

Reavers on the Seas of Fate - Session Summary 06/27/2010

The heroes are deep in a ruined castle called Viperwall, searching for the body of a lost idol. 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)
- Samaritha, the book-readin' half-elf Cypher mage who's sweet on Serpent (NPC)

Last session, we made a deal with a shadowy undead serpent man priest to find the artifacts he needs to break the curse on Viperwall and allow all the priests' shades to pass on to the afterlife. He needs an amulet (already found), the Scales of the Serpent (already found), the Fangs of the Serpent, and the Venom of the Serpent. Supposedly a serpent man named Sseth hid the Venom, and the Fangs are in the mouth of the avatar of Ydersius on the lowest level.

Fifth Level

We go down the ramp to the next level of the lower temple, and are now five levels below the not-inconsiderable upper temple. This floor has a wide open space with several smaller rooms around it. In the large open space, *Wogan* examines a 15-foot-tall statue of a snake with an altar in front of it. The altar holds two empty jars, used for offerings to the snake god.

We enter one of the small rooms. The walls are lined with tiny square niches for containing scrolls. *Samaritha* uses her magic sight and finds a scroll of *water breathing*. She hands it to *Wogan*, as it's priestly in nature.

Arguing Brothers

Next we investigate a circular chamber. The furniture has been moved to either side of the room, and a line has been scratched down the center. Two shadow serpent men are in the room, hissing up a storm at each other.

Serpent is wearing the Amulet of the Serpent that lets him speak their language. He asks the serpent men, "What's going on here? Why are you so angry?"

One immediately bursts out with, "Excellent, if you slay him I'll show you the hidden treasure!"

"Why do you want to kill each other?" *Serpent* asks.

"He's evil!"

"No, he is. He'll drink the marrow from your bones."

"I know the secrets, he's just an acolyte."

"That's a lie! We're the same rank."

"But I'm smarter."

Serpent asks, "What are your names?"

"Arness," hisses one.

"Hearst," says the other.

"Hearst the eggsucker!" the first says.

The exchanges continue in this vein for some time. *Serpent* shrugs, "Well, I don't think I'm qualified to judge this dispute. I'll just leave."

We Go To Lunch

We enter the largest of the rooms on this level. Three dark serpent men sit at a table eating, although there is no food on their plates.

Serpent interrupts their dinner by speaking to them. For a moment, they freeze and their featureless, shadowy faces regard the characters. There is a clatter of pots, then a serpent man emerges from the kitchen area and says, "Tasssty morselss, let's kill them and cook them into a feassst." The serpent men at the table seem to agree, and they attack.

Samaritha is the first to react. She *magic missiles* the cook. *Tommy* also moves to attack the cook, sneak attacking it. The cook hisses “Feisty lunch!” and touches Tommy, draining his strength.

The three diners rush at Serpent, Saluthra, and Sindawe, weakening each of them. *Sindawe* smashes at the nearest serpent man, hitting it twice for amazing damage and dispersing it. Saluthra the snake retreats from battle; the people have face paint allowing them to contact the shadows but she doesn’t. Serpent flanks one with *Sindawe* and hits it once. Tommy gets drained again, but Serpent and *Sindawe* dodge. Wogan energy bursts the creatures twice. *Sindawe* punches again, and Serpent follows with a staff blow, sending the next shadow screaming into oblivion. Tommy takes out the cook. The one remaining shadow flees from Serpent, taking a blow as it goes, and tries to get Saluthra, but the snake recoils out of the way. Wogan shoots with his pistol *Penelope*, winging the shadow. *Sindawe* goes after the shadow, pounding it once, then Serpent bashes it to death before it can suck his snake any more. (Ha!)

Serpent uses both his *lesser restoration* spells to restore strength to himself and Tommy. Wogan takes the time to re-pray for spells and gets a couple of *lesser restorations* and uses them on himself and *Sindawe*.

Sindawe searches the room and tries to assemble a full serpent man dinner set. He is impressed by the serpent man mouse-cups, complete with toothpick murder hole.

Sseth's Room

We explore around and find another couple of doors. One door has been wedged shut by three iron spikes. A small peephole door is in the big door. *Sindawe* tries to open the peephole but it is locked. Tommy picks the lock and then *Sindawe* opens the peephole. Beyond he sees a pitch black room. Wogan casts light on a random pottery shard and *Sindawe* throws it into the room. The room is completely bare except for crazy scrawled writing covering every surface. A voice calls out. “Enter fools, help you I must, you may be the ones.”

Serpent calls out in the serpent man language, “What is your name?”

“To me you must come, young ones, I will help you.”

“What is your name?”

“My name was *Sseth*.”

Wogan tries to read the walls but doesn't know Aklo. Samaritha peers in and reads some of the writing. She says it is a nine out of ten on the crazy-ometer.

The serpent man talks to itself, arguing about whether to let us in.

Serpent continues to try to talk to it. “Where is the Venom of the Serpent? We need it. Tell us where it is and we will help you.”

Seth seems conflicted; “I have it! No, I dont.”

Serpent convinces Samaritha to talk to Seth and try to convince it to give us the Venom. Samaritha convinces Seth to give us the venom if we can answer a riddle.

Before the serpent speaks its riddle, Wogan guesses, “It's an egg!”

The riddle is: “I create life and also contain it, I am first although some say I came last.”

The serpent man is confused. “Yes, it's an egg. How did you know?”

Wogan shrugs, “These riddles are all the same.”

Seth concealed the vial of the Venom of the Serpent in the tail of the snake statue. We go back to the 15-foot statue and Tommy examines the tail of the snake carefully. He opens the tail and takes out a small glass vial filled with yellowish liquid. Unfortunately the vial has leaked and Tommy gets a bit of the poison on him. He is worried but seems fine. Serpent examines Tommy. He seems to have gotten lucky with the poison but the area needs to be washed.

High Priest's Bedroom

The next door opens revealing a room with a faded rug on the ground. A rectangular glass case has a rotting log in it. In the corner sits a decaying mattress with a chest next to it. A large desk and a weird looking chair, the desk has a book open on it. We examine the room with magic sight and nothing appears magical.

Sindawe grabs the edge of the rug and looks under it but it appears to be stone. Tommy moves in, along the fringe of the room, checking for traps. Samaritha checks out the journal on the desk.

Tommy opens the chest and a shadowy snake strikes at him from it but misses. Serpent jumps into motion and smacks the shadow snake twice. Sindawe also jumps forward and stomps it. Tommy finishes it with his halfling-sized sword.

Inside the chest is gold and 4 potions. The potions include 2 *moderate healing* potions and 2 *lesser restoration* potions. The gold is about 500 pieces of antique gold. Wogan looks at the glass case and log and determines it is a snake aquarium (a terrarium?).

Samaritha says the book is the journal of the high priest. She studies it but doesn't get immediately useful information.

Sixth Level

We go down to yet another level. Here, there is a big statue of a snake, and light shines from its eyes onto a big set of snake-carved double doors. We scout around the room, avoiding the light from the eyes. Wogan looks toward the eyes of the statue and hears something whispering in his brain, "Monkey pudding!" He shudders, remembering the lit snake-eyes back up a level that forced him to attack the rest of the party. Tommy clambers up and drops his cloak over the snake's eyes, but the light shines right through the cloak with no interruption. We find three other doors around the large room.

Hatchery

A wave of hot air washes out of the room as we open one of the doors. The ancient remains of dozens of smashed eggs lie around the room. Some of the smashed shells still contain ancient snake skeletons. Wogan finds one ostrich-sized ancient egg. The walls have sconces containing continually warm rocks. Sindawe takes one of the rocks, then passes the rest around to the party. Samaritha claims the ancient egg; she thinks it may still even be able to hatch.

Samaritha thinks Sseth smashed the eggs, based on what his crazed scrawlings said and the state of the hatchery.

Jade Statue

Behind the second door is a large room with rotting furniture and faded tapestries. On a pedestal is a jade serpent statue, which looks like the one they're here for but this one is intact – they are expecting an idol with its head broken off. Tommy examines the statue and finds no traps. Sindawe takes it.

Zombie Room

The next room contains a huge amount of halfling-sized zombies. The zombies rush toward us. Tommy tries to pull the door closed, and Sindawe helps him. They slam the door on the zombies, but the zombies slam against it and begin to push it open and come out around the door. Wogan blasts them with his divine power. Serpent moves in to help and slams a zombie with his staff, hurting but not downing it. Samaritha screams “Get that door closed!” and enlarges Sindawe. Sindawe tries to hold the door, but a few zombies get out and claw at Serpent and Wogan, delivering a slash to Wogan and another to Serpent. Wogan channels more divine energies at the zombies, hurting them, but one of the zombies viciously sinks its decayed teeth into his shoulder, opening a massive wound. The channeled energy destroys the zombies outside the door, and Serpent helps hold the door closed. The zombies seem contained for now, and Tommy throws the latch.

Wogan thinks the undead might have been made from prehistoric halfling ancestors. Tommy finds this disturbing. “Hey, think of it this way, you’ve made your way up from food race to slave race!” notes Sindawe encouragingly.

Opening the Big Door

The only door left is the big doors with the creepy deadlights from the snake eyes. Tommy steps into the deadlights but doesn't feel any negative effects, so he goes to inspect the doors. Tommy sees no locks, but the doors will not open. Serpent tries to open it with his strength, but makes no headway.

Tommy comes up with a crazy plan to shine the soul-trapping mirror into the light from the snake eyes. It reflects the light back into the snake eyes and the statue's eyes close. A human-sized form comes spitting out of the mirror and lands in a collapsed heap

in front of us. It appears to be a bald dark-skinned woman with green eyes. She is wearing a tight but elaborate costume.

The doors swing open.

Hatshepsut

The woman looks at us. We stare at her. In the serpent man language, she says, “Who are you people, what happened?”

Serpent answers her, “You've been trapped inside a mirror for a long time. Probably so long that whatever nation you think rules this land is long gone.”

She is getting up and getting her bearings, says, “That's nonsense.”

Seeing the opening doors, she says, “Oh, the great god!”

Serpent turns to look and the other characters follow suit. We don't see anything immediately coming out from the doors. It looks like there is a huge room like a sunken amphitheater behind the doors.

Samaritha tells the woman that evil has overcome the temple. She says “Heretical nonsense, I don't believe it.”

Serpent tells her, “The high priest has asked us to recover the fangs of the serpent.”

“If the high priest wanted them he would come get them himself.”

“He can't, he is trapped.”

She strides toward the amphitheater. In Common, Serpent says “We may need to restrain her. She is being intractable.”

There are 5 tiers of steps leading down to a 40-foot diameter pit with a gigantic snake; its skin is yellow with decay. It looks in bad health. The woman looks taken aback by the snake's appearance.

She demands Sindawe tell her what's going on. Serpent tells her that Sindawe doesn't speak her language.

“You're not priests!”

“I told you, the high priest sent us to get the fangs of the serpent in order to remove the curse from the temple.”

Tommy slips on his bronze jackal mask, a relic of the long gone human priests of the temple above, but she doesn't seem impressed.

She utters a word of power. Wogan and Serpent recognize that it is a very high level spell, *dictum*. She seems surprised that we are not on the ground writhing in holy pain. Serpent is fed up and commands Saluthra to grab her. Saluthra wraps around her.

Serpent tells her, "Don't try to cast your magics on us again. We're here at the request of your high priest."

The woman commands, "Release me!" and Saluthra releases the woman. She seems to have a strange power over snakes.

She says, "Your garb is strange. Who are you?"

"I told you, we were sent by the high priest. Who are you?"

She tells us she is *Hapshetsut*, the high priestess of the temple above. Serpent offers to take her to talk to the high priest of the temple below. They march up to the chamber above. As we go, she looks in dismay at the crumbled ruins of the temple. She asks why we are here and Serpent explains about the head and body of the idol. She decides that we are tomb-robbers and tries to kick Serpent.

Fighting Hatshepsut

Sindawe may not be able to understand the language of serpent men but he understands the language of violence. He runs past Hatshepsut and punches her once. Samaritha tries to convince Hatshepsut that we mean her no harm as Sindawe beats her.

Hatshepsut gestures at Serpent, and Serpent is held in place by her divine magic for a moment, until he manages to shake it off. Tommy and Wogan try to hurt her, but she is too dodgy for them. Sindawe punches her again, and Samaritha tries to *enfeeble* her but misses. Hatshepsut tells Saluthra to restrain Serpent, and Saluthra grabs Serpent in her coils. Hatshepsut uses weird ancient martial arts to attack Sindawe and causes him to start bleeding.

Serpent directs Saluthra to let him go, and luckily she listens. Serpent quickdraws his silver scimitar and attacks Hatshepsut, but misses. Sindawe calls out, "Volcano of Blood!" and hits her again, cracking her ribs. She cries out and spits out some blood.

Hatshepsut casts a spell on herself and bolts up the steps. Tommy pings her with a rock as she runs, and Wogan catches her with a magical storm burst attack. Sindawe goes after her and hits her in the back, taking her down.

Sindawe hauls her unconscious body back down to the rest of the party. Wogan heals him and gets rid of his bleeding wounds. We bind her and stash her in a room.

We find magic items on her - a *ring of protection*, an *amulet of mighty fists*, and *bracers of armor*. Sindawe claims the amulet and bracers. Tommy, Wogan, and Samaritha dice off for the ring and Wogan wins it.

Dealing With the Giant Snake

We go down to the snake room. Serpent meditates to gain the ability to talk to animals and speaks to the snake. The only answers it gives to questions are “food?” and Serpent decides its only function is to eat offerings to its god. The group makes an assault plan and spreads out along the rim of the amphitheater to attack.

Samaritha casts a daze monster spell at the giant snake, whispering “Forgive us...”

The snake rushes Sindawe and sinks its giant fangs into him, dealing a terrible wound.

Tommy jumps down into the arena and rushes the snake, stabbing it in the vitals. Sindawe strikes at the snake and hits it twice. Serpent moves in and smacks it with his shillelagh. Samaritha shoots a *scorching ray* at the snake, burning it. Wogan moves to heal some of Sindawe's wounds.

The snake strikes at Sindawe again, but Sindawe dodges out of the way.

Tommy sneak attacks the snake again. Sindawe punches it twice, and Serpent hits it again with his shillelagh. Wogan shoots at the snake but misses.

The snake grabs Serpent and crushes him, throwing him aside like a limp rag doll.

Tommy and Sindawe hit it again. Serpent is barely conscious and hits himself with a wand of *cure light wounds*. Wogan heals Sindawe again.

The snake grabs Sindawe and we can hear the sounds of bones snapping and organs being crushed. Faintly, Sindawe calls out, “I'm all right!”

Tommy leaps up onto the snake's back and stabs the snake through the eye. Its death throes fling Tommy 20 feet through the air.

Wogan checks out the snake's fangs – odd equipment for a constrictor. The Fangs of the Serpent have been implanted in its maw, and they can be filled with venom. It seems that the snake does not actually have poison, which is a good thing. We heal ourselves before moving on.

The High Priest

Having procured all the items, we go back to the room where the serpent man high priest was. He appears before us, and gestures to a large jade bowl. We drop each of the items into the bowl.

The priest hisses at us. Samaritha says that he needs blood to power the ritual. Samaritha volunteers to give blood for this purpose and Wogan bleeds her. The shadow serpent priest proclaims... something. And the building begins to shake. The curse lifts from the temple and he briefly turns back into flesh and blood. From the center of the altar rises a serpent idol missing its head. The priest hands the white jade idol to us and then he waves at us and his form disperses. The building starts its rumbling collapse. A room full of water comes washing down on us from above. We go running the hell out. Sindawe grabs the jade bowl on the way.

Once we get out of the lower temple, it seems the upper temple is safe from the collapse. We decide to spend the night in the upper temple so that we can regain our strength and spells. Samaritha chats with Hatshepsut in Aklo and she wants to come with us.

The next day, we exit Viperwall and walk out of the mist. A thrush lands on Wogan's head. Wogan tries to shoo it off but it pecks him. Tommy notices a message tied to the bird's leg. Wogan gets the message off the bird and reads it. It's from their gnomish swamp guide Nilbog, and says "badman come ur way – nilbog." We assume this means Glapion the voodoo man is on our trail.