

## REAVERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE - SESSION SUMMARY 03/10/2012

### TODAY'S EPISODE: THE CURSED EARTH

Our heroes are on Argavist Island to visit the Arm-Ripper Shrine for its little known regenerative properties. The landing party includes every sailor who is short a body part or two. They discovered that White Estrid's Ulfen fleet is anchored at the island in preparation for raiding season, the shrine has been overrun by wrath sinspawn and their mutant spider pets, and Mythra, *Witch of the Dark pines*, and her werewolf children want the shrine back... Or rather they want the pirates to take the shrine back. A deal was struck - take back the shrine and Mythra herself will regenerate limbs and remove curses. Sindawe nurses a secret curse of bad luck from when he murdered Jaren the Jinx on the voyage here. Our heroes have almost reached the shrine, killing over a score of sinspawn and spiders along the way. It has been a long day and everyone wants to rest, but a voice chides them onward. They are:

- ♣ Captain Sindawe H'kilata Narr of the *Teeth of Araska*, the fist-punchin' Mwangi monk (Chris).
- ♣ Bosun Ref "Serpent" Jorensen, the staff-bashin' ulfen druid/ranger and his snake Saluthra (Paul).
- ♣ Samaritha, the wand-blastin' serpentfolk wizard in the guise of a pretty half-elf, and now Serpent's wife!
- ♣ Hatshepsut, monk and high priestess of a lost civilization who doesn't savvy much Common and her cobra Naja.
- ♣ Captain Wogan of the *Black Bunyip*, the pistol-packin' celibate cleric of Gozreh (Patrick).
- ♣ Bosun Tommy Blacktoes, the staff-slingin' sneaky halfling rogue.
- ♣ Lavender Lil, a buxom tiefling ex-prostitute, and Tommy's girlfriend.
- ♣ With them are *Teeth of Araska* pirates:
  - ♣ Survivors from the ship's previous pirate crew
  - ♣ Ex-slaves escaped from their Chelish owner (Martino Marcellano)
  - ♣ Various other recruits, some willing, some not.

- ♣ JJ, an aquatic homunculus, whose master may be dead.
- ♣ Recruits from the Andoran Colony, rebel faction (not Nuruu'gal):
  - ♣ Lefty (Narbus Smeet), traitor to his people, self-inflicted amputee, and son the sorceress, Elder Adara Smeet.
  - ♣ Claxton, he's tried "rebel" now he'll try "sailor".
  - ♣ Tegan, skilled house wife, and recently married to Stoke.
- ♣ 20 or so pirates captured along with the *Black Bunyip*. Their ex-captain, Morgan Baumann, languishes without her thumbs in the *Araska's* brig.

## *NEXT STEP*

The pirates are taking a well deserved break amidst their last battle site. Some are gathering their wits. Some finish downed foes. Lefty checks Peg-Leg Pete, confirming that the man is dead. Several men roll Pete's body in canvas while Wogan sprinkles it with sea water and murmurs a prayer. His body will be buried at sea where Gozreh may better watch over him. Wogan doles out healing magic carefully, as he is scraping the sides of the barrel. The possibly antique ranseurs are gathered, cleaned, and bagged, bringing the count to 20. Wogan and Serpent have identified the sinspawn captain's equipment as a *Belt of Physical Might* (+2 to Dexterity and Constitution) and a +1 *sadistic ranseur*. His large nipple rings go unclaimed. The sadistic ranseur is capped and placed in the bag of holding. Wogan lays claim to the magic belt until it is time to divvy up the shares.

Serpent says, "Can we rest before taking out the shrine?"

As if in answer another tremor passes through the area. Several men curse heartily. Lefty agrees, "Yeah! I hope Gozreh does to the sinspawn that thing Orgon just mentioned." Possibly for Lefty's benefit, Bel pantomimes that thing with one of the sinspawn corpses. Lefty turns red and gags a little bit.

The landing party includes: Serpent, Wogan, Sindawe (cursed - everyone's natural 1 rolls generate a response from the Critical Fumbles deck), Saluthra, Lefty (expert 2, no right hand), Mase Venjum (no thumbs, aristocrat 2/warrior 2), Orgon One-Ear (fighter 2, no ear), Bel the Eunuch (warrior 2, no jumbles), and Peg-Leg Pete (dead, no leg).

### *THE BANEFUL DEPTHS*

The pirates get their gear in order, preparing to head further into the shrine complex.

Wogan notes, "We've been having some really extraordinary bad luck on this island. Same for the creatures we've been fighting. Things have been happening to us just like when Jaren the Jinx was around. Of course, he's dead now. Maybe his curse is still with us."

The pirates look up from their preparations with concern. Bad luck is... well, bad.

Sindawe replies, "I was close when that giant squid killed him. Maybe the curse jumped to me."

Wogan asks, "Why didn't it jump to the giant squid?"

Sindawe shrugs and replies, "Maybe sea monsters can't have luck, good or bad. After all, they're really big."

The pirates ponder that possibility as they move through the arena chamber and out a vine covered exit into a long natural passage with two side passages. The first side passage way is covered with white roots and leads to an earthen chamber. More roots hang from the roof and the remains of decapitated green dragon. The second side chamber is overgrown with roots, vines laden with leaves and thorns, and a faint glow from a denser section of vegetation. Wogan pulls a rat out of his Beast Coffin and sends it to the light. The rat doesn't come back.

Serpent becomes bored and enters the chamber. He moves easily through the difficult terrain; the others are move considerably slower. He spots a glowing orb in a carved niche just before the vegetation grabs at him.

Serpent declares, "As a druid I know that plants need a good pruning in order to achieve maximum health and growth. Let's cut 'em."

Wogan strides forward shrugging off their entangling attempts, striking about with his Frost Mase. He notices a red sap oozing out and thinks, "That can't be good." Plants and Serpent bash away at each other. The rest of the pirates pitch in or become entangled.

Lefty rips free of the vines. Wogan and the crew pummel and cut the attacking plants. Sindawe breaks free of a vine and kills a plant with his kama. Another plant pummels, grapples, and strangles Orgon. Wogan spots this plant's primary stem and bashes away with his mace. Bel finishes it with a spear thrust. Orgon gasps for air as the vine relaxes its grip.

Wogan finally recognizes these vines from Fire Watch Island, where one brave monk made the assassin vine's fruit into wine. He shrugs at the now useless revelation and dashes to the glowing orb, actually a fixture carved into the stone forming the back wall. He touches the orb and is immediately bathed in yellow light. His morning prayers to Gozreh flash backwards thru his mind - all of the spells he has expended this day return to him. And several minor wounds heal. The other pirates gather round for their turn at the orb. Each one is able to heal minor wounds and recover all ability point damage. Everyone is happy with that last one as the day has been heavy with poisonous spider bites.

The pirates recover a masterwork great sword (with sheath intact) and a gold tooth. Lefty claims the gold tooth to replace one lost as a child.

Wogan asks Serpent, "I noticed a bloody looking sap on the assassin vines. Is that stuff dangerous or a sign of injury?"

Serpent thinks then shrugs, "I have no idea. No one got poisoned, so I guess it's just its blood."

Mase says, "My mother used to make a dish called 'blood sap'. It was awful."

Not to be outdone, Serpent replies, "Samaritha's people made it from slaves."

The other pirates fall silent and stare at Serpent, waiting for a punch line, because they don't know that Samaritha is actually a serpentfolk and her people probably did convert human slaves into exotic dishes like "blood sap".

Sindawe covers by saying, "That's Ulfen pillow talk, you guys. The snow men are a weird bunch."

Wogan adds, "And I thought Tommy and Lil were kinky."

As they leave the deadly cave someone at the back of the groups speaks in a falsetto voice, "Hey, big boy. Welcome to the Empire. Hungry for blood sap? Time to squeeze slaves!" Curiously, no one laughs.

## *TO THE SHRINE*

The shrine resides in a cave of dark earth. Pillars of once bright marble pierce the roof. Roots and vines hang from every wall and the ceiling, as well as covering every surface. The shrine is at the far end of the chamber; it is a dais, also of bright marble.

No obvious threat is within sight. Wogan and Serpent cast light spells on rocks and throw them into the chamber in an attempt to ferret out hidden creatures. The vines seem to shift around.

Orgon clutches his ear and says, "Arrghh. Do you any of you hear that?" Then he collapses. Wogan examines him but can't find anything wrong.

Serpent asks, "Did he get bitten by a werewolf?"

Sindawe says, "When did everyone wolf out last time we were here?"

Wogan replies, "Everyone wolfed out after we left the shrine. And I think all of these men got bitten by Mythra's were-goons."

Serpent strides toward the shrine, "Let's go before something worse happens." Sindawe and Wogan follow closely, then the rest of the crew.

Vine tendrils stealthy reach out, but the suspicious pirates spot them almost immediately. Everyone starts shouting and brandishing weapons. More tendrils, dripping sap, stretch out from the ground cover to attack. Saluthra and Wogan are both struck but avoid the needle like tips. Serpent yells, "Look out! Those are bloodsuckles!"

Lefty is grabbed up by a creeper; its needle tip plunges into the teenager and drinks deeply. Serpent attacks that creeper with his acid dripping staff, while noting a huge beak emerging from the foliage overhead. Sindawe attacks a bloodsuckle at its bulbous body while dodging its raking limbs. Another vine tightens about a load bearing pillar, causing debris to fall heavily onto several crewmen.

Another pirate is grabbed by a creeper and lifted toward the beak peeking out from the vegetation covered ceiling. More vines slam and grab Orgon. Both pirates scream as needles pierce them and suck their very life fluids.

Mase runs toward the shrine screaming, "Give me back my thumbs!" Bel drinks his *divine favor* potion. Orgon slashes at the vine holding Lefty, letting him wiggle free; the drained teenager slumps to the floor and stops moving. Serpent bashes at the vine holding Orgon, hitting several

times until he is deafened by a high-pitched, shrill noise (critical fumble). Orgon wiggles free of the vines. Saluthra bites the bloodsuckle while Sindawe punches and kicks it.

The violence and high emotion from the fight has stirred up the shrine. It takes action! A green light lances out surrounding Pete's body. He stands up, sloughing off his canvas cover. His hair and nails grow dangerously long while his skin turns green. Undead, green Pete leaps upon Wogan.

The bloodsuckle's tendrils slam and spear Saluthra. Creeper vines grab Serpent, Wogan, Orgon, and Bel dealing minor damage and draining life fluids (1 Strength point per hit). Wogan gets a lucky shot off and blows a large hole in the creeper's beak. The pained creature throws Wogan across the room. Bel slashes at tendrils, freeing himself. Saluthra wraps herself around the bloodsuckle's base and squeezes it into sap and pulp. Sindawe throws his spear into the beak overhead. No longer animated, dead green Pete falls over. The shrine shoots golden rays throughout the chamber, healing each pirate (1d8+1).

The creeper raises Orgon and Serpent ten feet closer to its maw, drinking more of their fluids in the process. More of its vines snatch up Saluthra and Bel. Wogan shoots his rail revolver into the vine drinking from him. Mase reaches the altar and hugs it. In response, a large tree grows from sapling to ceiling in the wink of an eye; its limbs bludgeon the creeper affixed to the ceiling. Bel drops his spear in favor of a short sword. Sindawe picks up Bel's spear and throws it into the beak. Dead, green Pete's flesh flash forwards through decomposition. Serpent hacks at a vine with his silver scimitar.

The creeper sucks strength from its victims as it shoves Serpent into its beak and chews. Several of its victims cease struggling. Wogan hits the beak with a *magic missile* from his Rain Tiger Emerald. Mase continues praying at the shrine; roots and vines grow violently, raining debris down

upon the chamber floor. Serpent slashes away with his silver scimitar, while Saluthra bites. Sindawe climbs the tree and begins kicking the beak. A second tree sprouts in the chamber, courtesy of the shrine. This time the tree pins Lefty amongst its branches.

The creeper continues sucking fluids from its victims and chewing on Serpent. Bel falls unconscious. Wogan shoots another vine. Despite his failing strength, Serpent's scimitar opens more wounds on the beak. Sindawe, dangling from tree branches, finishes the plant with a flurry of kicks. The creeper's vines go limp, dropping pirates and a giant snake to the soft earth below.

Wogan uses spells to stabilize, then heal Lefty, Orgon, and Bel.

Sensing that the shrine is still 'upset', Serpent runs over and begins soothing it. Druidic soothing is very intimate. A short time later the shrine falls silent and ceases its light show.

Serpent decides not to wait on Mythra. He orders Orgon up onto the shrine first, reasoning that if things go wrong Orgon has the least to lose. He performs the regeneration ceremony perfectly; Orgon's ear grows back.

Orgon announces, "I can hear! I can hear out of my new ear!"

Serpent repeats the ritual on each maimed pirate. Lefty gets his left hand back. Bel's testicles grow back better than before thanks to Serpent's flawless performance. Bel opens his drawers to marvel at the results. Mase's thumbs are regrown too; he grabs up a sword and shows off a series of fencing maneuvers.

The ex-maimed pirates clap Serpent on the shoulders in gratitude.

Serpent and Wogan put their heads together to figure out how the shrine might remove Sindawe's curse. But the necessary steps elude them, so they finish healing everyone up. For a brief moment, Serpent considers using the shrine to heal the ability damage dealt by the plant



creatures, but decides against it upon remembering Mythra's warning, "The shrine only works once for any man."

The crewmen are fine spirits as they head back to the shrine entrance. They pick up their cargo (1 plunder unit) and a 4pounder cannon along the way. They make it to the cave entrance intent on seeing daylight again.

### *BITCHES AND BETRAYAL*

Mythra steps out from behind a tree, demanding, "Is it done?"

Sindawe answers, "Yes, we killed the sinspawn."

Serpent, "And our men have all their parts." The men demonstrate their parts.

Wogan asks, "You know you have an imp running around inside? Why haven't you killed it off?"

Mythra ignores the question, "I will remove your curse now, Sindawe. Lay on this stump."

Sindawe's eyebrows raise, "Not the shrine?"

She shakes her head, "No, that shouldn't be necessary." She demands of the other pirates, "Sit cross-legged in a circle around the stump."

The suspicious pirates look about for her werewolves in ambush, but spot nothing of the sort. They follow her directions.

She raises her hands up high and says, "This may hurt. Kali Ma! Kali Ma! Curse come forth!" Her hands become claws which she rakes across Sindawe's chest (44pts!). She spins and runs into the forest, cackling happily.

Sindawe coughs blood and swears, "Every damn time! Lying bitch!"

The pirates give chase. Mythra stays ahead of them until Sindawe finally closes the gap just inside a clearing.

Sindawe immediately spots the five, large wolves in the clearing. He turns and runs back the way he came, shouting, "Run! Ambush! Her wolves!"

Clever Wogan hits the clearing with a *sleet storm*, which reduces vision, handicaps movement, and other effects. He turns and runs after Sindawe.

Wogan yells after him, "Shouldn't we head for the ships?"

Sindawe yells back, "Those ships aren't coming back for four days!"

The other pirates switch directions as the Wogan and Sindawe run by them.

Serpent complains about the lack of straight lines in the forest.

Sindawe slides to a halt. Gilmy, the ettin, is between them and the cave. Sindawe drinks a *bull strength* potion and announces, "Fucking traps... we always fall for them." The rest of the crew catches up. Wogan heals some of Sindawe's horrible wounds.

Bel spins, sets his spear, and catches a pursuing wolf on its tip. The battle has begun. The wolf pulls itself off the spear and shifts into a bipedal form, as does another werewolf. They attack with weapons (dwarven axe and greatsword). Their bipedal form is tough; pirate weapons slide harmless off their humanoid armor and werewolf natural armor.

Gilmy (the ettin) screams, "No! Don't hurt the doggies!" He runs into the melee and swings a club at Sindawe. A dwarven axe hits Serpent (15pts). The half-orc werewolf swings its greatsword, killing Lefty and cleaving Orgon (unconscious at -8). Wogan gets lucky with a heal spell, saving Lefty; the teenager is stabilized (-12). Again, the pirates' weapons fail to draw werewolf blood. Sindawe's curse also strikes, causing Mase to wound himself and sending Serpent's silver scimitar flying into the high grass.

Gilmy again screams, "No hurt doggies!" and clubs Sindawe (2rpts).

Myrtha arrives upon the back of a large wolf. Her howls cause the dwarf and half-orc werewolves to withdraw.

She demands, "Stop fighting! We are being deceived!"

Sindawe snarls and punches her without affect. Her wolf mount bites him savagely. Bel falls in alongside him and stabs at the wolf.

Mythra repeats, "Stop! There is a deceiver amongst us!" She casts *entangle* upon the area, which greatly hampers the pirates but not their attackers.

Wogan shoots his double-barreled pistol at Gilmy hitting once with a stinking cloud bullet. Gilmy reels back from the mist, sickened, then staggers away. Several pirate crewmen and Saluthra break free of the grasping vegetation. Serpent makes it half-way to his scimitar. All four werewolves move to Mythra's defense. Sindawe backs away.

Mythra speaks again, "We were deceived by someone who sounded like me. My children heard her order them to attack you. Peace. Let me heal your wounds."

Serpent and Sindawe refuse on general principle. Serpent picks up his weapons, while Wogan heals Lefty and Orgon back to consciousness.

Sindawe druidess, "Our ships will return in 4 days. We'll keep to the shrine complex. If you enter before then we will destroy the shrine. Leave us be."

Mythra shrugs, "Fair enough."

## *LEAVING ARGAVIST*

The pirates keep a watch on the entrance twenty-four/seven. Their 4-pounder is loaded and aimed at the shrine. The four days pass slowly.

On the fourth evening the invisible imp approaches Sindawe while he is on watch. It attempts to bargain for the dwarf's life. Sindawe refuses to entertain its lame offer ("Your questions, any questions, answered by a real devil!").

The ships arrive as scheduled the next morning before dawn. The pirates signal "all safe; pick us up" with lanthorns. Pirate boats hit the beach just after dawn. Loot is slowly ferried back to the ships, while Mythra and her children watch.

Sindawe tells his crew, "Finish up here. I'm going to see about getting that curse removed."

Serpent says, "You shouldn't go by yourself."

Sindawe, "We're no match for them. No sense in all of us dying." He walks over to Mythra and asks, "Is the curse removal offer still open?"

Mythra nods, "Yes. Come with me."

A short walk later Mythra pulls a poppet out of her bodice. She cuts the cord tied around it with a small knife. She holds it up for Sindawe to see; the poppet vaguely resembles Jaren the Jinx.

Sindawe asks, "That is it?"

Mythra nods, "That is it."

Sindawe shrugs and mumbles something that sounds like "thank you". He starts walking back to the beach. Mythra walks alongside him.

She asks, "How was it?"

Sindawe scowls, "How was what?"

She demands, "How was killing Jaren?"

Sindawe brightens momentarily, "It was very satisfying. Easily a top ten."

Mythra smiles evilly, "He deserved that curse. I knew it was just a matter of time before some killed him over his ill luck. Sailors are very superstitious; I should have known it would be a sailor who killed him."

She continues, "You are welcome back here whenever you want. You have safe passage, not withstanding Ulfen." Sindawe nods at that.

Mythra's attempts at small talk fail against Sindawe's monosyllabic replies. A short time later they part ways on the beach.

Sindawe climbs aboard the last boat off the beach.

Lefty asks, "How did it go? What happened?"

Sindawe says with a straight face, "I fucked her. And her werewolves."

## *SAILING HOME*

The *Teeth of Araska* and *Black Bunyip* race for home. All of the pirates are ready to live it up in Riddleport on their shares of the plunder. The away party tells tall tales about their time on Argavist Island, including how Sindawe fucked Mythra and her werewolves.

That night aboard the *Teeth of Araska*, Sindawe stands watch with Lefty. (The teenager's nickname has stuck despite his now regrown hand.)

Sindawe tells Lefty, "You showed a lot of potential on that shithole island. You were brave, steadfast, and revealed useful skills." Lefty beams at the compliment.

Sindawe continues, "Now just between you and me... if you're a doppelganger, it is no big deal. You can come clean with me, because I can definitely use a doppelganger on my ship. Of course, I will miss Lefty, but his death isn't a tie breaker." Lefty's smile slides away.

Sindawe says, "You know where to find me, new friend." Then he walks away.

After his watch is finished, Lefty fails to get much sleep: "The captain thinks I'm a doppelganger? *I'll miss Lefty, but his death isn't a tie breaker?!?*"

That night aboard the *Black Bunyip*, Wogan warns Kahina (a very loose lady pirate), "Watch out! Bel got his balls back."

Kahina stares at him expectantly, then replies, "Yes, I heard. That's why you lot went ashore."

Wogan reddens, "Well, I think he got more than his balls back. I think he got all new equipment. He's randy and will undoubtedly break some poor woman." Wogan reddens even moreso upon realizing that Kahina's interest in the ex-eunuch has been piqued.

That night in their cabin, Serpent and Samaritha's indulge in a little pillow talk involving "squeezing the slaves" for "blood sap". In the next cabin, Sindawe buries his head further under a pillow.

Half-way between Argavist Island and Riddleport, the ship's pause for Peg-Leg Pete's burial at sea. Wogan, priest of Gozreh, performs the burial ceremony. He recites "Bury Me with Sailors" as a prayer:

*I've played a lot of roles in life;  
I've met a lot of men.  
I've done some things I'd like to think  
I wouldn't do again.  
And though I'm young, I'm old enough  
to know some day I'll die,  
and to think about what lies beyond,  
Beside whom I would lie.  
Perhaps it doesn't matter much;  
Still if I had my choice,  
I'd want a grave, amongst sailors when  
At last death quells my voice.  
I'm sick of the hypocrisy  
of lectures of the wise.*

*I'll take the man, with all the flaws,  
Who goes through scared, and dies.  
The troops I knew were commonplace  
They didn't want the war;  
They fought because their Fathers and  
Theirs Fathers had before.  
They Cursed and killed and wept...  
God Knows  
They're easy to deride...  
But bury me with men like these;  
They faced the guns and died,  
Its funny when you think of it,  
The way we got along.  
We'd come from different worlds  
To live in one were no one belongs.  
I didn't even like them all;  
I'm sure they'd all agree.  
Yet I would give my life for them,  
I know some did for me.  
So bury me with Sailors, please,  
Though much maligned they be.  
Yes bury me with Sailors, for I miss their company.  
We'll not soon see their likes again;  
We've had our fill of war.  
But bury me with men like them  
Till someone else does more."  
Author Unknown*

Pete's old mates, the original *Black Bunyip* crew, are moved at his passing. He was admired and well liked.

At last the two ships sail slowly into Riddleport, passing beneath the Cypergate.