan they don't recognize, and a pirate called *Captain Grudge*.
- *Boss Croat* (looking like the half-orc version of Dom Deluise), and three half-orcs. One is strong-looking, the other has one eye and looks shifty, and the third is *Karl the Kraken* (an infamous Riddleport enforcer who loves to collect debts and teach lessons to those who aren't prompt with payments).
- *Splitface Knocmar*, the Beggar King, who wears a scarf to cover his cleft palate. His men include a suspicious beggar, a drug-addled sorcerer who goes by *Captain Spooky*, and a professional bodyguard named Bill Sangapuletele.

- *Ziphras* the wererat and 3 other wererats, most in half-rat form. One is extremely small. One female wererat is in human form, she looks unexceptional but smells of sewer.
- *Elias Tammerhawk* (the head of the Order of Cypherimages), with *Thorgrim* (lord defender of the Cypher Lodge), a gnome, and a guy dressed in a tribal voodoo outfit.
- Overlord Croamarcky with his men, *General Anton Mescher* of the gendarmes, an Ulfen pirate named *Captain Hrothgar*, and a hairy greek guy named *Demetrios* who used to work for Slyeg.

Croamarcky starts the meeting by inviting Saul to join this group of “civic-minded gentlemen”. He thanks the heroes for their work fighting the snake cult. Then he begins to start the process of splitting up Slyeg's empire. Demetrios is here to help the crime lords who get the franchises, he knows all the details of Slyeg's criminal empire. All the crime lords begin talking at once, shouting over each other.

Sindawe tries to help Saul bargain. Tommy carefully watches Croat's men and tries to figure out the relationship between Croamarcky and Tammerhawk. Croamarcky seems to be playing all the crime lords against each other, but he particularly seems to be trying to make sure Tammerhawk walks away with nothing. Boss Croat is not taking all this too seriously. Tommy thinks Boss Croat already knows his bed is made and all this is a formality. Zincher clearly has no love lost for Saul but is not causing a lot of trouble.

Serpent notices the small rat with Ziphras is eyeballing the group a lot. Ziphras is lobbying for a bigger piece of the action; he currently operates in the Boneyard and the shitty parts of town.

At some point the shouting dies down and the crime lords go around mingling and making deals. Serpent goes to talk to the small wererat who has been eyeing him, he determines that she is female and probably not human, but she avoids him quite well.

Tommy goes to talk to Shorafa Pamodae to see about arranging some kind of alliance. Tommy kisses Lavender Lil.

Shorafafa says, "Mr. Blacktoes, always a pleasure. What can I do for the Vancaskerkin organization?"

Tommy replies, "It's what I was hoping we could do together."

"We've always found the business we do together to be quite profitable. For us."

Tommy begins to work out a deal to offer dreamspider venom for cash and services. Shorafafa has an alluring scent that throws him off and, just when he thinks he has that handled, the other prostitute fondles Lil obscenely under the table but where Tommy has a full view. Blood rushes from his brain and he says "Uh, yeah, a hundred an ounce, whatever, sold."

Sindawe talks to the wererats and tries to make some kind of deal.

Serpent talks to Tammerhawk, offering the use of Vancaskerkin's men in exchange for spellcasting and enchanting services. After talking to Tammerhawk, Serpent sees Tammerhawk go to speak with Clegg Zincher, and notices him stealthily casting a spell on Zincher.

Sindawe has a frustrating conversation with Demetrios. He implies that Demetrios might have betrayed Slyeg. Demetrios is cheerful and evasive.

Croamarcky and his cronies come to talk to Saul, "Arr, you lads been showing some spirit. And Saul, glad to see you back in the saddle again, thought you wouldn't make it."

"You know me," Saul answers, "I never give up."

Croamarcky seems genuinely cordial. General Mescher gives everyone the stare.

Serpent surreptitiously casts *detect magic* and looks at Clegg Zincher. He catches an enchantment spell effect on Clegg Zincher. He is sure that Zincher has been *charmed* by Tammerhawk.

All the crime lord retainers get shown out while the crime lords have their final talks. Serpent tells Saul, "Tammerhawk charmed Clegg Zincher. I think this is a good thing for us because Tammerhawk is more friendly to us than Zincher but it may become important."

Serpent sneaks up on the small wererat and ambushes her. He says "I think we need to talk" she hisses at him. Serpent thinks he recognizes her as the goblin wererat who

captained the goblin pirate ship the *Sable Drake*, way back on the characters' first voyage together. She runs off and the other wererats puff up and hiss.

Tommy talks to Lavender Lil about trying to throw his deal off. She is embarrassed herself.

He asks her, "So how do you think it went."

"Well it's not for me to say but I'd like to see the Temple of the Silken Veil working with you more. Maybe it means I can leave the temple more. I'm really not sure why she brought me tonight."

"So can I come see you tonight?"

"Sure that would be great. I'll clear my schedule."

Akron Erix talks to Sindawe, "You seem to be a student of the martial arts. We should exchange lessons in the sweet science sometime." Sindawe agrees tentatively.

Karl the Kraken comes over and talks crap about how half-orcs like pain and humans can't take a punch.

Sindawe sarcastically says, "Yeah, that's what half-orcs are for: punching." The jibe seems to pass over Karl's head. Sindawe asks him about any missing half-orcs.

"It's a rough town; people disappear from time to time. Don't worry, what goes around comes around."

Sindawe compares tattoos with him. Karl says, "I got this one when I ate my first halfling."

Sindawe shoots back, "You know I've known a few halflings, and that sounds reasonable."

Tommy tries to "accidentally" stomp Karl's foot but Karl doesn't even notice.

Serpent thinks the suspicious beggar with Knocmar might be master of disguise and party gadfly the *Splithog Pauper* in disguise. He tells the other heroes this.

Finally the meeting breaks up. The Overlord and Tammerhawk and Pamodae have carriages waiting. Boss Croat meets with a gang of half-orcs and strolls off. Boss Croat eyeballs the heroes hostilely as he passes. Saul comes out looking drained.

Sindawe asks, "Are you OK Saul?"

Tommy says, "Maybe we should get a drink."

Saul answers, "There's a lot of people about. Let's have that drink back at the Gold Goblin."

Tommy offers, "That fat fuck Croat didn't look too happy."

Saul shrugs, "Some people get what they want and some don't."

Wait, Whose Dick In My Throat?

Tommy keeps watch to see if the group is being trailed. There's definitely someone following: a half-orc. Tommy steps into the shadows of an alley to wait to intercept the tail. This works perfectly and Tommy follows the half-orc. He puts his dagger at the half-orc's throat.

"See something interesting?" Tommy asks.

The half-orc answers, "Me looking for loving. Heard there are good whores here."

"Well there are some pigs down by the dock, why don't you go there, pig-fucker? If you come anywhere near the Gold Goblin you'll wake up with your dick in your throat."

The half-orc seems a little confused about how his dick will be in his throat but he runs away.

An Opportunity to Get Stabbed in the Back

Back at the Gold Goblin, everyone gets a drink.

Saul tells everyone, "We have an opportunity we need to move quickly on. It's part of Slyeg's smuggling business. It hasn't been exactly given to us but if we get there first then we'll have the advantage."

Sindawe asks, "Where do we go?"

"I'll write a letter of introduction for you. There's a guy named *Hiram Crooge* that lives out by the Boneyard east of town and takes care of the city's trash. He's the man that a lot of the smuggling business goes through. Go talk to him and give him this letter. He'll have details on the initial transaction."

Tommy asks, “And if we're not the first ones there?”

“Then we're out of luck. But I think we're the only ones who will be going after this.”

Tommy is doubtful.

Saul says to meet him at the Spar, a landmark in the Boneyard. The Boneyard is a local ship's graveyard and city dump, a swampy area filled with old wrecks.

Tommy Shoots Rats In the Dump

The night's wind has died and mist rises from the Boneyard. The heroes see a big creature huddled in cloaks at the spar. Sindawe calls out “Crooge?” but there is no answer. Getting a bit closer, He realizes that it's a dummy. “It's a trap!” Sindawe yells like Admiral Ackbar.

Four wererats appear. One throws a haunch of rotten mutton over near the party, which is puzzling until a swarm of roaches comes pouring out of the scarecrow and skeletonizes the mutton haunch right in front of them.

Serpent's snake *Saluthra* charges at one wererat, swimming easily through the Boneyard and catches the rat, crushing it. She stops to eat the wererat. Serpent casts *bull's strength* on himself and goes towards the wererats. One casts an *acid arrow* but misses Serpent. Serpent recognizes the caster as the goblin wererat from earlier in the night. As Serpent struggles to get across the water and reach it, the wererat casts *grease* on Serpent's staff and he loses it.

Tommy throws an alchemist's fire into the roach swarm and does a little damage. Sindawe and Tommy scatter away from the roaches. Tommy dives under the water to avoid them.

Serpent reaches the goblin wererat in time to get stabbed by it. Serpent draws the silver scimitar he had made on Staufendorf Island and slashes back at the rat. Tommy pops out of the water long enough to wing the rat with a silver sling bullet. Another ratman moves to flank Serpent as he gets stabbed again.

Sindawe begins throwing alchemist's fire into the roaches. The roaches chase Sindawe all over the Boneyard as he tosses flask of fire after flask of fire at them. They

engulf the monk and start to devour his flesh. Sindawe breaks two alchemist's fires onto himself and burns the roaches in the process.

Serpent slashes the goblinrat but it hits him with a nasty bite and Serpent is badly wounded. Tommy hits the rat with another silver bullet from behind, then another. Unfortunately it was his last silver bullet.

A wererat shoots Saluthra with a crossbow, finally grabbing her attention away from the rat she has swallowed. Saluthra swims over to it and grabs it and begins crushing it as well.

Sindawe runs out of fire and begins throwing acid at the roaches.

Although Serpent is horribly wounded, so is the goblin wererat, and she decides to retreat. She casts a *fog cloud* spell and tries to get away. Serpent lunges forward into the mist and attacks the rat once more before she gets away, and lops off her head with the silver scimitar.

Tommy throws his last alchemist's fire and takes out the roaches at last.

Sindawe runs up, hits the last standing wererat and stuns him. Serpent deals a massive wound to the stunned rat with his silver scimitar. Tommy swims up and stabs the stunned wererat with a silver dagger. Serpent strikes through the wererat's collarbone and into its torso. The rat turns into a straggly-haired human woman. Saluthra finishes off the wererat she has hold of. The three breathe heavily and scan the watery dump for additional foes, but it seems to be clear for the moment.

The heroes loot the rats and find a masterwork dagger, 2 *potions of water breathing*, a *wand of summon monster I* (CL3, 16 charges), and 4 alchemist's fires. The captain had a magical feather in her cap that is some kind of *feather token*. They also loot 4 crossbows, 3 short swords, 80 gp, and a set of thieves tools.

“What the hell was THAT?!?” demands Sindawe. The heroes open the “introductory letter” that Saul had sent with them to allegedly deliver to the smuggler. It contains only one large hastily-scrawled word - “RUN!”