

## REAVERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE - SESSION SUMMARY 06/29/2014

### TODAY'S EPISODE: A STACKED DECK

The pirate ships *Teeth of Araska* and *Wandering Dagger* are pirating in the Arcadian Sea off the coast of Cheliox. After several fruitful encounters the pirate vessels investigated a derelict vessel, the *Sea Chanty*. Our heroes boarded and fought a devil in the hold. Upon emerging from below they were greeted by the unwelcome sight of a Cheliox warship, the *Dominator*. And on its deck, *Paralictor Devreth Rotani* of the Hellknight Order of the Nail. Captain Clap howls in rage. Pirates scramble to escape.

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, Serpent's wife and a serpentfolk wizard in the guise of a pretty half-elf.
- ♣ 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 is a pirate crew of professional pirates, escaped slaves, and adventure seekers.

### *THE TRAP IS SPRUNG*

The *Teeth of Araska's* officers (Sindawe, Wogan and Serpent) are aboard a burning derelict vessel. Their ship is nearby, but must be reached by ship's boat. Further out is the *Wandering Dagger* under Captain Clap's command.

And there is a twenty-two gun warship, the *Dominator*, presenting for a broadside. It flies the red and black flag of Cheliox. Below that is a small flag with a red dot on a field of gold.

*Paralictor Devreth Rotani* demands from that ship's deck, "You will surrender in the name of Queen Abrogail II of Cheliox."

Slasher Jim shouts, "I'll cut that bitch!"

Wogan calmly asks, "Abrogail? Is that really a woman's name?"

Tommy Blacktoes takes command of the *Teeth of Araska*. "Sails up! Samaritha, retrieve our captain."

Captain Clap's only response is an incoherent howl of rage as he orders his ship to the attack.

The *Dominator* fires a broadside into the *Wandering Dagger*.

BRRRRRRRAAAAWWWRRRRMRMRMMRMMMMM!!! Shivers fly as the unprepared ship takes the worst of it. Their foremast and a hull section are smashed (condition broken). The *Wandering Dagger* returns fire causing light damage. Captain Clap orders his ship to close! An iron-masked *Hellknight signifer* hurls a *fireball* which hits the derelict, baking several officers.

Samaritha's flight to the derelict is stopped by a *dispel magic*, gently dropping her into the sea. Serpent dives into the sea and begins swimming for the *TOA*. Wogan hits the *Dominator* with a *lower water* spell that causes the ship some trouble.

Hatshepsut notices grappling hooks on the starboard side of the *Araska*. She finds sodden Chelish marines climbing out of the sea. The crew is portside and doesn't notice their ascent, so she blasts the boarders with a negative energy blast, courtesy of her god *Tdersius*.

The sodden marines climb aboard. Most are armed with cuirass and longsword. A half-orc sergeant slashes Hatshepsut. Another boarder, wearing a faceless helmet, casts a *fiery sphere* which rolls over a pirate.

Sindawe does something pointless; he hands a swim potion to Olgvik and Slasher Jim. Samaritha casts a second *fly* then closes with the derelict. Sindawe commands, “Fly me! Then we’ll carry Wogan across.” They do so as, Olgvik and Slasher Jim drink and swim. Wogan waits until his carriers gain some altitude, then casts *fireball* on the Dominator’s aft section.

Tommy continues commanding the *TOA* to full sail. Lavender Lil uses her bardic performance to provide courage to the crew. Several crewmen blast the marine boarders with swivel guns. Hatshepsut rains serpent strikes on the half-orc sergeant. The sergeant slashes her again with his sword. The faceless helmet caster freezes Tommy with a *hold person*. The other boarders attack the pirate crew.

Tommy attempts to break the *hold person*. Luckily, Mase Venjum notices his predicament and takes command of the *TOA*. Hatshepsut pummels the Chelish sergeant again, stunning him. Samaritha and Sindawe drop Wogan onto the *TOA*’s deck. The Chelish marines on board the *Dominator* shoot Sindawe (19pts) and Samaritha (crit for 72pts) with long musket fire. The Chelish marines aboard the *TOA* do poorly as the pirates rally against them. The signifer (Mr. Faceless Helmet) casts *fear* upon a group of pirates but only one breaks.

Serpent climbs aboard with his snake, Saluthra. He bashes a Chelish marine to death with his staff. Saluthra grabs and crushes another marine into a bag of broken bones. Wogan advances down the deck then uses a positive energy burst to heal his crew.

The *Dominator's* crew reloads their guns. *Paralictor Rotani* screams, "Give up and there will be an end to this horror!" Another Hellknight, a signifer, casts *dispel magic* on Sindawe, but fails. Captain Clap maneuvers the *Wandering Dagger* right alongside the *Dominator*. Grappling hooks fly out.

A Hellknight ends this with a *wall of fire* along the *Wandering Dagger's* edge. So, Captain Clap changes his orders to "Ram!"

Sindawe flies over to the signifer aboard his ship and grapples him. Marines attack Sindawe and Hatshepsut. Hatshepsut pummels the half-orc sergeant again. Serpent runs over to Sindawe and slams his staff down on the grappled signifer.

Again, the *Dominator* escapes punishment from the *Wandering Dagger*. It slips aside and completes the crossing of the T maneuver of the *TOA* (started by Tommy and carried out by Mase). Three cannon shots hit; two hit the prow port side, destroying that hull section. The open hull section reveals the *Dominator's* brig... but only if one were to stick their head into the tiny hole. The *Dominator* responds by broadsiding the *Wandering Dagger* hitting five times and breaking multiple hull sections. *Wogan dispels the wall of fire!* The *Wandering Dagger's* crew throw new grappling hooks.

### *BELOW, AN ESCAPE*

A prisoner in the *Dominator's* brig slips out through the ruined wall of his cell, a gift from Desna, or, he hopes, Calistria, delivered by a cannonball. He is spotted by a slave who is spreading buckets of sawdust on the deck. The prisoner puts a finger to his lips forming the universal sign for "quiet". The slave turns his back to the prisoner and begins spreading in the opposite direction.

The prisoner steps into the lantern light, revealing a young male Mwangi with a wild afro of hair. He peeks outside through a cannonball hole and witnesses a six-gun vessel sail past his line of sight. He listens to the sounds of battle above his head. Escape might be possible, if he can swim to that other vessel.

## *TOPSIDE AGAIN*

Mase Venjum maneuvers the *TOA* away from the *Dominator* and orders the cannon reloaded. Hatshepsut murders the Chelish sergeant with two hammer blows to the throat. Samaritha hits the *Dominator* with a fireball; pirates cheer at the sight of burning Chelish navy personnel. Sindawe pins the signifer who counters by rolling his *flaming sphere* over them. Sindawe rolls the signifer into the sphere; he burns slightly. Serpent then breaks the Hellknight's neck (51pts) with a mighty staff swing.

One unit of the *Dominator's* marines fire at the *Wandering Dagger's* crew. The other unit fires at the *Teeth of Araska's* crew with murder guns. Wogan and Stoke maneuver an unfired cannon into line and blast the *Dominator's* hull (43pts) at short range.

Captain Clap and his pirates board the *Dominator*. Men and women scream for courage and blood. Weapons clash, pistols discharge, and bodies break.

The *Dominator* has one more trick. It shimmers as a desert mirage, then solidifies into a different vessel. The ship looks like a hellscape. Hatchways are now pleading mouths, wet with hunger and full of teeth. The ship's rigging is a combination of wanton tentacles and leaking intestines. Each sail is made up of six hundred and sixty-six skinned faces of the damned that howl in agony. More skinned faces make up the Cheliox flag, the skin pigmentation matched perfectly to

that flag. Those faces moan Queen Abrogail II's favorite waltz. The hull is formed of writhing torsos that provide a handsome and unexpected buoyancy, but uncertain footing. Everything is heavy with the stink of brimstone. The shrill noises of Fox News waft up from below decks.

Some of Clap's pirates are stunned by the change; no one wants to go to hell early. Most shrug it off, too far gone with bloodlust to care. Clap heads directly for *Paralictor Rotani* while unsheathing a pair of cruel looking daggers. A wave of pirates push the marines near Rotani back, allowing Clap to stab him four times (3rpts) at the weak points in the Hellknight's full plate.

### *BELOW, AN ESCAPE*

The Mwangi man reaches one hand deep into his throat to retrieve a lock pick. He inspects the small tool, then begins work on the lock to another cell.

Inside that cell is a heavily bound woman sitting in a chair. Her ropes pin her arms and hands and keep her secured to the chair, which has been nailed to the floor. Her head is covered by a heavy sack, which is secured in place by a heavily knotted rope gag.

The Mwangi man defeats the lock and opens the cell door. He crosses quietly to the woman's side and whispers, "It is me. Mitabu."

The bound woman does not respond.

### *TOPSIDE AGAIN*

Tommy Blacktoes finally throws off the *bold person*, rushes forward to flank a marine, and backstabs the man. Halfing murder! Hatshepsut kills another marine. Sindawe grabs Serpent and flies them to the *Dominator*. Musket balls shoot past them.

Mase notices the *Dominator's* crew realigning to shoot at his ship. The signifer (the live one aboard the *Dominator*) casts *wall of fire*, burning the *Wandering Dagger*. The Paralictor trips Captain Clap with his halberd then chops away, but hits only once as the wily pirate rolls away... though that one blow is enough to leave Clap bleeding heavily. Damage control parties of slaves repair the *Dominator's* battle damage.

*Wandering Dagger's* crew attempt damage control, but are overwhelmed by their own casualties and the scale of damage. A second wave of pirates boards the *Dominator*, despite the hellscape.

Captain Clap rolls to his feet and quickly considers his options to escape from certain death at the Paralictor's hands. Attack, escape, or delay in the initiative? His hatred overrides his survival instinct; he decides to wait for an opening.

Mitabu whispers into the woman's ear, "Don't scream. I'm here to help." She doesn't scream. Mitabu picks the lock on her manacles, then unties her. Then helps her pull off the gag and hood, revealing is a dusky skinned, female half-elf.

The *TOA* crew continues killing marines and reloading guns. Several pirates work on dousing the *flaming sphere*. Wogan orders crew about, then casts *fog cloud* onto the *Dominator's* gun deck.

Sindawe flies himself and Serpent right into the Clap/Paralictor fight, dropping Serpent into a flanking position with Clap. Captain Clap responds by unleashing a series of punishing daggers strikes that leave the Paralictor bleeding heavily. The Paralictor responds to the target rich environment by killing Clap dead with one slash of his halberd. This blow strikes fear into Sindawe

(frightened; no saving throw) and Serpent (shaken; no saving throw). He also tries to trip Serpent but fails.

A nearby armiger rushes to help the Paralictor. To no avail! Serpent rages, power attacks, then shifts to flank the Paralictor with Sindawe. He hits twice (41pts). Then Sindawe flies away in magically induced fear.

Captain Clap's crew fight on. They kill marines. Those aboard the *Wandering Dagger* recognize that their ship is lost; it is burning and taking on water at three points. Cut off from boarding the *Dominator*, they set about abandoning ship.

## ROUND 2

Mitabu calls the slave over and works on his manacles. He tries to convince the slave to send other slaves down into the brig to be freed, then they can all rebel. The slave isn't buying the plan, but does show Mitabu the armory. The dusky skinned half-elf woman follows.

Mitabu peeks around a corner and across the gun deck. The armory lies at the far end, behind a locked door.

Mitabu asks the slave, "Is there a way around them?"

The slave replies, "The bilge. I will show you."

Mitabu remarks, "I'm not too proud for the bilge."

The half-elf woman, Zoamai, remarks, "Do I need some shots first? Isn't *bilge* navy talk for sewer?"

The slave replies, "No."

Mitabu nods a mute, "Yes."



Mase Venjum maneuvers the *TOA* across the wind (winding the ship) taking a single cannonball hit (smashed hull section). The ship slips closer to the *Dominator* for boarding. The *Dominator's* marines kill several more of Clap's pirates. Its slave crew continues damage control. The signifer sets fire to the *TOA* with a *wall of fire*, scattering pirates.

Wogan casts *dispel magic* on the *wall of fire*, ending it. He hands a *wand of cure light wounds* to Melella, the ship's druid. He orders, "Heal the wounded!" She does so.

Serpent is stabbed lightly (4pts) by the armiger, then once (37pts) by the Paralictor.

Serpent screams after Sindawe, "Thanks for flying me over here, asshole!"

Sindawe weeps with rage; he wanted to help kill the Paralictor. He continues flying away, still frightened.

Serpent bites the Paralictor with his serpent fangs and hits him twice with his staff (47pts). The Hellknight collapses to the deck, dead.

Mitabu, Zoamai, and the slave slosh thru the bilge, traveling the length of the ship. Mitabu lifts a grate overhead. He peeks out and sees a gunnery crew. And the armory door.

Mitabu slips out and tries his hand at picking the armory's lock. The lock is difficult. Close to success, fate steps in again. The lockpick slips from his fingers, bounces once, and falls into the bilge. <splash>

Zoamai whispers, "How's it going, Mitabu?"

Mitabu looks across the gun deck and spots the master gunner. And ring at his belt heavy with keys. Mitabu whispers back to Zoamai, "Change of plans. The lock is cursed. I'll steal the key from that officer."

Zoamai casts *invisibility* on him from the grate, then ducks back down.

The *Wandering Dagger* burns. Aboard the *Teeth of Araska*, Mase asks Wogan, “Are you sure we should board? I think Clap’s men are all dead.”

Wogan replies, “Well, let’s hit ‘em with one more cannon volley. The reloading is almost complete.”

Mase says, “Right! We’ll take their sails out, then flee.”

In the background, Hatshepsut leaps upon the last marine aboard the *Araska* and kills him.

Samaritha uses *lightning bolt* to fry the signifier over on the *Dominator*.

Sindawe continues fleeing from the dead Paralictor; he is still frightened. He flies back to the *Teeth of Araska*.

The *Dominator’s* crew continues performing admirably. A chase gun hits the TOA (40pts). The marines kill a few more pirate boarders. All of the pirate officers are secretly jealous.

Serpent rushes the signifer, but is intercepted by marines. He kills one with a single blow (29pts).

Wogan shoots a marine behind Serpent with a *magic missile* (from his *Rain Tiger* gem). Serpent fails to notice as he is swarmed by weapon-swinging marines.

The *Wandering Dagger* remaining crew pushes off in the ship’s boat and rows away from the fight. They intercept a second ship’s boat crewed by Olgvik and Slasher Jim.

The *Wandering Dagger* crew aboard the *Dominator* fight to the death. Specifically, their own.

The *Teeth of Araska* fires a broad side into the *Dominator's* rigging. A single hit renders a second rigging unit broken, making a total of two. This will really slow the warship. One unit of pirates repair damage to the *Araska*.

Wogan orders the crew to pick up the pirates in the boats.

Mase pleads again, "We need to flee now! We can't win alone against that ship!"

Wogan shakes his head, "We wait for the captain. And Serpent."

Samaritha flies at the *Dominator* announcing to no one in particular, "Must rescue Serpent!"

She casts *major image* - flaming skeletons to emerge from the *Wandering Dagger's* flames and leap onto the *Dominator*.

They scream, "Hugs!" It is clear they are not in a hugging mood.

Chelish marines react appropriately and refuse said hugs. They are on duty!

Serpent wins free of the encircling marines and again rushes the signifer. He is driven back by small arms fire. There are so many marines and so little to do that many mill about waiting for an officer to bark orders. The Hellknight signifer jumps down an open hatch and is lost from sight. Serpent curses then does the same through a different hatch.

Marines fix bayonets and go below after Serpent. Other marines make prisoners of the last pirates on deck. Several marines fire at Sindawe as he flies down another hatchway.

Zoamai, still hiding in the bilge and prairie dogging up through the grating to keep tabs, notices a demented looking Ulfen berserker down the hall. She waves uncertainly at the man. At least he's not Chelish.

Serpent runs past Zoamai's hiding place, his eyes fixed on the master gunner. As the highest level foe in sight, he becomes the focus of Serpent's rage. Several marines behind him decide to shoot rather than risk hand to hand with the berserker.

Mitabu invisibly sneaks the armory key off the master gunner just as an Ulfen berserker attacks. Mitabu decides to take advantage of the distraction to shank the master gunner, but his shank (a jagged piece of wood) fails him and he becomes visible. Zoamai shoots a marine with her *elemental ray*. Samaritha fires a *scorching ray* at the master gunner through a gun port.

Sindawe flies down a hatch and into the gunnery deck.

The master gunner hacks at Serpent with his saber (17pts), before he is cut down by Serpent and Mitabu. Marines bayonet Zoamai thru the grate; she fires back with *scorching rays*. The burning marine is killed by Samaritha's *magic missile*. Serpent finishes off the master gunner. Mitabu rushes the grate with Sindawe. They are able to kill the remaining marine.

The gun crews stand ready to defend their weapons. Apparently none bore love or respect for the gunnery master, as they stood by while the man died.

Sindawe blocks the hatch and hallway near the armory door. Mitabu opens the armory with the stolen key, while slipping a dagger he lifted on Sindawe back into its sheath. Serpent works on pulling a cannon out of its firing port, hoping to produce enough room for people to climb out. That gun's crew beat at Serpent's back with stokers. Samaritha helps by casting *animate rope* and controlling the cannon's winching system to clear it away from the gunport.

Zoamai emerges from the bilge and demands her stuff from Mitabu. Mitabu considers locking the armory door with her stuff still inside, but decides not to. Sindawe holds the hall.

The gunners redouble their attacks against Serpent, beating him mercilessly with stokers. Samaritha reaches thru the gun port and hauls him out.

Serpent, his eyes blinded by sweat and blood, whispers, “What monstrously large, strong hands... is that you, my love?”

Samaritha briefly considers biting her husband with poisoned fangs.

Instead, they drop into the water where she uses fly to escape the marine small arms fire coming from the deck. Serpent switches to serpent form and strikes out for the *Teeth of Araska*. Samaritha waits for someone else to spill out, so she can fly them out.

Marines fire muskets from the middle of the gunnery deck. Everyone is unhappy.

Zoamai and Mitabu run for the gun port. Zoamai casts *Water Breathing* on everyone as they spill out the gun port, allowing them to swim safely away below the waves. Musket balls splash in vain in their wake.

Serpent notices a strange contraption about 15' below the surface. It looks like it was designed to harness a large aquatic creature while multiple divers cling to various hand holds on the harness. He uses *summon nature's ally* to produce an aquatic beast of burden. The beast is harnessed, almost as if the device was meant exactly for this purpose. Everyone clings to the harness as the creature swims after the *Teeth of Araska*.

## *EPILOGUE – A CHASE*

Samaritha signals the *Teeth of Araska* to retrieve the escaped pirates. The vessel flees while the *Dominator* gives chases at a limp.

Thalios Dondrel and others mourn the passing of Captain Clap.