

REAVERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE - SESSION SUMMARY 03/09/2014

TODAY'S EPISODE: LIONS AND TIGERS, AND FROGHEMOTHS! OH MY!

The pirates are on a ranch in the Atteran Ranch region of Nidal. The area is plains edged by haunted woods. The weather is cold; the grasses are frost tipped. They want a guide to take them into the Nidalese swamps to where they hope to capture a froghemoth for the infamous necromancer, Thartane.

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.

ATTERAN RANCH

Sindawe, Hatshepsut, Wogan, Samaritha, Serpent and Rucia ride up to the ranch house where introductions are made. The ranch owner is Velda Atteran, a woman with brown hair and golden skin. She invites them inside to a room where she sits behind a large desk and visitors sit in mismatched chairs.

Velda says, "My friend, Baron Stephan, sent you my way. What can I do to help you?"

Wogan explains, “We need a guide to take us into the swamps and help us trap a froghemoth.”

Velda replies, “I know some locals who are decent guides.” She asks a ranch hand, “Who would you recommend?”

The ranch hand considers while scratching beneath his eye patch, “Stig. He knows the swamps.”

Velda appears unhappy with that answer but nods, “Send a rider to fetch him.” She tells her visitors, “He always needs work; he should be here by morning.”

She asks, “Where are you from? Pardon me for saying, but you don’t look local.”

Wogan slyly replies, “We are from Varisia, round about Magnimar.”

Sindawe says, “Yup. We love applesauce and mayonnaise.”

Serpent adds, “We got a lot of statues.”

Velda digests this, then asks, “You passed through Karpad, correct? What is new there?”

Wogan nods, “I can tell you all of that, but my voice is rusty. Some rum would help.”

Velda orders drinks for her visitors.

Wogan drinks his first cup dry, then begins: He tells her of the plague, Baron Stephan’s new wife and newer baby, and a few other tidbits.

Velda offers them dinner and a place to sleep. The pirates thank her. Velda ends the meeting as she is busy running the ranch; the pirates depart to wait for dinner.

The pirates explore the ranch until the dinner bell (5 o’clock). They join thirty or so ranch hands at long tables for hearty food. The pirates assume their families are far away; there are no children and very few women.

The ranch hands are unlike most of the Nidalese encountered. They are taciturn, yet friendly enough to talk to strangers. They very rarely invoke Zon-Kuthon. Even more rare are the self-inflicted wounds popular amongst the Kuthites. The pirates discuss amongst themselves the absence of the faceless dolls that supposedly watch the populace for the Nidalese theocracy.

The ranch hands ask their visitors quite a few questions betraying an interest in foreign lands and customs (“Is it true that you can’t build new buildings in Magnimar and that you have to leave existing ones in ruins?”). Mostly the pirates keep to their “We are from Varisia” story, until Serpent tells them about his Ulfen homeland.

Dinner ends when Velda tells her hands, “Well done. It was a good day’s work.” She departs while the dishes are cleared.

Rucia tells Wogan, “There is a hot spring in the mountains near here that if you survive bathing in it, will turn your skin yellow and tells you how you will die. That must be what Velda did.”

The ladies say goodnight and retire to a small bunk house reserved for the women. Serpent, Sindawe, and Wogan join the ranch hands around several large fires and drink.

Wogan finds out some local news:

- There are several dream hunters ‘about’
- One hand saw a frogemoth... once. It ate a horse with its horrific frog mouth and razor fangs.
- A lass named Wendy, who lives on the edge of ranch, is decent company for a handful of silver.

The night passes uneventfully. Breakfast consists of all the gruel you would want to eat. Velda sends a ranch hand around to tell the pirates that Stig has arrived.

Stig is a human bald, stout man. He wears homemade fur armor and is armed with an axe and a crossbow. He speaks with a drawl and uses a mixture of hill speak and archaic terms.

The pirates discuss terms with the hunter and settle on 40 gp a day. Wogan manages to negotiate the price down from 50/day, but is not helped much by Serpent counting a big stack of coins while he negotiates.

BARROWMOOR, THE HILLS, AND THE USK RIVER

Stig and the pirates head out immediately. Stig describes the best route: thru Barrowmoor, along the foothills of the Irespan Mountains, and up to the Usk River. That section of the river is wide and slow moving; the bordering land is marshy, maybe even swampy.

Wogan comments, "Barrowmoor... sounds like it is full of undead."

Stig replies, "You said you lot are hard to scare. That's the best way. Or we circle around."

Serpent stares ahead with dead eyes and states, "I do not fear that place if you have been there."

Wogan asks, "Who is buried there?"

Stig replies, "The ancient horse lords buried their dead out there. Folks today claim it is cursed and has more undead than the ranches have horse droppings."

The morning is passed with Stig answering questions about frogheaths and the local country.

Stig's answers often seem evasive and/or fail to inspire confidence. Sindawe and Wogan grow suspicious and discuss Stig in Aklo. Sindawe thinks he is a murderous cannibal luring strangers to his backwoods clan. Wogan thinks Stig is a charlatan who leads them around in circles to drive the bill up.

Later that day the pirates spot another wagon in the distance, so Stig takes them around a hill and out of sight of the other folks. This makes everyone happy since the travelers might have been Nidalese officials, maybe even dream hunters. The group reaches the foot hills that evening, then makes camp for the night.

Stig warns them, "The mountains will make it extra cold. Freeze your tongue in your mouth so sleep with your mouth closed."

The group settles on three watches for the night. Stig also sets some traps to catch breakfast. The night passes without any real trouble, though the pirates and hunter find several items missing in the morning: game from one of Stig's traps, a sack of food, and Wogan's redcap shoes.

Wogan decides, "I paid a lot for those shoes. I want them back." His prayers that morning include one for *locate object*. He casts the spell when Stig isn't paying attention. However, the thief has moved out of the range of the spell.

Samaritha recharges Wogan's *rain tiger* (spell storing device) with several of her spells.

FROGHEMOTH COUNTRY

The pirates pass through the barrow mounds later that morning. The mounds are coated in charcoal. Everyone agrees to leave the mounds alone and sticks to their agreement. Nothing happens.

The pirates reach the river before lunch. The area is swampy - froghemoth country!

Stig and Serpent scout out a camp. Rucia is left with the wagon to start a meal. The rest of the group head into the swamp with Stig in the lead. Stig finds tracks for several different monster types spotting froghemoth sign – tall trees with damaged trucks and upper decks... froghemoths like a good scratching between meals. Stig finds tracks in the area.

Stig points out the tracks, then says, “Can I have my pay now? You all might not come back.”

The pirates pay Stig, who retires to the camp.

Serpent follows the tracks alone using Samaritha’s *fly* spell to navigate the more difficult terrain. He quickly locates the froghemoth’s nest; it lies underwater beneath a crust of ice. The three eggs rest in a sphere of mucous like fluid. The froghemoth is nowhere to be seen. Serpent reports back.

The pirates argue about their next step, then settle upon a plan. They will approach the nest rapidly. Serpent will build a blind...

Sindawe asks, “Don’t we want a blind?”

Wogan replies, “But it has three eyes. Hard to blind.”

The city slickers decide that Samaritha will hide in a nearby tree. Her job is draw the froghemoth in with spells, then shut it down with her *wand of lightning bolts*. (Froghemoths are slowed by electricity.) The rest will buff up then pummel the creature down and out.

The plan unfolds as described. The pirates set up shop about eighty feet from the nest. Serpent builds an excellent blind (Survival roll 29). Samaritha hides in the tree; everyone else stays in the blind.

Six hours later, the pirates hear rather than see the creature. Wogan quietly casts *freedom of movement* on himself and Serpent. Sindawe slickers Hatshepsut down with half of an elixir of slipperiness; she gives him the stink eye and refuses his offer to “do him”. He applies it to himself. Serpent casts *snake totem* on himself (better AC) and *bull's strength*.

Minutes drag by and still no monster. Sindawe finally spots an oddly bent group of cattails. The froghemoth is stalking the pirates! He dashes out of the blind and waves his arms. The froghemoth dispenses with stalking and strikes! The house sized creature leaps out of the water and lashes out across 25' of open ground with its tongue. Sindawe dodges aside.

Samaritha replies with a *lightning bolt*. The creature isn't harmed but it slows.

Pirates rush the monster while Wogan shoots from the safety of the blind. Hatshepsut is grabbed by a snatching bite on the approach, despite the *salve of slipperiness*. Sindawe and Serpent are just steps behind; they both hit the monster who remains unimpressed by her (?) dinner.

Hatshepsut worms her way free of the froghemoth's mouth, narrowly avoiding a chew and swallow. Samaritha sees the creature speeding up and hits it with lightning again (it slows again). Sindawe delivers a critical blow (Solid Hit for 4opts) and another lighter hit; he is not

surprised when the creature fails to succumb to *stunning fist*. Wogan casts a touch spell, runs up, avoids the AoO, and delivers *bestow curse* (50% chance of *do nothing*).

The fight continues!

Samaritha shoots another *lightning bolt* while yelling, “Hurry up! The wand is running low on charges!”

Serpent delivers a volley of staff blows including a critical hit - 7 INT damage! The frogemoth goes from clever toddler to coma in a split second. The gigantic creature slumps over.

Everyone freezes briefly at this stroke of good luck, then leaps into action... there is no telling how quickly the aberration might recover. Wogan urinates on the monster. Sindawe and Serpent pull out the teleport spikes and start hammering them into the monster’s flesh.

Samaritha corrects them, “No, the spikes go into the earth around it.” “I knew that!” insists her husband as he pulls them free of the beast.

The spikes work – the creature and a perfect circle of scooped out of earth disappear.

MONSTER EGGS

Sindawe removes the eggs from the nest. He is lucky enough to have a *ring of electricity resistance* that protects him from their electrical discharge and the *elixir of slipperiness* protects him from the super sticky mucous. Serpent supervises the extraction. The eggs and a substantial amount of the sticky fluid is moved into barrels from the wagon.

Wogan glances at Serpent, then slyly says, “We should give one of these to my brother-in-law. Every Nidalese noble needs a monster.”

Sindawe and Wogan wait for their infamously cheap and greedy companion to react.

Serpent doesn't bite, but does ask, "So, why didn't we go with the monster teleport? Doesn't Thartane owe us something?"

Everyone looks concerned. Samaritha explains, "Thartane already paid. He gave us the papers we are using to travel through Nidal. And some magic items to battle the froghemoth."

Sindawe adds, "And he promised to tell us informed about merchant shipping, though I think that might be only what his undead whale and homunculus happen to spot."

Serpent demands, "Well, why didn't we go back with the teleport? Wouldn't that be quicker?"

Wogan explains, "Not really. Thartane's island is three to four days by ship to Nisroch, where we are supposed to rendezvous with our ship (the *Teeth of Araska*). We didn't see any ships at Thartane's island. Plus, we might get intercepted by White Estrid's Ulfen fleet."

Serpent nods, then continues loading barrels onto the wagon.

Wogan comments in Aklo, "That sea doppelganger is really off its game."

Sindawe replies, "Yup. Those things can't stand to be on land. It's really pathetic the way it keeps forgetting how greedy Serpent is."

Wogan nods, then adds, "But the sea doppelganger really has the hate filled stares down pat. It made Rucia cry twice already."

Samaritha spits, "My husband is not a doppelganger! I would have noticed!"

Serpent remains oblivious to content of their conversation, since he never bothered to attend Samaritha's classes on Aklo. Or, alternately, the doppelganger executes a high Bluff even though it can read their thoughts perfectly.