

## REAYERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE - SESSION SUMMARY 05/08/2011

The heroes are in a cave under Devil's Elbow, where there is a magical gateway to some nasty shadow dimension sending out tentacle-dogs and shadow demons. 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 giant snake *Saluthra* (Paul)
- *Hatshepsut*, monk and high priestess of a lost civilization who doesn't savvy much Common and her cobra *Naja* (NPC)
- *Samaritha*, the wand-blastin' serpentfolk wizard in the guise of a pretty half-elf (NPC)
- *Akron Erix*, hammer-wieldin' monk, minion of Clegg Zincher (NPC)

### *We All Have Dark Masters Already, Thanks*

A hideous shadowy demon has just bubbled forth from the gate and into the sea-cave we're in. Dead pirates lie strewn about where we killed them in a recent orgy of brutality. We're all floating in the water as we attempt to escape the otherworldly tentacle-dogs pacing the shore, except for Sindawe, who is still unconscious and bound to the pillar where the pirates had left him.

The demon stares at us. We all tread water, staring at it. After a long moment, it addresses us in a hissing voice. "Fascinating. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Chmetugo."

Wogan says, "What do you want, demon?"

"You have come to this place to serve me, yes?"

In chorus, we answer, "No!"

It looks confused. "But you are all marked with the Sign of the Void. It is your fate."

Hatshepsut babbles at the others in Aklo, but since Sindawe is currently out cold, no one understands her.

The demon continues to prattle menacingly, “Come serve me. You can rule this place as princes once we have made it more hospitable.” He gestures and all of the dead pirates stand up and turn into undead phantoms. Their heads loll menacingly to the side as their dead smiles reveal sharp teeth.

Hatshepsut tries to distract the demon while Wogan makes his way closer.

“Back to shadowy demon hell with you,” Wogan yells. He throws a flask of saltwater on the demon and bullseyes it right on its horned head.. Unfortunately the demon, unlike the tentacle-dogs, is not susceptible to saltwater. It is merely wet and irritated.

### **The Day After Tomorrow**

The demon reaches its claws into the water’s edge and the sea begins to freeze in an expanding circle from the demon. This allows the tentacle-dogs to run over to attack. Akron and Tommy nimbly pull themselves up onto the ice as it approaches them; Wogan swims frantically away so as to not be trapped like an unlucky ice-skating child. Two of the dogs lose control on the ice though and go crashing into the saltwater, which kills and dissolves them in short order. Three other dogs manage to bite at Akron, Wogan, and Tommy. The phantoms stalk towards us across the ice.

The shadow demon says, “Perhaps the others will be more willing,” and disappears in a puff of smoke. Wogan casts *call lightning* and brings down mighty blasts of nature’s fury upon the phantoms, but they keep coming.

Samaritha levitates up onto the near half of the broken bridge. Serpent swims over and leaps up onto the ice. He hits a phantom with his staff but the staff goes through the insubstantial creature without hurting it. The others try to beat back the phantoms but all our weapons pass through them with nearly no effect.

Akron Erix decides that the doggies need to go in the drink so he begins hitting the ice with his great hammer, splitting a large section off from the shore. He ends up knocking the three tentacle-dogs in the water and dissolving them, but Akron and Serpent

fall back in as well as the ice floe tumbles underneath them. Tommy frantically clambers across the ice to stay above water.

### **The Witchblade**

Hatshepsut has been making her way across the cavern and up onto the high pirate platform above. Her glyph-mark (from when we thwarted the opening of the Cyphergate) is humming, and she finds a stack of the odd orichalcum metal plaques with glyph symbols on them. She can sense one humming at the same frequency as her glyph and picks up the plaque with her own symbol on it. As she touches it, the metal flows up her arm like melting wax and forms into a pair of serpent-fang gauntlets. She yells to the rest of the characters but their grasp on Aklo is poor. “What is she saying about snake teeth?”

Serpent manages to get up out of the water onto the ice, where he is surrounded by phantoms and tentacle-dogs. They begin chewing him up rather quickly. One of the phantoms attacks Samaritha and she screams as strange visions assail her mind. She leaps backward off the broken edge of the bridge she's on and levitates backward to the main platform.

The other characters make a fighting retreat back to the raised platform built around the support pillars in the middle of the cave. Serpent manages to break out of the crowd surrounding him and slides over to the main platform and climbs up. More tentacle-dogs keep appearing out of the mist every second.

Akron Erix guards Wogan's back as he climbs and manages to clobber a couple of the dogs with his hammer. He then shatters the ice below him again and dumps the dogs into the deadly saltwater; he lashes out a beefy arm and grabs the scaffolding supporting the platform before he falls in with them, and begins to climb. Hatshepsut moves to confront the approaching phantoms and tentacle-dogs and her orichalcum gauntlets tear through them with great efficacy. She spares an moment to slash the ropes holding Sindawe bound to the column, who slumps into her arms.

Wogan throws a couple of healing bursts on the group as the characters head for the plaque pile and start getting weapons of their own. Tommy gets his plaque first and it becomes an orichalcum demon-tooth dagger. Samaritha's plaque turns into an orichalcum wand and Serpent's becomes a staff. The healing burst wakes Sindawe as well.

Tommy stabs one of the phantoms with his new weapon through the railing as it clambers up to the platform. It dissipates as his blow passes right through its skull.

Sindawe grabs his plaque and it becomes spiked gauntlets. Wogan grabs a plaque and it turns into a metal booze jug. He is inordinately pleased at this turn of events. Each weapon is marked with the Cyphergate glyph corresponding to our bodies' rune marking.

With the orichalcum weapons, we begin beating the tentacle-dogs and phantoms. Finally we have weapons that can actually hurt them. Two of the zombies get past the front line and attack Samaritha. She *magic missiles* one and Serpent finishes it off with a staff strike.

### **Big Bada Boom?**

In the meantime, Wogan is trying to figure out how we can get out of this cavern. The only tunnel out leads directly to the gateway to demonland, and the sea entrance has been frozen over by the demon's ice. Wogan finds that the pirates have left behind plenty of gunpowder with their supplies, and he rigs up some explosives around the big columns in the cavern, planning to bring down the roof.

"This place is rigged to explode!" Wogan calls, "Everybody head to the exit!"

"Which exit?" calls Sindawe, "the hellmouth or the frozen entrance?"

"I don't know, pick one!"

Akron Erix asks, "How will we get through the ice?"

Wogan says, "Take this grenade!" and he produces a big spherical cast iron black powder bomb from the pirates' supply stash. Sindawe grabs it and heads out over the ice to the sea entrance.

Although we are now taking out the tentacle-dogs in great numbers, more keep appearing one after another. There are now more than 20 tentacle-dogs in the cavern.

Wogan screams, "Get away from the bomb!" and calls in a lightning strike on the bomb that Sindawe has just placed. A large hole gets blown in the ice and we all start heading for the icehole. Serpent leaps down, and Samaritha levitates down gracefully. Wogan leaps off ungracefully and lightly sprains his ankle, falling prone on the ice. A phantom follows him down and scratches at him.

Hatshepsut and Tommy are trapped up on the platform, surrounded by a dozen phantoms and tentacle dogs. She leaps up and slams down onto the wooden planks with a double-heeled kick, shattering the wood and dumping her and Tommy down to the ice and relative safety. Serpent uses his snake totem transformation to lengthen his body and allow him to swim snakily through the water. Sindawe dives into the hole first, and Samaritha, Saluthra, and Serpent dive in after.

Wogan is the only one left in the cavern, and a wave of foes is skittering across the ice towards him. He desperately penguin-slides across the ice on his belly and slips down into the water to get away.

We swim along under the water out of the sea cave. All the characters turn out to be pretty strong swimmers. Tommy gets his head beaten against the rocks midway through, and Samaritha needs some help from Serpent and Saluthra. Wogan grabs Tommy and hauls him out of the water as he starts to drown.

Just after we get out of the cave opening, we hear a massive explosion and a cave-in as the sea cave collapses. A water jet forces us 100 feet out into the surf, and we spend the next 30 minutes hauling ourselves and our equipment to the beach.

There is a gray false dawn in the sky as we lie on the beach listening to Tommy vomit up seawater. The familiarity of the sound is oddly comforting.

### *They're Bugging Out, Man*

Sindawe shimmies up the cliff with a knotted rope so we can all climb up. At the top he sees a group of tentacle-dogs heading his way so he leaps back down to the water. We quickly finish off the patrol of dogs and then go up to the path. We take a short rest to avoid fatigue and then head down the road.

We spot a small figure stumbling down the path and we run up. We find Eli, the young Cypher mage boy. "Oh, thank goodness," he says, after he gets over his initial alarm at meeting someone on the road, "Everyone else was asleep or on watch, Zincher was in his tent. Then this big shadowy demon thing appeared and started talking to Zincher, telling him to join it."

Serpent nods, "And he said yes, of course."

“No! He said that he wasn't interested in ‘being some demon's butt boy,’ but then the demon went into him, and he must have been taken over. He came out and started yelling for everybody to break camp, they were leaving. Fustinius tried to argue against it, and said we needed to wait for the rest of you to get back, but they killed him and fed him to the axebeaks. So I got out of there.” Samaritha takes the news of the death of the next to last surviving Cyphermage from her expedition poorly.

We take Eli with us and start heading toward the docks. We spot Zincher's ship, the *Dark Pearl*, and walk straight toward it. An odd twilight hangs over the dock area even though the sun has risen in the east. A bunch of thugs are loading gear on board.

### **Prepare To Be boarded!**

When we get closer, Zincher calls out from the side of the ship, “You're even better than expected. Together we will rule this world!” His eyes are oddly colorless. He swigs down a potion and yells to his men, “Kill 'em!”

Zincher's men and his axebeaks swarm towards us. Sindawe, Akron, and Hatshepsut run forward to engage them. Samaritha throws a *ray of enfeeblement* spell at Zincher but it is not very effective. The ship fires a cannon at us and Serpent takes a fair amount of damage from wooden shivers thrown up from the dock.

Akron, Sindawe, and Hatshepsut take out several thugs while Serpent casts *shillelagh* on his staff. Then Serpent and Saluthra join the fray and take out another thug.

Both of Zincher's axebeaks get killed quickly; Sindawe and Hatshepsut gang up on one and Akron Erix hammers the other down. Zincher is so upset over the death of his beloved axebeaks that he convulses and manages to shake off the demon's control and the demon is expelled from his body.

The demon forms in the air above the dock and screams, “No, it's impossible!”

The thugs are so distracted by the emergence of a demon from their boss that they stop attacking and mill around in confusion. Tommy takes advantage of the lull in the battle to sneak attack one of the thugs. “Gleeargh!”

While the characters get ready to fight the demon, the thugs mill around and get in the way. Wogan manages to hurt it with a burst of positive energy.

The demon hisses something about ripping the flesh from our bodies and summons a sleet storm to cover the whole deck, blinding everyone and making the pier slick with ice. Zincher turns and strikes the shadow demon with his pickaxe, and the demon seems to be severely hurt. Tommy notices that Zincher's pickaxe seems to be made of orichalcum as well.

Tommy runs through the crowd of discombobulated thugs, jumps up nimbly, and cuts the shadow demon with his orichalcum demon fang. Sindawe also runs up and smacks the demon.

Chmetugo the demon flies high in the air to get out of our reach and rains down an ice storm on us, but Zincher manages to lunge up and hit it with his pickaxe again. Sindawe and Hatshepsut leap high into the air with their monk powers and flank the demon, raining orichalcum strikes down upon it.

Serpent moves forward, spots the demon in the snow, jumps up, and strikes it with his staff. Samaritha realizes the sleet storm is a fake shadow conjuration and that she can see the demon; uses her serpentfolk *suggestion* ability to suggest that he stop using spells and come in to fight us in hand-to-hand. Unfortunately the demon proves perfectly capable of striking us with flyby attacks so that we can't strike it back.

“Get to the ship!” yells Zincher. We all make for the ship and get on board. Some of his goons stumble off the pier in the sleet and flounder in the water. We are unsympathetic to their plight.

The demon rises above the sleet cloud and yells, “You will join me yet but I see you need more convincing!” Then it vanishes.

*Avast!*

As we try to get the ship underway, and Eli and straggling Zincher henchmen come on board, Tommy calls out “Ship ahoy!” We see another ship entering the bay, the *Teeth of Araska*. It boldly flies a Shackes pirate flag. We have met its captain, Captain Treeg, who stood with the Calistrian priestess Shorafa Pamodae at the fateful Riddleport crime lord meeting that ended up with us being marked for death. We are sure this is good news.