

REAVERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE SESSION SUMMARY 10/17/2009

ATTENDANCE

Amber prowls her way into the kitchen, announcing her presence by crying out over and over, “Mrow! Mrow!”

Ernest answers her calls, “Mrow! Mrow!”

Bruce (Ox) joins in, “Mrow! Mrow!”

Amber answers, “Mrow! Mrow!”

Chris (Sindawe) tells them, “I hope you both go blind” as he contemplates spending the rest of his day with an extremely voluble cat.

Amber agrees, “Mrow! Mrow! Mrrrrrow!”

Paul (Serpent) wonders why exactly people are so enraptured with using uncommon words like ‘voluble’. Then he starts to become agitated because someone is copy-editing his thoughts in exactly the same manner.

Chris interrupts Paul’s reverie by pointing out how useless the so-called “instructional” videos on the REI website are. He offers specific critique upon a video associated with a bivouac in which the company’s PR flacks babble on about how their company manufactures products with low environmental impact. He tells the others, “After all, I’m already at REI. I just assume that every product they sell has no environmental impact, and if I were to feed it to dolphins they’d just swim away fat and happy.”

As usual, *Patrick (Wogan)* eventually migrates in with his lunch. Ernest looks at him closely, “Did you bring enough for everybody?”

Patrick responds, “If you’d brought your lunch, would you have brought food for everyone? Huh? Huh? Touche!”

Ernest grumbles something about needing to write down some NPC stats. Patrick settles back and eats his lunch, smug in his victory. Nobody else notices.

<i>Player</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Class / Level</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Bruce	Melako "Ox" Chaalu	Barbarian 1	Enslaved ship crew from Rahadoum
Kevin	Tommy "Blacktoes" Burrowbank	Rogue 1	Riddleport halfling
Paul	"Serpent" Ref Jorenson	Druid 1	Northerner human with a southerner snake pet
Chris	Sindawe H'Kilata Narr	Monk 1	Mwangi-Bonuwat (human) monk
Patrick	Wogan	Cleric 1	Human priest of Gozreh

DO YOU THINK THERE WILL BE MORE GOBLINS?

The characters spend the rest of the night on the *Albers* at a high level of alertness, wary of the possibility of additional goblin bands showing up to cause trouble. The ship is currently anchored in a cove in an island off what is hopefully one of the islands on the edge of the Varisian Gulf.

Wogan and *Serpent* indicate that they're both capable of producing fresh water with magic. The characters assign *Wendt* to inventory the remaining food stocks as they examine the contents of the hold. He concludes that if nothing remarkable happens between here and Riddleport they should have sufficient rations. The *Albers'* cargo turns out to include furniture, olive oil, and finished metal goods.

The characters decide to mount an expedition to the island to look for foodstuffs. Both *Ox* and *Serpent* have survival skills and can lead a foraging team. *Blacktoes* (conveniently under automatic pilot for the occasion) agrees to stay behind to watch the other folk on the ship.

Looting the Cabins of the Dead

Before heading off to the island the characters loot the cabins once belonging to *Captain Finn* and *First Mate Huxley*. They come up with:

- A fine gold-plated hourglass from the Captain's cabin;
- A purse with 30 pieces of silver in Huxley's cabin;

- A strongbox built into the wall of the Captain's cabin containing the payroll, the Captain's log, and some other documents;
- A latched box under the Captain's bed containing a fine cutlass;

The characters give the cutlass to *Thalios Dondrel, son of Mordekai*, as he is currently without weapons. The characters decide that they're going to continue holding the payroll and will pay everyone upon arrival in Riddleport.

WE MUST EXAMINE THE FRIENDLY ISLAND! IN SMALL, SEPARATE GROUPS!

Serpent, Ox, Wogan and Sindawe board one of the ship's boats and row to the island. Ox claims to be skilled at finding food in the wilderness, so he leads the way. The island turns out to be fairly rich in edible plants: wild onions, a couple of types of fruit, and some running water to drink. Sindawe manages to spot and kill a wild turkey as well.

As Serpent and Sindawe are retrieving the turkey carcass, Serpent hears something approaching. Suddenly Wogan sees something and casts *Obscuring Mist*. He whispers, "There are seven guys out there!"

Sindawe leaps to the attack with Ox right behind him. They find themselves faced by three humans wearing leather harnesses and carrying poor weapons. Ox attempts to intimidate them to no useful effect. The strange humans order the characters to drop their weapons, also to no effect.

With more chance to examine the strangers, Ox notices that they're all wearing slave harnesses. The two groups exchange touchy introductions: the escaped slaves are led by *Bel*, a man with a fine physique and the high-pitched voice of a eunuch. He and his group were household servants for a cruel Chelaxian master. Their master decided to take a cruise on his luxurious pleasure barge, and they were brought along as part of his retinue. Contrary to their master's intentions, they took the trip as an opportunity to escape: when he ventured onto a particularly pretty-looking bit of island, they overpowered the loyal crew and took the barge north, eventually wrecking it upon the shore of this island. Their number includes:

- *Bel* the Eunuch;
- *Pirro* the Porter;
- *Ori* the Cook;
- *Darthos* the Entertainer;

- *Olbas* the Household Slave;
- *Trendas* the Craftsman;
- *Sevgi* the Harem Slave;
- *Kabina* the Household Slave;
- *Kusuma* the Sage;
- *Karomander* the Fine Craftsman;
- *Leorab* the Household Slave and Mom; and
- *Nitzab* the Six-Year Old Girl

Bel tells the characters that the group of slaves has been on the island for about a month. They have plenty of food, but it is getting colder and they know that their old master will not rest until they are brought back to face “justice” in the Chelaxian style.

Though they have been able to peacefully live on the island for a month or so, recently another ship arrived, a threatening vessel painted all in black. The characters quickly determine that the ship is not the *Albers*. It is anchored in a hidden cove off the eastern part of the island.

Bel, Pirro and Sevgi take the characters to spy on the ship. The ship looks like it was once a large fishing vessel that has been heavily modified. It has a fighting castle on the stern and an armored crow’s nest. Sindawe looks for crew and sees something green-skinned and long-eared, something that looks like a goblin. He assumes that he is seeing things because the idea that goblins might be able to navigate and crew a significant vessel is completely inconceivable.

As the characters watch, another escaped slave bursts out of the underbrush. He reports that a second ship has arrived. The new ship is a big Chelaxian frigate called the *Raptor*, probably loaded down with marines and devils and inhuman monsters of all description. Sindawe reassures the fellow, “Don’t worry, it’s probably just full of Chelaxians.” This doesn’t seem to settle the ex-slave’s nerve much. It is swiftly approaching the *Albers*.

WE NEED A PLAN!

The characters swiftly create a plan. They will return to the *Albers* and claim (plausibly) to be Chelaxian ship crew whose ship was damaged in the recent storms. They will describe the goblin attack and indicate that a bunch of escaped slaves were on the island, but have now been dragged off by goblin raiders and are held in the holds of the pirate vessel. The goal is to get the Chelish to fight the goblins, then betray the winners and dispatch them.

The characters arrive on the *Albers* to find *Selene* and *Tommy Blacktoes* talking to the leaders of the Chelaxians: *Captain Vix Charlo* (a half-elf) and *Martino Marcellano* (a human fop). Tommy tells Sindawe that the Chelish are looking for some escaped slaves. It doesn't take the characters long to understand that Marcellano is the cruel master that Bel and his people escaped from. The characters make an informal count and guess that there might be over a dozen marines on the Chelaxian vessel.

Captain Charlo and Marcellano listen to Sindawe's story with interest. Captain Charlo claims that he actually knows the goblin raider: the *Sable Drake*. He claims that the *Drake's* captain is some kind of demon. Captain Charlo adds that the *Sable Drake* has managed to take at least two prizes, and only attacks at night. Marcellano actually seems rather joyful at the prospect that his escaped slaves might be tortured by goblins for their disobedience.

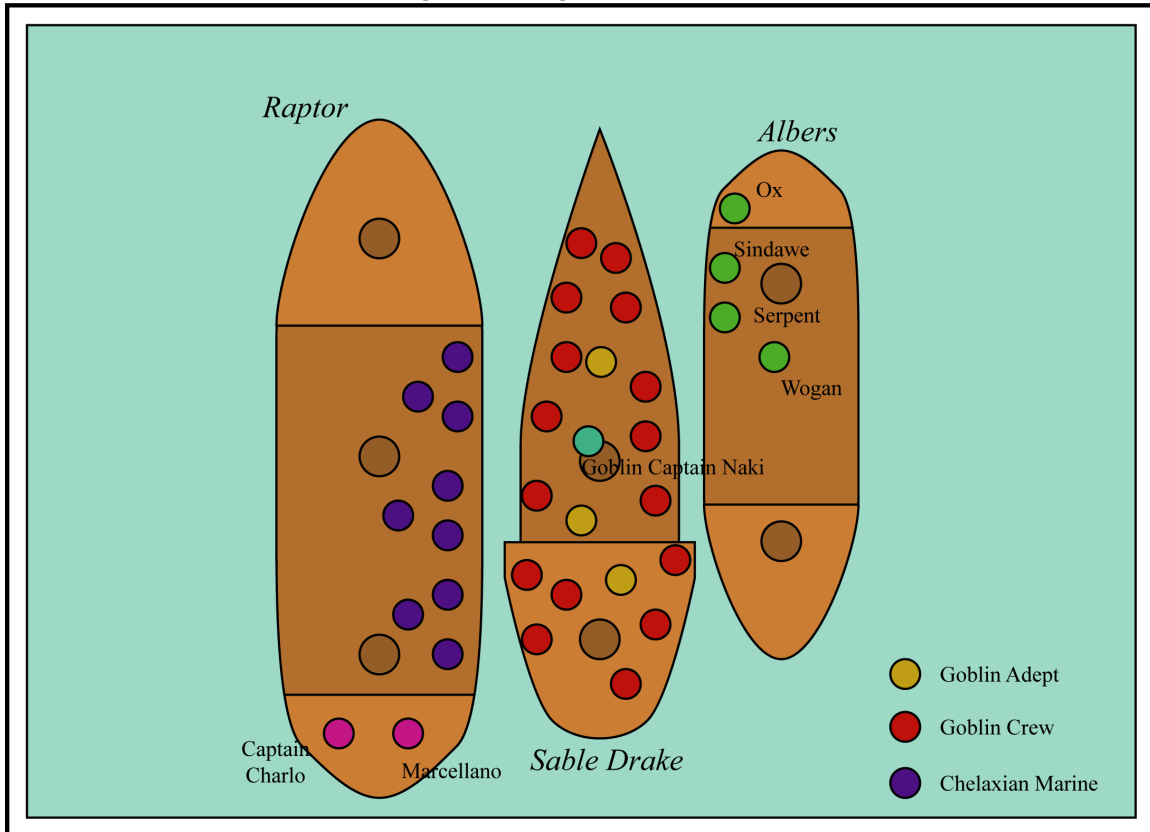
Sindawe and Captain Charlo work out a plan involving using the *Albers* to pin the *Sable Drake* so the Chelaxian vessel can destroy it. But before the plan can commence, Captain Charlo demands to see the ship's logs. Sindawe turns them over, glad that neither Selene nor Blacktoes has said anything that conflicts too much with either the truth or Captain Finn's logs. Captain Charlo is fairly thorough in his review, questioning Selene in particular. She expresses great sadness at Captain Finn's passing but assures Captain Charlo that everything is (nominally) well in hand. Showing great foresight, Blacktoes and Selene have arranged two bits of sleight of hand: pretending that Vincenz is still a prisoner, and pretending that Bull is actually still alive (Thalios Dondrel is playing his role).

Through the whole conversation, Ox is doing his best to conceal the fact that Marcellano is the younger son of his actual owner. He is absolutely thinking about stabbing the man with his pike, but he stays quiet because Sindawe seems to be touchy about his mentioning weapons, murdering friends or blood.

THE APPROACH AGAINST THE SABLE DRAKE

The *Albers* makes the initial approach against the *Sable Drake*. As soon as the characters' ship comes into view around the island the goblin ship becomes a mass of activity. Goblin crewmembers raise the sails, pull the anchor and set their ship in motion. They make surprisingly good time. They also demonstrate that they have a bow-mounted ballista, which they fire at the *Albers*.

Boarding Action Against the Sable Drake



Ox confidently offers, “There’s very little chance that ballista will...” Sindawe shuts the big man up before he can say anything too foolish. The ballista bolt rips through the mainsail and tears away some of the characters’ hard-won rigging. Captain Sindawe decides to bear down upon the goblin ship directly.

The *Raptor* sails into range and opens fire upon the *Sable Drake* with their cannon. Their shot hits the deck, spraying screaming goblins with wood splinters. Chelaxian musketeers follow with a volley. Goblin topmen fall from the rigging to lie broken upon the decks. Strangely, it appears that goblin morale has never been better.

Sindawe observes that the goblins are having a poor time at killing Chelaxian marines. He pulls the wheel about and brings the *Albers* up alongside the *Sable Drake*. The *Raptor* comes about to board from the other side.

The goblin crew of the *Sable Drake* surges like the tide as the *Albers* and the *Raptor* draw close. Magicians among the goblins start summoning dire rats onto the decks of the *Albers* and to reinforce their own troops. Goblin archers pepper the Chelaxian marines and the characters with arrows as Serpent and Ox fling grappling hooks and pull the *Albers* in to boarding range. *Wogan* casts *Bless* and *Bane* just as the goblins cast their own *Bless* spells.

The Chelaxian marines start to leap across from the *Raptor*. They discover that the rails of the goblin ship have been deliberately weakened and salted with traps made from broken glass, sharp metal bits and so on. The characters can see that this is slowing the marines' progress substantially.

Serpent leaps across to the *Sable Drake* and slashes at a female goblin adept. His blade scrapes harmlessly across an invisible shield. Sindawe clammers across and crushes a goblin in his bare hands. Ox leaps over to engage a goblin, jabbing with his boarding pike. The goblin snarls at him and dodges away. Ox snarls back.

One of the goblin adepts notices that the characters are swarming across the deck of the *Sable Drake*. He casts *Burning Hands* at Serpent and Sindawe, scorching both of them (and Serpent's snake).

An enterprising goblin flings some alchemist's fire onto the deck of the *Raptor*. Two marines leap to fight the fire, but promptly collapse. The characters suspect that the marines were not overcome by the fumes. Then they understand what is happening as another goblin adept casts *Sleep* and drops *Wogan* to the deck of the *Albers*.

Three goblins leap to the deck of the *Albers*. Two of them make it. The third is ground to a sticky red paste between the hulls of the ships.

The marines over on the *Sable Drake* are having trouble negotiating the slippery deck. As the characters watch one marine hits a weak patch in the deck and vanishes into the darkness below.

Never one to turn up a chance to inflict horrific cruelty upon living creatures, Marcellano leaps onto the deck of the *Sable Drake* and cuts down the goblin captain. The marines make steady progress against the rest of the crew.

The *Sable Drake's* armored crow's nest opens up and a bizarre rat-goblin hybrid comes into view. It waves around a scroll and squawks insistently. The characters actually think this is charming, up until a *Wall of Fire* springs up between the *Sable Drake* and the *Raptor*. The flame burns through all of the grappling lines attaching the two ships and makes those marines still on board the *Raptor* somewhat less comfortable.

Serpent's pet snake bites down upon the well-defended goblin adept it had been fighting ever since arriving on the *Sable Drake*. The goblin screeches as the snake locks its teeth into the creature and then wraps around. It screeches even louder, then pulls out a vial of alchemist's fire and smashes it over its own head, setting both itself and Serpent's pet on fire. Ox takes a bit of damage from the splash and is not amused.

Serpent is not concerned. He explains to the others, "Fortunately, snakes love fire!" His snake crushes the goblin dead, which more or less proves out his claim.

The rat-goblin drops something from the crow's nest. It quickly expands into a huge fan. The fan waves once and fills the *Sable Drake's* sails with a magical wind.

Noting that the *Albers* deck is being overrun by goblins, Sindawe and Serpent leap back to help out. Sindawe wakes Wogan as Serpent crushes another goblin. Moments later, Sindawe punches the second goblin out. Wogan finishes it off.

Back on the *Sable Drake*, Ox notices that Marcellano has gone below decks. He follows with hopes of "accidentally" stabbing the nobleman through with his pike. Unfortunately, he steps right into the gangway spring trap that sends him flying back onto the deck of the *Albers*. Chelaxian Marines, concerned by the presence of the *Wall of Fire*, start to move onto the deck of the *Albers* as well.

A particularly brave Marine clambers up into the crow's nest and chops at the rat-goblin, who turns out to be *Captain Naki*. His strike bounces harmlessly off her damage resistance. She responds by clawing him to death. His broken body falls to the deck.

Sindawe notices that there are now seven Chelaxian Marines standing on the deck of the *Albers*, along with one goblin wearing a Marine's hat. He yells at the Marines, "Get back over there and kill goblins! Like this one right here!" He points at the "disguised" goblin. The marines cut down the goblin then elect to hang back.

Two more surviving Marines and Marcellano emerge from belowdecks on the *Sable Drake*. They leap to the *Albers*, but only Marcellano and one Marine make it across safely. The characters see additional goblins pouring out of the gangways onto the deck of the *Sable Drake* as the goblin ship puts on surprising speed.

The *Raptor* comes around and fires a broadside into the *Sable Drake*, delivering shattering impacts to the goblin ship's hull. Captain Charlo yells out, "I've had it, Marcellano! I'm just going to sink her!" Marcellano appears to be upset because this isn't brutal enough. It doesn't take many more volleys to send the *Sable Drake* down beneath the waves. A few rats surface and swim away.

The Chelish Are So Efficient!

After the exchange is done, Captain Charlo brings the *Raptor* back alongside. He congratulates the characters for their service to the Chelaxian Empire and takes note of them. Marcellano is disappointed because he wasn't able to torture his escaped slaves. Captain Charlo also offers to take a day to escort the characters to Riddleport. Captain Sindawe persuades him to help them repair the *Albers* rigging instead.

Ox keeps a very low profile while the Chelaxians are around. He keeps an eye out for opportunities to murder Marcellano, but sadly none arise.

ESCAPED SLAVES? I THINK NOT!

Once the *Raptor* has dropped out of sight the characters head back to the island on a boat to assure the escaped slaves that even though the plan went terribly wrong the slaves are now considered dead so they need not fear hunters.

Bel explains that *Martino Marcellano* is old *Captain Marcellano's* youngest son. He has always felt that he has something to prove, and it has done nothing for his sense of empathy. Ox grumbles.

The characters stay with the escaped slaves for a day, enjoying the culinary skills some of them possess. The slaves comment that they should be able to retrieve some of the timbers from the shattered *Sable Drake*. They clearly intend to reside

permanently upon the island. The characters make some effort to persuade some of them to join the crew of the *Albers*, but they find that the ex-slaves have all bonded together and don't want to leave.

DIVING FOR GOBLIN LOOT

Early the next day the characters take some depth soundings where the *Sable Drake* went down. They determine that it went down in eight fathoms of water. Both Ox and Serpent are strong swimmers, so they try diving (with the aid of weights) to retrieve any obvious valuables. Wogan and Sindawe are not strong swimmers, but they decide to give it a try anyway.

In the first hour, Serpent comes up with a magical wand and Sindawe retrieves a light crossbow (normal size).

In the second hour Sindawe brings up a silver dagger, Ox finds a box full of goblin crap, and Wogan finds a flask of alchemist's fire ("I drink it!"). But none of them can compete with Serpent: he finds reefclaw, an awful creature with the upper body of a lobster, the lower body of an eel and the disposition of a constipated retiree. It grapples him as Sindawe and Ox desperately try to swim to his rescue. Serpent struggles free of its grip and swims for the surface. Serpent's snake pet fights a desperate rearguard action to cover Serpent's retreat. Serpent makes it to the surface, then feels the reefclaw grab his leg and pull him back down.

Wogan realizes that he's standing right near Serpent's lifeline on the boat. He pulls on it, but the reefclaw tugs back and sends Wogan into the water. Wogan screams, "It'll take me too! Help! Help! Saaaave me!" Serpent shows distinctly little concern for Wogan's possible fate, as he is *actually* being dragged to a watery doom *right now*.

Ox stabs the reefclaw with his boarding pike. Sindawe swims in and jabs with his javelin. Together, they kill the thing. It goes into its death throes, catching Sindawe with its failing claws. He is numbed by poison as the reefclaw's body sinks to the bottom. Ox drags Sindawe and Wogan back to the boat. Serpent makes his own way back.

THE COURSE BACK TO RIDDLEPORT

Some fog burns off in the morning, but otherwise the weather is clear and cold. The *Albers* makes good time across the Varisian Gulf. Three days of sailing

brings the ship into sight of the great Cipher Gate that crossed over the entry to Riddleport's harbor

Captain Sindawe tries to settle up with the crew for their back pay. For simplicity's sake, he pays everyone out 40 gold. Nominal crew pay rate is 10 gold per week.

Vincenz is concerned about not being apprehended by the authorities in Riddleport and Thalios Dondrel wants to go his own way, so the characters let them off the ship in a boat before entering the harbor. Sindawe sees them off with a quiet comment, "Here's some gold, best of luck to you!" They paddle towards the Derelict Flats, a place with notably inferior patrols.

RIDDLEPORT: PICTURESQUE VACATION SPOT ON THE VARISIAN COAST

Riddleport is a dense mass of multi-story wooden buildings with high peaked roofs, all packed close together. Many of them are starting to sag. The air is chill as winter approaches. Main streets are cobbled, but the side streets become muddy tracks with the slightest bit of rain. The place lacks much of a sewer system and has a long history as a pirate refuge. Tommy Blacktoes explains that the frequent iron gas-flare lamps along the streets are thanks to by-products from the Ironworks, a major local industry. He also points out the Cipher Gate, noting that nobody knows what it is for or how old it is. The whole place is very much a pre-industrial shithole.

The characters notice that the harbor very effectively divides the town into two pieces. There are no bridges allowed across the harbor by law, an effort to frustrate the humanoid attacks that used to come from the west. There are ferries operating across the harbor instead.

The Forces of the Consortium Arrive

The characters haven't been docked long before a squad of gendarmes arrive. They explain that they are supposed to pick up a prisoner. Sindawe explains that the prisoner died in a zombie-totem pole-ghost ship attack. They are skeptical, so he tells them the story in full detail. They check the brig and see that he isn't there, then go away suitably impressed.

When they depart, Tommy Blacktoes explains that the city is run by a group of crimelords. The current ruler is *Gaston Cromarcy*. The city is at an interesting juncture: to effectively run the city a leader needs some "pirate cred" of having engaged in some quantity of seagoing criminality, but in reality most of the dominant

crimelords have not been on a boat in some years and rely instead upon business relationships with lower-ranked pirates who do take the risk of going to sea.

The characters decide they are curious who the gendarmes work for, so they send Tommy off to follow them. A few minutes after that, a couple of serious-looking individuals show up. They walk on board. One of them comments, "We hear that the Captain's dead." They flash bronze badges. "We're with the Consortium."

One of them points at Selene and asks, "You! What happened to the Captain?" She tells them about the ghost ship. By the end of the conversation, she has managed to get them to hand over the rest of the payroll (which amounts to another 34 gold for everyone, including Selene) and Ox's freedom. She tells the characters that they'll need to get their stuff off the ship quickly. This also applies to the NPC crew, much to the upset of Durt, Old Pete and Wendt. Sindawe takes Durt under his wing as his new sidekick.

When Blacktoes comes back he reports that the gendarmes went directly to the Consortium guildhall, then off to the guardhouse. They talked to some very serious-looking individuals at the guildhall. The other characters offer, "We know."

Wogan drags Ox over to a local shrine to Gozreh to offer thanks for a safe arrival. Later that evening, everyone goes to the *Gold Goblin* for dinner.

THE END OF THE SESSION

The session ends with the characters no longer in possession of the *Albers*, but safely arrived in Riddleport. All the characters advance to second level.