

REAVERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE - SESSION SUMMARY 12/15/2013

TODAY'S EPISODE: PAINTED 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 ringleaders have not been revealed. A trip to the manor house reveals that the baron's family has something to do with the shadows, but not enough to give the pirates a target.

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.

WHAT NEXT?

The pirates have just finished talking to the baron's prisoner, Yuris, and his guard, Isiem. Yuris is in a holding cell waiting for the prisoner caravan and is eager to hand over his accomplices to get a break. He tells them:

- His name is Yuris.
- His crime is theft. "My buddy stole candlesticks holders 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."
- Rough locations of homes and camp sites belonging to Yuris, Cosmin and the dead woodsman from the chandlery.

WRATH OF THE ICONS

Wogan asks, "Are we going to the temple now? To investigate Ansar's painting there?"

Sindawe says, "But that will end poorly. A Zon-Kuthon themed monster will emerge, attack us, and the clerics will join in because 'it is a miracle'."

Serpent replies, "Let's confront the baron about his lack of shadow."

Sindawe says, "But we already did that and nothing happened beyond the baron offering a lame explanation."

Serpent corrects him, "No, you asked and he gave an evasive, non-answer."

Sindawe shrugs, “If the bad guys are that clever...”

The pirates walk through the morning’s misting, gray skies to arrive at the torture-themed Zon-Kuthon temple. Wogan casts *detect magic* before entering, then wanders about. Serpent wanders off too. Sindawe asks about Ansar’s painting and is told, “Radu Miklos, the head priest, purchased it with his own funds and hung it the cleric quarters.”

Serpent finds the painting first. There is a city of humans defending against a large attacking army of skeletons. He leans in close for the artist’s signature, then feels his Cyphergate glyph burn. He whips out his staff and spins about looking for attackers. Luckily, there are no clerics about... or monsters.



Movement on the painting catches his eye. There is a tiny figure that might be Ansar, waving then pointing at him. He touches the figure and is surprised when his finger presses through

the paint. His hand comes back out, covered in paint and tingling. He runs off to get Wogan and Sindawe.

The three pirates stand before the painting. All of their glyphs burn. Sindawe spots a shadowy image of Ansar in the sky on the painting. And then the first rank of skeletons steps out of the painting.

Luckily the pirates were expecting a fight. Wogan hits the skeletons with a *positive energy burst*. The skeletons do not recoil from the attack but the shadowy figure of Ansar does. A shadowy figure of amber mist flies out of the painting and strikes Wogan (3pts of Charisma), then continues onto the ceiling.

Sindawe grabs Wogan and runs to the front room. Serpent watches his departing companions and decides, as usual, "Fight!" He strikes down one skeleton then suffers several natural r's. His staff begins bleeding shadows and the Ansar shadow flies into his body. The two briefly struggle for possession of his flesh; Serpent wins and ejects the phantom.

More skeletons emerge from the painting to attack Serpent as the shadow also torments him using fly-by attack, moving between the painting and the ceiling. Serpent misses with a held attack but is struck in turn by the shadow (5pts of Charisma). Wogan returns to the room to attack skeletons.

Sindawe stares at the Zon-Kuthon acolytes and demands, "Well, are you going to do anything about the skeletons back there?" The acolytes listen to the battle noises coming from their living quarters and give the, "Oh gosh, what do I do now?" face. He drinks a *fiery breath* potion and runs back into the room, heedless of the skeletons.

More skeletons step out of the painting. Skeletons claw at the trio of pirates.

Shadow Ansar gives a syphilitic chuckle and declares, “You can’t stop me. The child will be mine.” The temple begins transitioning into the landscape from the painting.

Sindawe breathes fire on the painting. It burns. The transition continues. Wogan pulls out a bomb (a Warner Bros’ Road Runner style bomb); he cackles madly. A painted skeleton strikes him from behind (12pts). Wogan hits the painting with his bomb, tearing clear through the painting. Bomb shrapnel destroys the latest rank of skeletons and injures Sindawe. The skeletons dissolve into burning paint. The painting is mostly destroyed.

Shadow Ansar flies by Sindawe but does not connect. Sindawe breathes fire onto the painting again; it is destroyed. Shadow Ansar declares, “No! My painting!” Unable to reach Shadow Ansar, Serpent takes his rage out on the painted skeletons, who die in droves.

Several Zon-Kuthon acolytes stand in the doorway, attempting to *control undead*. The painted skeletons ignore their commands and several of their number attack the acolytes.

Shadow Ansar cackles, “You are too late! The child will be ours!” Then he flies through another painting (a head shot of Zon-Kuthon) and seemingly disappears.

Sindawe runs to Olga’s room. The girl child greets him weakly, “Hi, mister.” Sindawe does not see Shadow Ansar.

Serpent and the acolytes bash down the remaining skeletons. One acolyte falls before the skeleton. Wogan runs after Sindawe.

The last skeleton has long since been smashed into a pool of paralytic paint when Father Radu Miklos, Sheriff Lucien, and minion clerics show up and demand, “What happened here?”

The pirates explain. Everyone seems to agree that something happened and it probably wasn’t Zon-Kuthon sanctioned.

Wogan remembers, “Hey, Shadow Ansar said ‘the child’ not the ‘the girl’. Maybe he meant my nephew!” The pirates hoof it up to the manor house, through the bonfires surrounding it.

BASEMENT ART

Wogan bangs on the door of the manor. There is no answer. Sindawe looks for other ways into the fortresslike building. Eventually the peep hole is opened, then the door unlocked and thrown wide by the baron, the majordomo, and the hound master.

Wogan demands, “Is Merric OK? Where is he?”

Baron Stephan replies, “He and Anya are missing.”

Wogan explains the Ansar and paintings angle. Soon everyone is running to the basement to confront the Ansar painting there.

Sindawe yells to Stephan, “Your dead aunt is crazy. Her ghost haunts the basement. She’ll interfere with us.”

Stephan replies, “She is family. It will be all right.”

Sindawe rolls his eyes.

They enter the temple room. Ansar’s painting (Zon-Kuthon on horseback trailed by several kytons and other hideous minions) hangs from a wall. An iron maiden stands nearby. It is wrapped in chains that appear to be made of paint.



The iron maiden shakes as if something is trying to get out. A voice rings out from inside, “Stephan, they took your wife and child.”

Shadow Ansar materializes in the painting. “You will never reach him. Attack!” Kytons and a hag emerge from the painting. Battle begins.

Wogan casts *cure critical wounds* in anticipation of touching Shadow Ansar. Sindawe uses his last *fiery breath* on the chains around the iron maiden, freeing the ghostly aunt Evgenia.

Stephan and his servants attack. The hound master releases the vicious hound. The major domo stands firm but lacks a weapon. Stephan strikes a kyton with his family long sword. A kyton chain strikes the major domo, nearly killing him. Sindawe dives under another kyton chain.

The night hag bites Wogan (9pts and 3pts Con). Serpent attacks the night hag but is unable to connect. The iron maiden slides forward and its hinges creak open. Aunt Evgenia's desiccated corpse lies within. The iron maiden clamps down on the night hag.

The pirate's glyphs burn as Shadow Ansar emerges from the painting, "Join me in service to Chmetugo! You will become phantoms!"

Wogan demands, "Who's Chmetugo?"

Sindawe demands, "What's a phantom? Is that a shadow?"

Serpent replies, "Chmetugo is that shadow demon that keeps attacking us. And the things that come from the shadow realm connected to our cypherglyphs are phantoms. It's a good thing I have this headband of vast intelligence, because otherwise I'd be a forgetful shmoo like the rest of you."

Stephan strikes a kyton for a slight amount of damage. His hound does even less. The majordomo rips free of the barbs and flees... until a second kyton chain drags him back where the night hag bites his throat out; his blood sprays red in the dark basement. Sindawe drinks another *fiery breath* potion and burns the painting (17pts).

Serpent drives the night hag into the iron maiden, which slams shut. But the night hag struggles free. Shadow Ansar strikes Sindawe (6 Charisma) but leaves himself open to Wogan's touch – a *cure critical wounds* delivers 28pts of damage. Sindawe breathes fire on the painting again (12pts). A kyton chain wraps around the hound. The other kyton animates chains which surround and seal the iron maiden.

Wogan casts another *cure critical wounds*. Stephan hacks at a kyton. The hound master tries to free his hound. Sindawe burns the painting leaving small patches.

A kyton and the night hag attack Stephan who defends desperately and successfully against both. Serpent hounds the night hag, striking her readily.

Shadow Ansar screams, “No! Spare my painting and I will tell you everything!”

Sindawe demands, “Give us the woman and child and you have a deal!”

Shadow Ansar, “I cannot...”

Sindawe tears the burning painting apart and Ansar disincorporates with a shriek. A tiny, golden glyph shrapnel falls to the floor with a ting! Wogan dives for the shrapnel and catches it. The shrapnel sinks into his flesh, leaving a metallic glyph tattoo of on the surface. Wogan stands and delivers a *burst of positive energy burst* (healing 11pts).

The hag bites the baron, poison pouring from its fangs. Kyton chains whip around the room. Serpent crunches the night hag with his staff. Spectral Aunt Evgenia attempts a *bestow curse* upon the kyton chaining her iron maiden.

Sindawe runs and trips a kyton, throwing the painted devil down between himself and Serpent. The downed devil flails about with eight spiked chains. Serpent beats upon the devil. Sindawe beats on the devil. The devil doesn't die immediately, protected by the DR granted it by its *paint* template. But a second round of staff and fist beating does it in.

The night hag and other kyton continue attacking Baron Stephan and the hound master. Wogan casts another *positive energy burst*, then blasts the night hag with his blunderbuss. The kyton and night hag switch to attacking Wogan. Serpent flanks with Baron Stephan against the night hag.

Aunt Evgenia bursts free from the iron maiden sending paint chain shrapnel across the room. She pulls the remaining kyton into the iron maiden with her. Wogan uses the distraction to step back, draw his short musket, and blasts the kyton's flailing limbs. Stephan joins in, hacking with his

sword. Sindawe steps up to the night hag and throws her to the floor. Serpent pounces upon the night hag, pounding her into a puddle of paint. Sindawe and Serpent push the kyton further into the iron maiden, which slams shut.

Aunt Evgenia announces from inside the iron maiden, "I have waited a long time for my bride groom. You will do for now."

Sindawe knocks on the iron maiden, "Aunt Evgenia, where did they take Stephan's bride and son?" He gets no response but the disturbing sounds from within cause him to move away quickly.

Stephan says, "Follow me. I know where they were taken, but we need something from my study."

THE MIDNIGHT MIRROR

The pirates, the hound master join Baron Stephan in his study. They drink whiskey from a crystal decanter and glasses. Fortified, Stephan explains:

A Midnight Mirror is in the vaults. The church uses them to imprison people. This one has been with my family since the barony's founding a thousand years ago. It was used to imprison the leader of the fetchling rebellion. This one is also cracked and allows access to the shadow plane, which might be why the local fetchlings reproduce more quickly.

My family struck a deal with a demon within the shadow realm to guard our holdings. The cost is the first born child from each generation. But I reneged on the deal, because I love Anya and my son. I have been researching a means to close the gap or destroy the mirror.

Destroying the mirror is a difficult feat; if not done correctly its destruction will only open the gap wider. But I have found the way to do it. Will you take this dangerous mission?

Wogan answers, "I will risk it all for my sister. And my nephew."

Sindawe adds, "Yes, we will do the same. But you, Stephan, must make sure the church, the law, and other officials do not interfere with us."

Stephan agrees to that and says, "The mirror is a prison. The only way to destroy it is from inside it."

Wogan, "Won't that free the prisoners?"

Stephan, "Yes. But they can die there so there shouldn't be very many." He shows the pirates a huge tome titled, *The Night Without Moon*. He continues, "I will tie your shadows to this book, to tie your spirits to this plane. You will take this original shard of mirror into the mirror and destroy its heart. The entity my family has the bargain with is Nicastor, a shae, a creature of shadow. He will try to stop you. The heart itself controls the environment within the mirror."

Wogan says, "So, Nicastor will have the heart?"

Stephan replies, "I believe it is a location rather than an item. Nicastor might live there."

Sindawe senses that Baron Stephan is holding some information back, but is unable to get Stephan to round out the details. He says, "You will live to regret your secrets."

They go back down to the basement and think to check the dungeon and on its guard and inmate. They find Yuris and Isiem melded into a single piece of Kuthite art. Their bones are fused to the ceiling, their flesh hangs festively. Blood pools on the floor.

Baron Stephan says, "Ah." He closes the door.

THE PHANTOM ZONE

Baron Stephan opens the vault doors with his keys. An interior room contains a large mirror... *The Midnight Mirror*.

He hands the mirror shard to Wogan and says, “I am unable to enter the mirror. It is part of the deal with the Nicastor. We descendants cannot be drawn into the mirror. I need to take your shadow, let it fall across the tome.”

Wogan, then Serpent, and then Sindawe let Stephan take their shadows. Wogan takes no ill effect, but Serpent is struck with melancholy (sickened). The pirates enter the mirror.

THE END OF THE SESSION

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 Chandlery:

- 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 expensive wedding ring with large diamond).*