

REAVERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE - SESSION SUMMARY 12/01/2013

TODAY'S EPISODE: CASTING SHADOWS

Wogan and his comrades are in the village of Karpad, deep inside the shadow-haunted nation of Nidal. He has been summoned by his sister, Anya, to deal with the problems plaguing her home town. The pirates' investigation has uncovered a horror factory beneath the town's chandlery. Kidnapped townsfolk were impregnated with aberration spawn, some of which become awful moths and others that become shadows. The factory and its denizens have been slain, the local law has been summoned to witness it all. Yet the ringleaders have not been revealed.

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.

NOW WHAT'S ALL OF THIS ABOUT?

Serpent and Wogan finish identifying several of the magic items just before the law shows up: a *ring of climbing* and a *candle of truth*.

The lawmen show up well after the battle and investigation (and looting) have been completed. One of the wounded guardsman leads Lucien, the guard captain, and the remaining guardsmen into the chandlery basement. Lucien and three of his guardsmen are still showing wounds from fights that occurred earlier that day.

Lucien demands, "Now what's all of this about?"

Wogan describes what they believe has gone on here: the chandlery owner has been kidnapping (methods unknown) locals, imprisoning them in the basement using vats of wax, and infecting them with *tallowthroat* and aberration spawn.

Lucien and his deputies discuss their options, most of which involve sealing the remaining infected in a building and burning it down. The pirates briefly talk the lawmen through their options. This doesn't help the lawmen come up with a solution but it does seem to introduce the idea that killing the infected might actually speed up the release of shadows.

THE WIFE'S CONCERNS

The party returns to the Weeping Willow Inn to find Hatshepsut guarding Samaritha's door. Samaritha woke up earlier but became so agitated that she thought it best to wait outside. Serpent enters the room alone after knocking. He finds his wife working with her scroll materials; she is sketching instead of creating a magical scroll. Serpent notes her fevered condition and asks to

examine her. She grows angry at Serpent's questions about her drawings (mostly of snake skeletons in H.R. Giger style). Her eyes turn black, her voice changes indicating a different speaker, and she grabs Serpent by the throat... Her touch dissolves some of his flesh into shadow and leaves him feeling drained (2 con damage).

Outside, Rucia brings Wogan, Sindawe, and Hatshepsut a bottle of rum and glasses. Wogan asks, "Can we talk in private? About your visions?" They go into a side room and he starts quizzing her about her butterfly and moth visions, trying to determine if they are inspired by Desna or by shadow hellmoths. This line of questioning is interrupted shortly by a huge commotion from the hallway.

Rather than attack his wife, Serpent jumps back and drinks a *potion of invisibility*. He runs past her into the hall and yells, "My wife has gone crazy! Help!" His friends see Samaritha run into the hall and leap upon an invisible figure. She drains more constitution from Serpent even as he reverses the grapple.

Serpent yells out, "She's draining my life force! And no this isn't some joke about marriage!"

Wogan, noticing Samaritha's unusual characteristics, responds by using *cure light wounds* to 'exorcise' Samaritha, while Serpent pins her to the ground. She writhes in pain from the spell's touch, then breaks free of her husband's grasp. She leaps up to run but is immediately tripped and thrown back down by Sindawe. Serpent and Sindawe grapple and pin her while fighting off her attempts to control their minds. Hatshepsut grabs the barmaid, Rucia, then moves to watch the stairs.

Wogan continues casting healing spells on the pinned woman, causing her to shriek. A shadowy creature is forced from her body. It has a grub like body with tentacles. Samaritha slumps unconscious. Serpent slashes at the creature proving it is incorporeal; he retreats to recover his magic

staff from the weapons box. Hatshepsut and Sindawe beat on the creature. Wogan drives the creature away using a positive energy burst. It dives through the floor to the inn's common room.

Hatshepsut, Wogan and Serpent run downstairs. Sindawe retrieves his orichalcum gauntlets from the weapons box. Inn patrons crowd at the base of the stairs. More patrons are in the common room; some are panicking while others have dropped unmoving to the ground. Everyone decides it is time to flee the building. Serpent moves amongst the people to touch them with his staff hoping its orichalcum will reveal who is possessed. It works - It is the tavern owner's wife! The shadows come out of his staff, however, and she grabs it and sends the flesh-dissolving power through it into him. He subdues her with his staff. Hatshepsut uses the fireplace poker to drag the unconscious woman to the fire place, which invites the shadow creature to emerge and attack her. Serpent is ready; he destroys the shadow with his orichalcum staff. It screams then dissipates.

The pirates regroup their members in the common room. Wogan examines the tavern owners and Samaritha; all are infected with *tallowthroat*.

Sindawe asks Wogan, "Shall we press our luck? Use your healing to surgically remove their parasites? We can use the fireplace's heat and light to aid the endeavor." The pirates are somewhat convinced that heat and/or light weakens the parasites causing *tallowthroat*. Or at least upsets it enough to get it to come out and play.

Wogan reluctantly agrees. Sindawe orders the barmaid to lock the front doors and loudly announce Lucien and his men when they arrive. Very loudly. Then he orders the Zon-Kuthon painting and the eyeless dolls removed to the kitchen.

Wogan starts with the tavern owners searching for a parasite. He finds none possibly because they are in the early stages of the disease. He casts *remove disease* on Samaritha, whose

condition seems to improve immediately. Meanwhile, Serpent casts *lesser restoration* to recoup his constitution.

A short time later several guardsmen arrive and knock hesitantly. The pirates show them what has happened. The guardsmen declare the inn a quarantine zone, which the pirates decide is awesome until they find out that they are included in the quarantine. They argue with the guardsmen without much success.

Sindawe and Serpent board up windows while Wogan questions Rucia about her Desnan dream. He initially suspects it might be related to the Gloom Moths, but he becomes more convinced after further discussion that she has been chosen by Desna. She might become a cleric or oracle. If she's not loaded into an iron cage for torture and disposal.

The pirates load up on weapons, then strike out for the baron's manor house. They duck under the quarantine rope at the inn's front door.

DINNER AND FRUITLESS CONVERSATION

The majordomo answers the front door. He allows the guests in. Noting their many weapons he offers them use of the weapons closet. They refuse but do accept an offer for a quick wash up before dinner. At dinner they enjoy multiple courses prepared by the cook and his two assistants. Anya asks Wogan about his investigations and decides that some of their findings deserves a private chat with her husband the baron... who is not present at dinner.

After dinner she writes a request to her husband, Stepan, for a private audience between him and his guests. The majordomo returns with a positive reply; the baron will see them in his study. En route they spot the fetchling hound master training dogs in the central courtyard.

The baron's study is a mess of scattered books, correspondence, and writing materials. The baron himself appears harried yet healthy. Introductions are made. Wogan describes what their investigation has uncovered.

Stephan nods, "I see. My research shows that the disease is intelligent, designed to wipe out my family and its people." He continues, "I believe the fetchlings are behind the disease, perhaps as part of a rebellion."

Sindawe notes that the man does not cast a shadow.

The baron inquires about the next step in their investigation. The pirates shrug and explain that they have no leads, though they would like to question Ansar, the ex-Riddleport gendarme. Stepan is unable to offer any help on that front. He does mention that Ansar is a talented painter. Many people have an Ansar original hanging in their homes or businesses. Several people, including the church and Stephan himself have had paintings commissioned.

Sindawe asks, "What does it mean around here when a man has no shadow?"

The baron replies, "Well, they probably wouldn't flaunt it around, it might be seen as a sign of disrespect to the shadow lord (Zon-Kuthon)."

Everyone stares at one another for many long seconds waiting for someone to throw down or continue asking about missing shadows. No one does, so the meeting ends.

The majordomo escorts the pirates to see Ansar's painting, which hangs in the manor house's Zon-Kuthon temple (basement level). They pass an iron maiden with the image of a woman in bridal gown and veil on it. That woman turns out to be Stepan's aunt Evgenia, who declared herself a bride of Zon-Kuthon and had herself sealed in an iron maiden. She passed in three weeks.

Ansar's painting is 3'x6' and looks slick, as if still wet. It shows a night hag riding a horse with chained demons and lemures in tow. Wogan eyes play tricks on him; the painting's figures appear to be moving. Sindawe notices a cypher glyph on the frame.

Sindawe walks the majordomo out of the room, leaving Serpent and Wogan behind to inspect the painting more closely... and use spells. Wogan finds it is magical, but is unable to narrow down the specifics. He uses a pistol to pull the painting away from the wall. This seems to cause the iron maiden to turn and face him.

Wogan and Serpent move over to the iron maiden, cautiously. Wogan knocks on the device, then backs away as a beautiful, punctured lady ghost emerges from the device.

The ghost asks, "Who disturbs me?"

The pirates talk to the ghost while the majordomo flees. The conversation serves no purpose except to upset the ghost enough to chase the pirates clear of the shrine.

GHOSTLY INTERROGATION

Confused and befuddled, the pirates decide to turn in for the evening. They camp in one room, leaving one person on guard duty. It is on Wogan's watch that the ghost bride appears.

She demands, "What are you doing here in my home?"

Wogan replies, "I am here investigating strange happenings for my sister." He describes them.

Ghost Lady nods, "It is good that the Shadow Lord shares his blessings."

Wogan tries reason, "Some people don't want these blessings. They are being kidnapped and infected against their wills."

Ghost Lady shrugs, "Zon-Kuthon is beyond need. He is judging Karpad."

Wogan asks, “Why?”

She explains, “It is Stepan’s fault. Stepan was a quiet bookish boy and is now a callow weak man. His brothers would have been better rulers... but they died. He didn’t bring them to me for healing or the proper funeral rites. Stepan gave me the painting; I guess he is not all bad.” She departs, probably to stare at the gift painting.

Wogan waits until morning to tell the others what happened.

They eat a hearty breakfast, then decide to visit the prisoner. They find a locked and barred door, beyond which a bored guard waits. Said bored guard refuses them entry until adequately threatened. The guard’s name is Isiem; he directs them to cell #5.

The pirates find a young human, freshly beaten, in the cell. He stirs. They question him at length about his crimes, associates, and anything strange he might have seen:

- His name is Yuris.
- His crime is theft. “My buddy stole candlesticks from the fetchlings. It got pinned on me. My buddy’s name is Cosmin.”
- Wogan describes the dead woodsman from the chandlery’s subbasement. Yuris says, “I don’t know that guy. Cosmin was feeling sick just before he disappeared. He went into town to purchase medicine.”
- They get rough locations of homes and camp sites belonging to Yuris, Cosmin and the dead woodsman from the chandlery.

Sindawe shares biscuits with Yuris and Isiem, courtesy of Stepan’s kitchen.

The loot hole contains:

- +1 *heavy mace* * 2
- +1 *mithral chain mail* * 2
- an *amulet of natural armor* +2. It has a Kuthite theme.
- a *bat of disguise*. It is made from fey skin leather, potentially from Boutique Zeleve.
- a *ring of protection* +2
- a *headband of mental prowess* +2. The band is barbed wire.
- a *cloak of resistance* +3
- 1,167.6 gp in various coins
- a 20gp zircon gemstone from the tiefling's hidden pocket.

New, legal loot from the Candlerly Shop:

- 65gp, 29sp, 88cp
- *magic candle (flesh colored wrapped in barbed wire)*.
- *ring of climbing*
- *a bagged everburning torch*
- Paraffin barrel: *cure moderate wounds potion, composite long bow (+1 strength), 15 arrows, four daggers, one set of masterwork studded leather and 2,000 gp in assorted cash and jewelry (including an*