

## REAVERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE - SESSION SUMMARY II/O3/2013

### TODAY'S EPISODE: DARKNESS AND SECRETS

Wogan is visiting his sister, Anya, at her new home in the village of Karpad. With him are Sindawe, Hatshepsut, Serpent, Samaritha and Saluthra. The village and its people have seen better days. Murders, disappearances, prostitutes, shut-ins, accidents, hags, a witch, and other strange creatures abound... or at least that's what the superstitious locals believe. But there is definitely a plague. Smarter pirates would return to the sea.

Our heroes are:

- ♣ Captain Sindawe H'kilata Narr of the *Teeth of Araska*, the fist-punchin' Mwangi monk (Chris).
- ♣ Quartermaster 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 is also Serpent's wife.
- ♣ Ship's Surgeon Hatshepsut, monk and high priestess of a lost civilization and her cobra Naja.
- ♣ Chief Gunner Wogan, 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 their pirate crew, formed from previous pirate crews, escaped slaves, and recruits both willing and unwilling.

### *ANSAR'S AQUATIC FRIEND*

Serpent has a strange dream. He is playing hnefatafl with *Death* on a cold beach in his homeland. He narrowly wins the game. *Death* says nothing during the game even when he loses.

Serpent awakens feeling satisfied. His wife, Samaritha, sleeps fitfully at this side. They are in the Weeping Willow Inn, in the Vale of Karpad in Nidal's heartland.

They break their fast, then walk to Ansar's house thru the drizzle and gray sky. The house is a nice structure for the town and well painted.

Serpent asks Wogan, "Ansar is a gendarme we know?"

Wogan replies, "He was with us when the glyph blew up in the Riddleport Light. He probably has a chunk of it him like we do."

Serpent says, "So, we will grow more powerful if we kill him?" Wogan ignores him.

Knocking at Ansar's door and demanding his appearance does nothing more than cause a bumping sound, then breaking glass. Sindawe and Hatshepsut rush around back, while Serpent throws open a shutter. He sees nothing amiss in that room, so he tries a window to another room. It reveals a ransacked room; broken items litter the floor. A trio of purple tentacles lash out from a dark corner, shatter the window glass, and seize Serpent (2rpts, 2 Con). The pirate is dragged into the room through the window by a giant, day-glow, purple octopus looking creature.

Samaritha casts *slow* on Serpent's attacker, then announces, "I don't recognize that creature and it's got the wrong number of tentacles. It looks like a *construct*."

Wogan runs up to the shattered window and fires his blunderbuss. The purple octopus holds Serpent while trying to grab Wogan. Sindawe and Hatshepsut kick open the back door and rush inside. Serpent chops at tentacles with his +3 *battle axe* backed by *power attack* and *rage*.

Everyone recognizes that the creature possess DR and their weapons draw paint rather than blood from the creature.

Wogan casts *spiritual weapon*. He then climbs into the room while the creature bites at Serpent. Wogan's *spiritual trident* and Samaritha's *magic missile* spell both deliver full damage. The

creature grabs Samaritha with a spare tentacle (it has nine) but she wiggles free. Serpent chops again with his magic battle axe. Another volley of *magic missiles* 'pops' the creature, leaving Serpent standing in a big puddle of purple paint.

The pirates spend a minute to bind their wounds and *prestidigitate* the paint from Serpent's body. They move through the house but do not find Ansar or even signs that he has been there for a while. The pirates search the bedroom; Wogan finds a chest beneath a loose flagstone beneath a large throw rug. Serpent chops the chest open to reveal Ansar's gendarme uniform, mementos from Riddleport, and money (679gp). They steal it all.

The desk holds a number of sketches showing Kuthite style art: cenobite priests, slaves hauling a cart holding a shadowy figure, skeletons playing cards, etc... They take those as well.

The kitchen is searched – there is spoiled food suggesting no one has been there for a week or two. The bathroom shows little use too. Sindawe spots Lucien and several constables across the rainy street watching from beneath a covered awning, clearly discussing whether they should go check the house out or not.

### *BOROI MANOR*

The pirates slip out the back, leaving their vandalism behind, and head out to Boroi Manor. The manor is the oldest building in Karpad and rests on a hillside overlooking the town. It is surrounded by large bonfires that easily fight off the light drizzle while revealing the building's weathered exterior. The manor itself is a stone octagon with several branches that disappear into the hillside.

The pirates follow a path to the front door. Wogan bangs on the iron shod door until an old man opens the door. His worried face emits a tentative, "Hello?"

Wogan introduces himself, "I am Anya's brother."

The old man says, “One moment.” He closes the door then opens it again a minute later, “Come in. I am the baron’s majordomo.”

Two statues guard the entryway – one carries a sword and is missing its nose and the other carries a whip and is missing its ears.

The majordomo escorts Wogan and his friends down a long hallway to a sitting room (red wallpaper, old books, overstuffed chairs, table). An elegantly dressed, pretty young woman sits at the table. Her short sleeves reveal spiral scars.

Wogan says, “Anya!” The pair hug. He notes her pinkie and ring finger on one hand are missing at the first joint.

She notes his concerned look and says, “It is a local Nidalese custom for the gentry. It shows we don’t have to work for our living.” She seems pleased enough with that tradeoff.

Wogan introduces his friends. He asks Anya, “Tell us about the disease. Are you okay?”

She offers them refreshments, then explains, “*Tallowtbroat* is the sickness making the rounds. It first appeared here, striking several servants sick. My husband dismissed the extra help, mainly the fetchlings, and we’ve stayed separated from the town since. The bonfires are a defense against the illness... it seems to spread more easily in darkness. My husband is convinced he can find the cure.” The baron is greatly stressed by the plague, shadow creatures and day to day operations. He spends most of his time in the library.

Sindawe requests a letter from the baron to give their investigation weight with the locals. He also suggests that Wogan examine the staff and other manor denizens for the disease. Anya agrees.

Anya offers them three rooms at the manor house during their stay. Then she asks Wogan about his years since the last saw each other. And she mentions her newborn son.

They find out that the bonfires are fueled by 'found wood' from the manor lands, but mostly it is purchased from the local lumber operation.

Wogan asks about the shadow creature attacks, but Anya knows little about anything going on outside the manor house due to the lockdown.

Sindawe asks Anya about local troublemakers, but is told such people are not tolerated.

They discuss Ansar (a local boy who went to Riddleport and came back) but Anya knows nothing more.

She warns them, "My husband might be cross with me for letting you in. But he'll get over that." When prodded she allows, "You can look around but stay out of locked rooms. And downstairs. Downstairs is a Zon-Kuthon shrine and cells. And a jailer."

A human servant brings in a baby who Anya introduces as, "Your nephew, Marek." Wogan holds the creature as if it is made of glass.

A servant shows the pirates to their rooms on the second floor. The windows there overlook a central courtyard that is poor repair. A fountain sits with stale water. Plants are overgrown. The guest rooms are nice and smell only a little musty from disuse.

The pirates decide to return to town for their gear and investigation.

## *BACK TO TOWN*

The inn owners are sorry to see paying guests leave. Rucia, the waitress, entices them into a round of beers before they depart. She brings out the beer and a note for Wogan.

Wogan reads the note, then excuses himself. Rucia meets Wogan at his room. She says, "I know you are strangers. I need to talk to you about something. Swear by your god you won't tell anyone."

Wogan looks at her suspiciously, then says, “I swear by my god.”

She says, “I saw the sign. The moth came to you, so you must be here to help me. I have had visions of a giant butterfly. But I can’t discuss it with anyone here because worshipping any but Zon-Kuthon is punishable by death.”

Wogan says, “Well you have clearly been selected and you can’t refuse such a gift.” He measures her up and decides she isn’t an informant for the local cenobites.

They agree to meet later and discuss her visions.

### *THE FETCHLINGS ARE POLITE BUT KNOW NOTHING*

The pirates walk over to Shade Row where the fetchlings live. Their neighborhood is separated from the town by the brook. They get dirty looks from the non-fetchlings as they enter the ghetto. Fetchlings look at the pirates and quickly retreat to their home.

They are eying the fetchling bar when the fetchling ranger Sergei approaches with an old woman. He says, “This is Ms. Zagrev, mayor of Shade Row.” Greetings are exchanged. Wogan detects her Chelish accent. The group retreats to the tavern for a private conversation:

- Ms. Zagrev confirms that none of the fetchlings have gotten sick.
- She knows that Lucien’s nine year-old daughter has been missing for two days.
- The thief in the baron’s jail is a local ne’er-do-well. He will be shipped off soon for formal punishment.
- Wogan asks about Ansar. She knows only that he made a living painting locals and selling images of Zon-Kuthon.

- She knows nothing about strange beasts, but does confide that monsters, shadowcallers, and folks 'looking for a way out' do provide for a number of unexplained disappearances each year.
- She knew the baron when he was a boy. He was stern. His older brothers died leaving him the barony.
- They also interview the baron's ex-fetchling servants.
  - The baron fired his fetchlings when the plague came... except for the hound master, Gavril, who has a talent for handling the baron's beloved yet temperamental hounds.
  - He was stern, the baroness kind. The work was plentiful and the pay good. Stephan started acting strange before the plague arrived. Several gardeners were the first to die from the plague.
  - The baron's shrine is haunted. And the baron doesn't use it much.
  - The baron's jailer, Isiem, is an awful man who takes pleasure in torturing his prisoners.
  - The maids are the only other interesting servants. One of the fetchlings discusses his imaginations of their sex lives for several minutes.

### *SEE THE WITCH*

The witch, Nadia Witchblood, lives in a cottage just north of Karpad. The trees grow close together there, blocking out the gray sky, but not the drizzle. The cottage is overgrown with leafless vines. The ground between cottage and its fence is covered with a thin sheen of ice.

Serpent looks at the vines and ground, then announces, “Those plants have been killed by frost.”

After some prompting the witch appears in the doorway, being careful to stay in the shadows. “You are strangers in Karpad. Who are you?”

Introductions are made.

Nadia asks, “What do you want with me?”

Wogan replies, “We want to talk. About the goings on in your town.”

Nadia replies cryptically, “I will if you are worthy.”

Sindawe walks to the door, stepping on the ice covered ground. Nadia steps outside. She is a half-elf with white hair and gray eyes. She appears youthful.

Wogan hands iogp to Serpent, “You were right. She is an attractive witch.”

Sindawe sweet talks Nadia, asking for her help. She agrees for a price... gold then maybe more later. She invites them inside, where it is cold and there is no fire.

Nadia accuses them of investigating her. Sindawe denies that they’re looking at her as the cause, then they discuss the plague and shadow creatures. Nadia explains that the shadow creatures are really a local bogeyman. Yes, there are the occasional real *shadows*. But the creatures plaguing the town are something different. Sindawe rubs his scalp... apparently ‘bogeyman’ in Nidal means “something very real and very terrible”.

Wogan asks, “How does one combat these shadow creatures?”

Nadia replies, “The bonfires keep the creatures at bay. My magics do the same.” Her breath doesn’t fog in the cold air.

She offers to read their auras... for silver. Wogan hands over his silver. Nadia takes his palms in hand. In a very short time she mutters, then jumps back from the table in alarm!

Nadia slashes the air with icy claws, keeping the startled pirates away. She screams, “You bring the same curse to Karpad! Leave!”

Sindawe and Wogan talk calmly to the woman, assuring they are here to help.

Nadia shakes her head, “You bear the curse. You bring troubles with you.” She remains hostile.

Sindawe asks about the missing girl child. Nadia offers only cryptic comments and threats (backed up by icy claws).

The pirates leave the cottage and return to town.

### *THE BAKER, HIS MISSING WIFE, AND THE CANDLE MAKER*

The pirates turned investigators decide they need a win. They will question the baker to see if he murdered his wife. Samaritha suggests *dominate* backed by *charm person* for maximum deniability after the fact... Just in case he is innocent.

The pirates enter the bakery, wait until a lone customer leaves, then begin their plan. Samaritha casts her spells on the hapless baker. Then the questions begin.

*Do you know what happened to your wife?*

*No. She just disappeared one day.*

*What day was that?*

*It was about a month ago. She had lunch with her friend Catalina that day. When I got home she had not returned. <a tear rolls down his face... Samaritha exclaims, “You poor man.”>*

*What do you think happened?*

*I know what people say. But I know that's not true. She wouldn't do that. She must have been abducted by monsters or shadowcallers or something. I asked Catalina – she said they had lunch then went their separate ways. She gave me a free candle.*

Samaritha steps him down, then leaves a handsome tip for the purchased pastries.

The group walks to the chandlery to interrogate Catalina. It is shop with a large front window. It occurs to them that the shop must be supplying many, many candles to the townsfolk to scare the shadow creature away.

Wogan spots a small figure under a cart near the store. Small enough to be a little girl. He whispers that information to the others, then turns around and calls out.

In reply, the little girl runs, cutting behind the building and heading toward the bridge. Sindawe and Serpent follow closely. The blonde girl dashes under the bridge well ahead of her pursuers. Sindawe catches her in the bridge's shadow. She squeals and thrashes. Sindawe does his best to calm her down but fails miserably. The other pirates catch up. Her violent thrashing lasts only a minute before she exhausts herself.

The girl cries weakly, "My dad is Lucien. He has a mace. He'll beat you with his mace!"

Wogan asks, "Your father and everyone else is looking for you. Where have you been?"

The girl claims that she goes home every day just before dark.

Sindawe points out some wax drippings on her clothes.

Wogan searches the area and finds a hole under the bridge, large enough for a child. He looks the girl over and guesses that someone has been feeding her.

Wogan asks, "Have you been to the candle store?"

“Well, I had a dream that I was at the candle store. A man, well, a big doll was there. He was nice to me. Further questions reveal that the doll man was perhaps a man wearing a mask.

Wogan uses his beast box to summon a rat, then orders it to fetch items from the hole. Olya (the little girl) watches with great interest. Her crying and shaking slow, then subside. The rat recovers a wooden spiked chain and a candle. The former is a common child’s toy in Nidal. The latter item means a certain candle maker is going to die (that’s pirate investigation and justice for you).

### *CHILD AND PARENTS REUNITED*

The pirates take Olya to the inn for lunch. The owners and locals are excited to see the girl. One villager is ordered to fetch Olya’s father, Lucien, while the pirates’ women care for the girl. Lucien and his wife arrive a short time later, but the reunion is bitter sweet... Olya has fallen asleep and cannot be woken. Wogan examines her finding she has the early symptoms for *tallow throat*.