

REAVERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE - SESSION SUMMARY II/14/2010

The heroes have just unmasked Elias Tammerhawk as a serpent man, chased him off, and stopped a fateful ritual atop the Riddleport Light. Sadly, the Cyphergate activated and sent a huge blast of energy south, and that was followed by the sea receding out of Riddleport Harbor and, shortly after, a tsunami struck and inundated the city! 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)

With us is:

- *Hatshepsut*, high priestess of a lost civilization who doesn't savvy the Common (NPC)

Samaritha fled in shame after being unmasked as a serpent person herself.

Our heroes have just reached level 5! Serpent took a level of barbarian, and the other characters have leveled up in their respective classes (cleric, rogue, monk). Everyone revels in their new abilities and hit points.

Katrina Strikes!

As Wogan surveys the damage done to the city by the tsunami, we discuss what to do. The Gold Goblin may to have been hit by the wave, so we decide to head there. We recover our load of treasure from the lighthouse and drag it with us down into the battered city. Serpent estimates the sale price of the treasure at 5600 gold. We remind each other to look out for looters, and then realize we're the ones carrying a treasure chest through flood waters. "Might as well be a big screen TV!" Sindawe says.

On the way, we look at some of the damage. All this ships in the harbor were sunk or thrown into the city itself. Many buildings in the Wharf District are damaged and

the southern part of the Rotgut District is completely destroyed. There are dead bodies in evidence and there's people still trapped in wreckage. The Gas Forges appear to have not been destroyed, but it might have suffered some flooding. It is still smoking, but not as much as usual. Clegg Zincher's arena seems to have suffered some damage but it has not collapsed. More's the pity. We consider helping it collapse. One toothless old shop proprietor is protecting his store with a blunderbuss, yelling, "Step off!" to anyone who gets within 20 yards.

Serpent bumps into a waterlogged crate floating by that happens to be filled with centipedes. Three large panicked centipedes run up Serpent. Serpent grabs one and throws it off him into the water. Wogan spears the centipede in the water and impales it on the tines of his trident. Sindawe grabs another centipede and shoves it under the water, but not quickly enough to save Serpent from being bitten once. Tommy grabs the third centipede and throws it aside.

Serpent spends the rest of the walk back bitching about centipedes and how they keep biting him. He claims to be immune to their poison by now.

The Drowned Goblin

The Gold Goblin is still standing but is flooded. The goblin statue is standing in a shin-deep lake of water. Hans and Beyar are standing in the front door with loaded crossbows.

Beyar calls back, "Hey boss, it's the boys."

Wogan adds, "Yeah Saul, still not dead!"

Sindawe walks right in as if nothing has happened.

"Where were you guys? A big fuckin' wave came through here!"

"We were on high ground," Sindawe says.

Wendt the cook greets the group with his traditional, "Hey pig-fuckers!"

The casino floor has been flooded with a couple inches of water. Everyone is trying to use brooms to sweep the water out of the room. Saul Vancaskerkin, Bojask, Marzielle Ajuela, Wendt, Durt, and other staff members are hard at work; all the patrons appear to have been ejected already. The casino tables are knocked over and it appears there was 1-2 feet of water in here previously.

Wogan says, "I hope they rescued Swamp Bear." Sadly, the swamp bear was drowned as well as the other animals in the basement; it's full of water.

Saul says, "Speak of the devil! Tommy Spats! I'm glad you boys are back. We're having a spot of trouble. I don't know what brought you boys back to town, but grab a broom!"

Durt the ex-cabin boy heads straight to Sindawe. "Hello sir!" he says chirpily.

"Hello Durt. I'm glad to see you haven't been sold into slavery."

Durt asks, "More slavery?" He chortles. Sindawe rolls his eyes.

"By the way everyone, this is Hatshepsut." The assembly eyes the bald woman warily. "She doesn't speak the language too well."

Bojask stares at us sullenly. Sindawe and Serpent go to the bar to get a drink. Marzielle is trying to rescue bottles of liquor from the water line. Sindawe helps himself to one. Serpent helps himself to several.

A devil spider-climbs down the wall next to Sindawe. This is only momentarily startling. It's Old Scratch, the casino's resident imp. Apparently, he had been communicating with Shaz (the imp from the lighthouse), something about "pulling a train" on his new succubus slave. But he cut out with the tsunami hit and he thinks something happened to Shaz. He just wanted to give Sindawe a heads up. Sindawe heads back to work the crowd, but Serpent stays there drinking.

Iesha has been doing a head count upstairs and returns down to the casino floor. She says to Saul, "Hey boss, she's not here."

Wogan asks, "Who's not here?"

Saul says "Lixy Parmenter. We've checked the place and she's not here. She wasn't on shift when the wave hit. Maybe she was at her apartment."

Tommy pours a shot for himself and Saul. As Saul's drinking, Tommy says, "By the way, Larur Feldin asked about your health." We met Feldin's ghost in Riddleport's shadowlands.

After he spit-takes, Saul says, "Where did you catch up with him?"

Tommy replies spookily, "On the other side."

Saul tries to play it off calmly. "He was a good floor manager."

Sindawe presses him with, "That's not good enough. What happened?"

“I found out he was working for Clegg Zincher. I had to take care of him.”

“So why did you send us after the moneylender?”

“Well, I had to frame *someone*. That’s just good sense.”

Sindawe asks, “So how are you going to help us come back to town?”

“You'll have to get on the good side of Tammerhawk and Zincher.”

Serpent says, “Tammerhawk is gone. He won't be coming back.”

“Really?”

The characters explain how Tammerhawk had been replaced by a serpent man and he had *charmed* Clegg Zincher. The real Tammerhawk has become a vampire and rules over a twisted undead shadow city. We also explain that Tammerhawk’s ritual caused the flare-up of the Cyphergate and the tsunami. This is quite agitating to the various Gold Goblin staff members.

Saul asks, “So are all the cyphermages snakemen?”

Serpent says, “No, but Samaritha is.”

Sindawe pulls him aside and says, “Maybe you shouldn't tell people that.”

Serpent drunkenly insists, “I don't care! That lying bitch!”

We talk a little more about Tammerhawk and such. Saul eventually asks us to go look for Lixy and find out if she's safe.

The Mean But Wet Streets

We go out to look for Lixy. Hatshepsut has gotten off somewhere and doesn’t come with. She lives in a slightly slummy part of the city. On the way there we come across Clegg Zincher and Akron Erix leading their gang in cleaning up the flood damage. Zincher is levering up a roof beam that fell on someone. Injured and homeless people are being taken up into Zincher’s coliseum style arena and are sitting and lying on bleachers. Sindawe helps him move the roof beam and Wogan gathers up a knot of the wounded and hits them with a healing burst.

Sindawe notices that Clegg Zincher seems to have suddenly aged. There is more grey in his hair than before.

Sindawe asks, “I notice your hair is a bit different.”

Zincher seems surprised, he hasn't had a lot of looking in the mirror time since the tsunami hit. "That's what clean living will get you," he replies.

"But besides that, we would appreciate it if you could make sure we can live in the city again."

Clegg responds, "Yeah, I don't know what all that bullshit in the tower was about. But I think we can let bygones be bygones." He arranges to send a message to the Overlord asking for the "kill on sight" order for us to be rescinded until there can be a proper sit-down of the bosses to discuss things.

Tommy pulls Zincher aside. He tells Zincher, "Listen, from now on Lavender Lil can walk the streets freely. She has no more need to fear you."

"That bitch gonna die. You're going to have to find yourself a new hooker."

"I'm sorry to hear that."

"She killed my blood. Nobody walks away from that."

"Are you sure she was the one who did it?"

"That idiot who did it, she put him up to it. He didn't have two brain cells to rub together."

He says, "Anyway, welcome back to Riddleport." and wanders off. Tommy watches him leave grimly.

Shock the Monkey

We see a cadre of dwarves emerge from the Gas Forges wearing elaborate gas masks. The head of the dwarves, Tromard Roldheim, is among them. They seem to be on some sort of mission.

Some of the streets are blocked by collapsing buildings and there is standing water everywhere. Wet and injured people are streaming north from the ruins of the Rotgut District into the rest of the city. Serpent notices a familiar legless body floating face-down. Serpent flips over the body and finds it to be Ukkar the Fierce, a legless homeless Ulfen man the group had met at St. Casperian's mission. He pulls the man's body up onto a dry patch for later retrieval. It's a rare enough show of emotion that everyone else gives him sidelong glances.

Suddenly there is a screaming commotion and people running. About 50 yards away, there is a gorilla wearing an organ grinder outfit freaking out and attacking people. Sindawe actually remembers this ape, he's one of Mungo's Amazing Monkeys, some local street performers and petty thieves. We look around for Mungo himself but he's not in evidence. He flings a piece of masonry fifty feet and takes someone out in one shot.

Serpent approaches the gorilla and attempts to use his calming druid presence to influence it. Sindawe also approaches the gorilla. The gorilla throws a chunk of masonry straight at Sindawe's head, but Sindawe deflects the chunk deftly.

Serpent's attempt to influence the gorilla is totally unsuccessful, and it attacks. Sindawe leaps on it and attempts to stun it. He lands a glancing blow. Wogan shoots a musket ball straight into the ape, causing a huge spray of blood. Tommy finds and grabs the organ grinder's organ. He tries to crank the organ but the ape is too enraged to listen, but it does provide a demented soundtrack to the carnage.

The ape tries to rend Sindawe limb from limb but is weak from blood loss and Sindawe easily dodges its paws. Serpent runs up and smacks the bleeding ape with his staff and it staggers to the ground, dying like King Kong.

A capuchin monkey in a similar little outfit runs over and starts screeching at Tommy. He continues to grind the water-damaged organ until the monkey calms down and scampers off.

Disaster Rescue Squad

We get to Lixy Parmenter's building. It appears to have fallen in on itself. Tommy and Sindawe try to force their way into the rubble as Wogan and Serpent walk around the area calling out to her. Sindawe thinks he hears Lixy's voice from inside the rubble. Tommy climbs inside and finds her, but he doesn't see a way to get her out.

Tommy tells her, "Don't worry. We'll get you out of here, you'll be fine."

Tommy comes back and tells Sindawe, "She's fucked."

A gang of six toughs wandering by sees the group. "Hey, hey you!" They look like looters or troublemakers of some stripe.

Sindawe says, "Wogan, shoot that man!"

Wogan doesn't pause but pulls out his musket and shoots at the man who spoke. They come charging/sloshing forward through the standing water; a couple have rapiers but the rest have weapons picked up from the wreckage, hatchets and improvised clubs and the like. Sindawe punches one of them as he approaches, causing him to stagger back. Serpent clubs one of them unconscious with a staff, and Saluthra emerges from the water like the snake from Anaconda, completely enveloping one. One of the gang members stabs Wogan, but Tommy leaps out from the rubble and runs him through from behind. Wogan shoots his second musket and takes another gangbanger out. The remaining two guys run, but Sindawe follows them to finish them off. They don't last long. He recovers their bag of loot. "Hey, we could make a living at this!"

We decide the easiest way to get her out is to go through her sewer grate. Tommy clambers in to unlock the grate and the rest of us go through the sewer to find the grate from below. We see a shark fin come up from below the filthy sewer water.

Serpent (rolling a 1 on his Knowledge: Nature check) screams, "Sewer shark!" He gets ready to bash it.

The creature surfaces about 20 feet away and lets out a grotesquely loud roar. It appears to be a huge cross between a shark and a sea lion, but with a mouth of razor sharp teeth. In the constrained environment of the sewer the sound is like being stabbed in both ears.

Serpent screams again, "Bunyip!" but no one can hear him. Saluthra and Wogan decide on the better part of valor and run. Serpent slogs toward the bunyip, calling on his rage to deliver a big staff blow to the monster. Sindawe also moves up and stabs it with his ghost-killing spear.

The blood in the water causes the bunyip to go into a frenzy and rip into Serpent with its super-sharp teeth. Serpent responds by beating it thoroughly with his rage-enhanced strength. The bunyip stops moving after a while. Serpent keeps beating on it. The rest of the group looks at each other with concern.

Sindawe tries some rage counseling here in the sewer standing over the corpse of the shark-lion. "I think you're really angry at Samaritha..."

Serpent doesn't respond to the counseling very well and Sindawe goes to check on Wogan and Saluthra. They seem fine.

Serpent, Sindawe, and Tommy cooperate to move aside the grate. Tommy tries to clear the rubble pinning Lixy but ends up caving some rubble in on himself. Eventually they manage to dig themselves out and we all get back up to street level.

Tommy is bleeding and woozy from having a building fall on him, and Wogan uses his last healing spell to fix him up.

We make our way back to the Gold Goblin. The city is pretty grim. The flurry of immediate post-tsunami activity has calmed and people sit around listlessly.

We spot an old one-legged man stalking about the streets and recognize him as the high priest of the pirate goddess Besmara. “The goddess is wroth and her wroth shall fall on us all!”

Sindawe attempts to get the old guy to come with us.

“No, I will spread the news of the goddesses wroth!”

Wogan doesn't help much by starting an argument with him over whether the destruction is the wrath of Besmara or the wrath of Gozreh. Eventually we leave him to his crazy while he points after us saying that the tsunami is all our fault.

On the way back we recover the body of Ukkar the Fierce to give him a good Ulfen Viking burial.

Saul is glad to have Lixy Parmenter back. He says that the Gold Goblin is like one big family that looks after its own. We have our doubts.

Evening falls. Wogan and Sindawe go out to try to mobilize the locals to do clean-up. Hatshepsut returns from wherever it is she went and silently helps them with that task. Serpent stays in the Gold Goblin's bar to get massively drunk.

Sindawe and Wogan notice the dwarves again. They seem to be going around trying to repair ruptured gas-lamp lines. This explains the occasional explosions and fires that we've been noticing in the distance.

Time For A Date

Tommy heads out to go to the Cypher Lodge. On the way he notices that the Mystery of the Gate has been burned down. The Mystery of the Gate was a Cyphermage fetish bar. It seems that many people are upset and blaming the Cypherimages for the

flood. Apparently word has gotten out. The ferries seem to not be running and there is no way to get over the river to the Cypher Lodge.

Tommy decides that his next stop is the House of the Silken Veil. It's quite far north in the city and wasn't touched by the tsunami. There are guards at the entrance; they are turning away most folks but regulars can get in. Tommy asks for Lavender Lil and accompanies her to her room.

“They say that the Cyphermites flooded the city!”

“Sort of. Is this a safe place to talk?”

“Hold on a second.”

She turns out the lantern and it is pitch black. She sidles up to Tommy and whispers, “Just think what you want to say to me and I'll hear you.” She casts a spell.

Tommy thinks to her, telling her the story of what has transpired. Tommy also wants to see Madame Pamodae because a power struggle is coming up. He gives Lavender Lil a shopping list of some items he wants, including poison, a hat of disguise, and boots of elvenkind. He knows she can get these items for him. Lil is not sure that Tommy should trust Madame Pamodae.

Tommy says he talked to Clegg Zincher about leaving Lil along but he wasn't too agreeable. Lil wants Tommy to take care of Clegg Zincher for her so she can once again leave the House of the Silken Veil.

Then Tommy ravages Lil. She has a special treat she prepared for when he returned. She gives Tommy an enlarge person potion so that he can grow to human size, and takes a shrink person potion herself and becomes halfling size so they can turn the tables for once. “I pound her like a railroad spike!” is his euphoric declaration. Ah, young love.

Domestic Disturbance

Serpent gets drunk and decides it is a good idea to go give Samaritha a piece of his mind. He is quite angry when he finds out the ferry is not running. He uses his snake shaman powers to swim across the river. Luckily the other river predators avoid him.

Across the river, a soaked Serpent walks to the Cypher Lodge. The gendarmes are guarding the building from a mob of rich white folks. The poor people from the rest of

the city can't really get over here, so the crowd is less the torch-and-pitchfork set and is more like "We demand answers! I'm a tax-paying citizen!" Serpent walks up drunk and dripping with river water. The guards will not let anyone in or out, even after Serpent eloquently explains he needs to talk to his lying bitch of a girlfriend. Serpent tries to sneak (about 10 feet away) in but the guards are having none of it. Serpent notices some gendarmes moving covertly out the back of the Cypher Lodge escorting a woman in a cloak. He recognizes her as Fenella Bromathan, the pale Cyphermage second in command.

Serpent calls out to her, "Fenella! Fenella Bromathan!"

The crowds get rowdy and starts to try to rush Fenella. The guards get distracted trying to hold back the crowd while Serpent gets around the building. Serpent goes around to Samaritha's window. He tries to climb the building, falls off, then remembers to turn on his serpent shaman climbing power. Serpent climbs to her fourth story window and tries to get in. He bangs on Samaritha's window, making plenty of noise. "Samarithaaaaaaa!" he howls drunkenly.

From inside the room, he hears, "Serpent?"

"Yeah it's me. I need to talk to you."

"You can't be here. You should go away."

"I need to talk to you right now."

"You're probably here to kill me because I'm a monster."

"I'm not going to kill you, I just want to talk."

"No one's supposed to be here. The city blames the Cyphermagas for the tsunami! Leave me to my fate."

"And rightly so! Let me in before I fall off this building!"

Samaritha continues to refuse so Serpent rips the window open.

Serpent confronts her, "Everything you ever told me was a lie!"

"Because you would never have accepted me!"

"What makes you think that? I have all kinds of weird friends of different races."

They go around on the topic for some time. Finally Serpent forgives her and they clasp each other tight. Eventually Samaritha believes that Serpent truly accepts her. For his part, Serpent manages to avoid saying the "L" word.

After a while they talk about Samaritha and her past. She is a serpentfolk and a worshiper of Ydersius, but she believes in a kinder gentler Ydersius. She didn't know Tammerhawk was a serpent man and didn't have anything to do with his weird time/dimensional manipulation ritual.

Between the booze and the natural disaster, Serpent's normally impassive demeanor is softened, and he kisses Samaritha. The unexpected show of tenderness overwhelms her.

“Oh, Serpent, make love to me like a human!”

“Well... I guess if you put it that way...”

Serpent and Samaritha finally consummate their relationship and Serpent stays the night in her room. Samaritha's roommate pretends to be asleep and whimpers quietly to himself.

Lo there do I see my father

Sindawe and Wogan go out in the middle of the night to take care of the body of Ukkar the Fierce. They load the body on a recovered rowboat and set it out to sea, setting it on fire in the traditional Ulfen manner. They wonder where the heck Serpent has gotten off to, as they expected him to be here for this. As they stand there, they see an orca surface.

Wogan says, “That orca really is stalking us!”

Sindawe says, “You know about religion. Is there some kind of connection between Mama Watanna and killer whales?”

Wogan replies, “She lived in a boat in a swamp. I don't really know anything about her.” Wogan's not into all this voodoo mumbo jumbo.

Sindawe casts his mind back and remembers that back in the Mwangi Expanse the janiform goddess Shimye-Magalla was sometimes associated with images of killer whales.

The God Squad

The next day Tommy staggers in happy, and Serpent staggers in with a hangover and dripping with river water, yet strangely sanguine.

As we stand around comparing notes, Salvadora Beckett sweeps in to the Gold Goblin.

“I’m glad to see you’ve come through this relatively well. I need to talk to you privately.” We escort her into the private upstairs study.

“The acting head of the Cyphermages met with the Overlord last night.”

Wogan asks, “Who is that?”

“Fenella Bromathan.”

Serpent says, “Oops... I mean, I think I saw her last night.”

“She convinced the Overlord that the entire Cypher Lodge was not involved in the plot and that it was just the impostor Tammerhawk. Anyway, something’s come up. Many of the gendarmes are dead, out keeping order in the city, or have abandoned their posts in the chaos. I need some help with an... unusual situation.”

We agree to help her out and she leads us to a marketplace in the Leeward District. A building was destroyed and everyone in the area was killed. An entire squad of gendarmes was killed when they came to check it out. No one knows what happened exactly. Witnesses said people were just dying and buildings were crumbling and nothing seemed to be causing it. The gendarmes were ripped apart by something, though. Salvadora explains that it’s being dismissed as a gas explosion, but she’s pretty sure there’s more to it.

“What do you think is going on?”

“... I’d rather you take a look and come to your own conclusion.”

What would normally be a busy market has been abandoned. There is a hastily erected rope barrier that Salvadora set up, and we see faces staring down from windows above. Immediately it begins to rain, hard.

Salvadora leads us to where three bodies have been placed under cloths. Two of them look like alley dweller types, the third one is a gendarme. The first body has been killed by having his chest crushed, the second has his back broken, and the gendarme has been twisted like a pretzel and his arms have been broken in a myriad of places.

She then leads us to the site of the killing. Blood and gore are all over the place. One of the buildings has a huge spiraling shape drawn on it in blood. Everything has an incredible stench.

Wogan notices someone peering out of a cobbler's shop down the road. We go to his shop.

“I don't got nothin' you want!” he shouts through the door.

Wogan manages to convince him we just want to know what happened and he opens the door. Wogan goes in to talk to him. From the look of him, Wogan is convinced he is hopped up on drugs, probably flay-leaf.

He tells us the whole front of the building across the road exploded outward. People were screaming and he ran and hid until the screams stopped. Then gendarmes arrived and went in to the building. Then the screaming started again. A gendarme ran out and then got picked up and bashed by something invisible. The house in question belonged to Old Man Marshan. He heard a rumor the old man was a retired adventurer; he didn't have a job or mix with regular folks. From time to time he had visitors at night, but the man doesn't know who they were.

Marshan's House

We go to the ruined house and check it out. Wogan pulls a rat out of his beast coffer and throws it into the building. The rat seems unmolested. Sindawe goes in through the big hole in the wall and the other characters follow him. There is black slime all over everything that smells horrible. Wogan throws a poison resistance spell on everyone from a wand.

We examine the slime but can't tell anything from it, besides the fact that it has a nauseating smell. We take a look around. We examine the parlor. The front door to the house looks like it is still locked. To the south is a library/bedroom. Everything is coated with a thick layer of tar-like slime. Serpent thinks the slime came from below, and it looks like something big had to squeeze through the stairwell.

Serpent suggests installing a big metal door and leaving whatever is down there to itself. We note the wisdom of this proposal.

We go down into the basement. There appears to be some ancient crypt down here. The place is ancient and decorated with symbols of the dead god Aroden. On the far end of the gallery is a door to the south and a stairwell leading down to the north. The door is locked but Sindawe uses a crowbar on it. He accidentally breaks the crowbar. He tries again and breaks the door. We see into a large brick gallery. There are bedrolls and camping equipment for 6 people here. It looks like it's been here for years but some of it has been disturbed recently.

We go back to the stairwell and go down. And down. And down. The stairs go down around 100 feet. Dried black slime is everywhere on the stairs, and quite sticky. It comes out in a place half cavern and half carved stone. Thick sheets of mold and fungus cover everything down here. Pillars hold up the stone roof on the near half while the far half opens into a large cavern. There are circular indentations in the ground. Serpent thinks they might be footprints, but they are 2-3 feet across.

Serpent thinks the spores, molds, and fungi here are fairly harmless. We go north into the cavern. The floor is an uneven collection of stone and fungus. The fungus on the walls glows. Toppled rubble and pillars are on the far end of the cavern. There is a big altar stone surrounded by dead trees. Four cave passages branch off of the cavern, but most of them have been blocked off with iron bars. There is a giant pool of black slime here. A ghoul perches on the altar stone, nibbling an arm and reading a book.

Next Time

The Sunless Grove beckons!