

## REAYERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE - SESSION SUMMARY 10/17/2010

The heroes are inside the Riddleport Lighthouse, getting ready to assault Elias Tammerhawk and stop his dastardly ritual that will... Well, we're not sure really what it's going to do, but Samaritha tells us it's bad. Our heroes are:

- *Wogan*, the pistol-packin' celibate cleric of Gozreh (Patrick)
- *Tommy Blacktoes*, the staff-slingin' sneaky halfling rogue (Kevin)
- *Sindawe H'kilata Narr*, the fist-punchin' Mwangi monk (Chris)
- *Ref "Serpent" Jorensen*, the staff-bashin' Ulfen druid/ranger and his snake *Saluthra* (Paul)

With us are:

- *Samaritha*, the book-readin' half-elf Cyphermage who's sweet on Serpent (NPC)
- *Hatshepsut*, high priestess of a lost civilization who doesn't savvy the Common (NPC)

### BOSS FIGHT THROUGH HERE!

We are near the top of the Riddleport Light. A storm is raging outside. Bright flashes of light appear from no source and cause strange time distortions. We are ready to go up to the lantern room, so we stop to buff ourselves before continuing. Hatshepsut uses her clerical abilities to buff herself. Serpent uses his druid spells to turn his staff into a *shillelagh*, enhance his strength, and give himself armored scales. Wogan casts a few protection spells on the group and enhances Sindawe's strength. Sindawe takes the beheaded jade snake idol of Ydersius they got in Viperwall out of his pack. His job will be to reunite the idol's head to its body and stop the evil ritual.

We use our *chime of opening* to open the door. Tommy sneaks in first. The halfling emerges out into the lantern room of the lighthouse. The room is circular and in the middle there is a giant 30' glass dome forming the top of the lighthouse. Twin stairways curve up to meet the platform supporting the glass dome, which is 20 feet above the floor. Rain pours from the sky outside and thunder causes the glass to shudder.

There is a column of silvery light up on the platform in which we see the head of the serpent idol suspended; the light projects straight up into the stormy sky. Elias Tammerhawk the Speaker of the Cypher Lodge, Clegg Zincher the Riddleport crime lord, and Thorgrim the Lord Protector of the Cypher Lodge surround the column. They are protected by a brute squad of ten gendarmes. The column of energy glows with an intense silvery light like moonlight. The snake head throbs with magical power. Tammerhawk is standing with a metal plaque with glyphs on it which he is manipulating. It is made of an unfamiliar reddish-gold metal. Thorgrim carries two large mithral axes. Clegg Zincher carries his infamous pickaxe. The entire room is filled with the silvery light. There are some slit-like windows around the wall's perimeter. Outside we can see the Cyphergate. The first of 11 runes on the Cyphergate is glowing silver. Another flash of light happens and a second glyph on the gate begins to glow. Time starts to flow weirdly. Tommy speeds up and becomes even more dodgy than usual.

Serpent comes charging up the stairs with his snake, yelling, "This ends now!"

Zincher sneers, "Hey boss, Saul's boys are here." He hefts his pickaxe.

Tammerhawk says, "Destroy them, you fools! Don't let them interrupt the ritual!"

He casts a spell on himself that Serpent recognizes as *stoneskin*.

Thorgrim throws his two mithral axes, one at Serpent and one at Tommy. Tommy dodges one and the other bounces off Serpent's scales. The axes bounce and whiz back into Thorgrim's hands.

Tommy throws down a *feather token* and it transforms into a floating leather whip and begins to attack gendarmes on its own. The light flashes again and most of the party begins to speed up. When the light flashes we see the outline of the ghost-paint skulls on each other's faces (we received the ghost paint from Mama Watanna when we went to Viperwall). Another glyph on the Cyphergate illuminates. Wogan rockets up the stairs at double speed and fires his pistol at the serpent head idol. His bullet flies true and it knocks the head out of the column of silvery light. The head lands on the edge of the central platform and the column of light dims. Tammerhawk screams, "NO, YOU FOOLS!"

Serpent mutters, "He says that a lot."

Samaritha comes up the stairs and casts a spell on herself, levitating above the fray. The gendarmes charge at us. One of them fires a blunderbuss at Tommy but Tommy is moving in bullet time; he leans out of the path of the shot. Another misses Wogan thanks to his enhanced speed. Two of the gendarmes shoot at Serpent but miss. Two more shoot at the floating Samaritha but she is protected by the magical promise ring she received from Serpent.

Sindawe dodges and jukes through the gendarmes, up to the central platform. Hatshepsut follows Sindawe. At the top of the stairs, Clegg Zincher makes a dazzling display of prowess with his giant pickaxe, intimidating the heroes. Tammerhawk concentrates on Sindawe and sends waves into his brain, but the monk's iron will fends off the domination. Thorgrim casts a spell and enlarges himself; he hefts his gigantic axes and blocks the stairway's access to the platform.

Meanwhile, Serpent misses a gendarme but his snake Saluthra grabs a gendarme and crushes him. Tommy's whip attacks a gendarme and yanks him by the ankle off the stairs. Tommy sneak attacks a second gendarme and slashes his neck wide open. Samaritha uses a ray to drain Thorgrim's strength.

A gendarme on the stairs hacks down on Tommy with a longsword, and two of them run up and slash Saluthra. Another gendarme runs a sword along Wogan's ribcage.

Sindawe runs right around the giant Thorgrim to get at Tammerhawk and the idol but gets crucified by Clegg Zincher's pickaxe. Hatshepsut runs up to face Thorgrim and cobra strikes him. Serpent hits the gendarme he is facing but Saluthra misses hers.

Clegg Zincher tries to bull rush Sindawe off the platform by pushing him with his pickaxe, but the Mwangi grabs onto the head and flexes his muscles, pushing back towards the crimelord. Thorgrim steps back and throws his axes again, one misses Hatshepsut and the other misses Serpent. Tommy's whip releases one guard to attack another. Tommy stabs through the gendarmes' guts and takes him down.

Tammerhawk grabs for the fallen snake head, snatching it up and sticking it back into the pillar of light. The silvery light flashes again, super-bright. Once more we see each other's ghost paint.

## WE'RE NOT IN KANSAS ANY MORE

All the bad guys vanish. We are standing in the lighthouse, and the snake head is gone from the shaft of light. Samaritha is with us, but Hatshepsut and Saluthra are missing. The storm is gone. Everything is in black and white.

We look out through the windows. There are no stars, but we can still see as if everything is in half-light. Everything in the city of Riddleport seems shadowy and distorted. There are no lights except the Overlord's tower, which is blazing with light.

Samaritha surmises we may be in some sort of demiplane. Wogan heals those of us who are injured.

Tommy says, "I wonder what happens if we step into the column of light?" He stares at it but does not move to do it himself.

Wogan says, "I'll do it." He steps into the light but nothing happens other than him being illuminated.

Sindawe tries sticking the idol into the light. The idol floats upwards. The light grows brighter, but nothing else happens.

Tommy suggests we should head to the Overlord's palace. We have no better ideas, so we head down. As we go we notice that some of the furnishings in the tower are different, more sinister. We poke around the ghostly reflection of the city. The bay is motionless and perfectly transparent; when Sindawe puts his hand in the water it flows slowly, like molten glass.

### **Spirited Away**

Some of the streets are rearranged, and the decorations of the city seem more sinister. Roughly human-shaped shadows move through the city. We try to talk to them, but they go about their spectral errands without paying us any mind. Back at the Gold Goblin, we find that the gilded statue of a goblin out front is made of basalt and the goblin has his foot perched on a human head.

Inside the Gold Goblin, shadowy forms stand around a couple tables; no cards or chips are apparent but they remind us of gamblers. We see Larur Feldin, the dead former floor manager of the Gold Goblin. The dwarf has a huge and clearly fatal slash across his neck stretching from ear to ear. He seems to be going about his old business, walking

around as if he's a pit boss. Serpent tries to talk to Larur, but the ghost walks right through him. Sindawe has better luck talking to him.

Larur Feldin seems vague and confused. He is looking for his cloak. Sindawe tells him he left his cloak at the moneylender's house, but Larur says he never went to the moneylender's. Sindawe tries to get more info out of him. Larur remembers that he had been called to Saul's office. He was afraid that Saul had found out that he had let the assassin out of the cage in the basement. Everyone glances at Tommy; after they caught the assassin Jesswin after her attempt on Saul's life, Tommy had her imprisoned in an animal cage in the basement and tortured her. Larur had been secretly working for Clegg Zincher. He went to Saul's office but he doesn't remember what happened.

We decide to go check out Saul's office. In Saul's office there are 5 interrogation chairs. This is strange because normally there is only one interrogation chair. Everyone but Sindawe goes and sits down in the chairs and manacles clamp down on them. Sitting down seemed completely normal to us but after that we start to get freaked out and try to escape. Tommy and Samaritha manage to escape from their chairs but Serpent and Wogan do not. From behind, Serpent and Wogan feel a dagger slash across their necks and they start to bleed. Finally Serpent and Wogan snap out of it and manage to break free of the chairs. Wogan tries to heal Serpent's wound but nothing happens. He is rather freaked out.

We discuss what this all means. Apparently Saul found out that Larur Feldin had betrayed him. Saul called Larur into his office and Bojask killed him. Then Saul lied to us and sent us out to kill the moneylender. Sindawe thinks that the moneylender was framed so that Clegg Zincher didn't realize that his spy had been found out.

We go to check out the vault. Tommy picks the Gold Goblin's vault door and finds lots of treasure inside. He begins trying to gather it all for a while before he eventually comes to his senses. When he does, he realizes he is feeling weaker.

Similarly, Wogan went and got a shadow bottle of whiskey from the bar and has been drinking away on it. He feels weaker as well. "Ah well, hair of the dog!" he muses, and downs another glass.

We start heading to the Overlord's palace again. On the way, Tommy recognizes a building. It was the small house concealing the entrance to the serpent temple. Wogan

wonders if this place is related to the current serpent ritual. Samaritha admits to being nervous and Serpent comforts her.

We go into the building and find a set of stairs leading down to a big serpent temple. In here we see the ghost of Vincenz. He is huddled in a corner. His heart has been removed. Sindawe tries to attract his attention but is unsuccessful. Serpent feels too guilty about not saving Vincenz from the serpent cult and tries to avoid the ghost's attention. Sindawe pokes the ghost of Vincenz with his ghost-killing spear.

Vincenz moans, "Save me..." and several shadowy serpentfolk appear and attack. Wogan immediately channels positive energy to hurt the shadows.

The shadows move forward. One of them drains Wogan's strength, and another drains Samaritha's. Sindawe stabs one with his ghost-killing spear and destroys it. Samaritha moves back and *magic missiles* a shadow, then Tommy moves up to slash at it, but his saber passes through it. Serpent moves between Samaritha and the shadow and hits it with his staff. Wogan icicle-rays one and also manages to shrink it with his magic.

The two remaining shadows try to get us but miss. Sindawe disperses another shadow with his spear. As the shadow dissipates, he feels rage washing through him. Samaritha magic missiles the last shadow out of existence and is similarly overcome with wrath.

Sindawe turns and takes a stab at Wogan but Wogan manages to dodge the spear. Samaritha tries to stab Serpent with a dagger; it rakes across his armor. Serpent grabs Samaritha and tries to restrain her. Wogan tries to dispel the rage with a positive energy channel, and they both snap out of it.

Samaritha says, "Oh Serpent, I'm so sorry!" She throws her arms around his neck.

"Shhh, it's OK." Serpent says.

"Why didn't you save me?" Vincenz' ghost moans. We leave awkwardly.

We walk towards the Overlord's tower. Things seem weird and dreamy; we're not sure if we're walking together or apart through the twisted streets of shadow Riddleport.

Wogan gets tempted by the smell of tasty food from a vendor stall in the street, but manages to pull himself away.

Sindawe is tempted by some druggies in an alley to try some ghost shiver. He feels an ache as his body remembers the ghost spider venom and he gives in and takes some drugs.

Tommy gets tempted by a tiefling hooker. He denies her his manly essence and scampers away.

As we approach the palace, which is on an island, an unmanned barge approaches and bumps up against the shore before us. We take the boat over to the island; it sails through the curtain wall of the fortress. The fortress is brightly lit all over, though the light is weaker than one would expect. Sindawe hears music coming from the overlord's tower.

### **Overlord Tammerhawk?**

The tower seems strangely dark and opalescent. We head up it and get to the heart of it. We come into a large brightly-lit throne room. Two figures sit upon black glass thrones. One of them is Elias Tammerhawk and the other is a skeleton in a black silk dress. Along the walls stand the leathery corpses of armed guards.

“It's so good of you to come visit me.” His eyes appear quite mad.

Sindawe asks, “Who's the missus?”

“Oh, pardon my manners, this is my sister, Ariadne. Sister, meet these fine gentlemen. Who are you?”

Sindawe claims to be Erich Staufen of the now-mostly-murdered Staufen family. We're somewhat confused that Tammerhawk doesn't recognize us.

“What brings you to my domain? I see there is strange activity with the Cyphergate.” He looks at Samaritha, “You're a Cyphermage aren't you? Why have you come over to this side?”

Sindawe says, “What do you mean? This side of the city?”

Tammerhawk's staring eyes flash angrily. “Mind your manners, boy.”

“Who are you calling boy?”

Serpent whispers, “Don't start a fight with him.”

“Why? What's he gonna do, kill us and send us to the land of the living?”

Serpent says, "Or he might just kill us."

"Good point."

Wogan says, "You are the one who sent us here. You were doing some sort of ritual at the lighthouse to open the way between that side and this."

"Fools! That's an impostor! Has he not been discovered yet? He said he was a prospective Cyphermage but he had much knowledge of the future and the past. He betrayed me and sent me here."

"An impostor? But he wears poofy shirts and says 'Fools!' just like you do!" says Serpent.

Tommy notes, "We were just about to kill him."

"You must go back and slay him." Tammerhawk seems enthusiastic about the prospect.

"Can you aid us? We don't know how to get back."

"Here is a spell to return him to his true form. He is not truly elven." A scroll floats out towards Samaritha and she takes it.

Tammerhawk looks at Serpent and says, "I can help you to return but you must have a connection to the other side."

Serpent says, "I have a mystical connection to my animal companion."

Sindawe holds up the serpent idol. Samaritha says, "This is a piece of a powerful artifact. The other piece is in the prime material."

He casts a spell and tries to implant a posthypnotic suggestion ordering Serpent to kill the impostor at all costs, but Serpent throws off the compulsion. Tammerhawk casts a spell on the idol and examines it carefully.

"Take your idol and put it back in its place and I will cast a spell that will rend the veil between this world and the next."

We run off while Tammerhawk babbles insanely about how the city is now "perfect" under his rule.

### **Mind Your Nipples, Boys**

Along the way, Tommy recognizes Avery Slyeg's house. Tommy finds himself engulfed in a cloud of smoke and fire. He begins to burn and claws rip at him out of the



smoke. Then he sees a horrifying apparition that appears to be the burned ghost of Jesswin, the assassin who blew herself up on this very spot. Sindawe runs around the apparition, but doesn't approach for fear of being burned. Serpent steps up, getting burned in the process, and strikes the undead woman twice. Wogan throws a healing spell on Tommy and Tommy steps to stab her, sneak attacking her with his saber. Fire runs out of her wound. Samaritha batters the undead with a telekinetic fist. Sindawe steps up and spears the ghost. The blast shadow burns us all, but Tommy gets the worst of it. Tommy manages to crawl, choking, out of the cloud of smoke and flame. Serpent hits her once more and she explodes, badly burning everyone, and causing Serpent to be crippled and staggered.

In the aftermath, Wogan heals the group. The wounds from the earlier haunted encounters still won't heal, but the wounds from the fiery shadow do heal.

As we get back closer to the lighthouse again, we notice a shadowy army of serpentfolk gathering on the bottom of the bay, ready to step through the Cyphergate should it open up a portal to the real world. "That's not good!" declares Wogan.

We get back to the top of the lighthouse and position ourselves around where we want to be, and Sindawe puts the idol into the light. We see a mist floating up to the lighthouse and it turns into Elias Tammerhawk, who then spider climbs around the tower. We can see that he appears to have gone full vampire, with fangs and red eyes. We try to think especially non-tasty thoughts. He casts a spell and a crackling gate appears upon the platform.

Before we go back, Samaritha grabs Serpent's arm and says, "Whatever happens, remember that I love you!"

### **Back To The Fray**

The real Tammerhawk casts a spell and the column of light flares, and we appear back in the middle of combat with the fake Tammerhawk and his cronies. No time has passed in the real world. To them, it looks like we've all abruptly teleported around the lantern room; now we're all up on the platform with Tammerhawk and Zincher. Hatshepsut is still cut off from the platform by the huge Thorgrim and Slauthra is down

on the ground wrapping herself around gendarmes. Five of the eleven glyphs on the Cyphergate are illuminated with power.

Samaritha reads a spell off a scroll and shoots a *lightning bolt* through fake Tammerhawk and Clegg Zincher. Zincher dodges completely but it singes the wizard.

Two gendarmes hack into Saluthra, seriously wounding the snake. Two other gendarmes shoot at Sindawe but he dodges.

Sindawe grabs the idol and grabs for the head, but it's a bit out of reach. Hatshepsut executes a stunning flurry of misses on her opponents. Serpent strikes fake Tammerhawk twice but does little damage thanks to the *stoneskin*.

Tammerhawk casts a spell at Sindawe and a *phantasmal killer* is unleashed; Sindawe sees his arms skeletonized by the column of argent light. Sindawe realizes that it is partially an illusion and manages to avoid dying. Thorgrim tries to trip Sindawe with one axe but fails. The enlarged Thorgrim throws his other axe up to break the glass dome above us. The shards of glass rains down, badly wounding Serpent, and the wind and rain lash the room. Thorgrim protects the bad guys (and Sindawe) with an instant force dome. The force dome also protects them from attacks.

As the storm rages within the lighthouse, Wogan says, "Hahaha, you have only let in the powers of Gozreh!" He casts a healing spell on Serpent.

Samaritha seems to not know what to do. Serpent yells, "Use Tammerhawk's scroll!" She reluctantly reads the scroll into the rushing wind and rain, and as the spell takes effect the fake Tammerhawk is revealed to be a stylishly-dressed serpentman. Samaritha's form also changes as she is also revealed to be a serpentfolk! Serpent says, "I knew it!"

Wogan says, "Look, you've been following a serpentman!" One of the gendarmes seems confused and hesitates. Zincher seems to also throw off his *charm*. He aims his pickaxe at the serpentman Tammerhawk and says loudly, "What the fuck!?!?" Thorgrim also seems confused.

Serpent takes advantage of the moment to drink a healing potion and heal the rest of his wounds. Tommy and his whip dash in and attack the serpent Tammerhawk. The column of light continues to flash and cause time to flow oddly; seven of the eleven glyphs on the Cyphergate are illuminated. We're running out of time.

Sindawe tries to bring the idol together, but the two pieces slip apart like two like poles of a magnet. Wogan jumps up and grabs the head of the idol. Between the two of them they bring the idol together and light flares into the room. The energy from the gate coalesces in its center and shoots out in a huge lance of light seaward out into the night. There is a bright flash of light in the distance to the south. The metallic glyph plaque in the serpentman's hands explodes into pieces. We feel a shooting pain as the pieces of the tablet shoot into our bodies. One of the gendarmes is killed by the blast.

Samaritha magic missiles a stunned gendarme out of the fight and she begins to run away down the stairs. "I'm sorry!" she sobs as she runs.

Both of the remaining gendarmes attacking Saluthra turn and run. Serpent continues to smack the serpentman Tammerhawk but his attacks mostly bounce off the *stoneskin*.

Zincher calls out, "That's not Tammerhawk, that's some kind of freak! Get him, Thorgrim." Thorgrim tries to trip the serpentman, but he nimbly leaps out of the axe's way.

Sindawe pummels the serpentman, stunning him but not actually damaging him. Serpent slams him twice while he's stunned.

Zincher continues to back away, commanding Thorgrim to fight.

A vivid cone of energy shoots from the serpentman's hands and Serpent becomes blinded and stunned. Then Tammerhawk vaults off the platform.

As he jumps, Tommy's whip grabs him and entangles him and he falls in a heap at the base of the platform. Tommy jumps down onto him with a vicious sneak attack, slightly wounding him through his *stoneskin*. Sindawe also jumps down and begins pounding on him. Hatshepsut also vaults down, flushed with combat, but when she gets a good look at Tammerhawk she pulls back and doesn't strike. Serpent thrashes around blindly on top of the platform.

Thorgrim throws three axes into the serpentman, finally breaking his *stoneskin*. Sindawe slams his fist into the serpentman's head quite satisfactorily.

Zincher retreats down the stairs and out of the room. Serpentman Tammerhawk escapes from the whip and makes a break for it. "We will destroy you mammals, just wait!" he screams. He casts a spell and falls out of the window. Tommy and Sindawe

move to the window and spot him climbing down the tower. Sindawe throws his spear but it misses and tumbles to the rocks 60 feet below. Tommy flings a rock at the departing serpentman wizard but misses. We all eye the drop warily, but no one elects to pursue the fleeing serpentman.

The fake Tammerhawk climbs up onto the Cyphergate, runs across it, and then drops off the center of it, *feather falling* into a ship passing under the arch. Wogan identifies the ship as the Three Sheets, captained by one Screev Ten-tooth. We watch him sail away.

### **Cheese It - The Cops!**

Salvadora Beckett, the half-orc on the secret gendarme organization known as the God Squad shows up leading a force of gendarmes. She is surprised to see us; she says that when the Cyphergate started lighting up, she took a squad in. We explain our story to Salvadora and Thorgrim backs us up. Wogan offers to tell her everything if she buys him some rum.

In the meantime, Sindawe is running down the tower chasing after the serpent person we know as Samaritha. He catches up to her in the caves below where she is getting into our boat. Sindawe asks her why she's running away.

“You guys will never accept me the way I am.”

“Really?”

“No, how could you?”

“You being a snake lady is not that big a deal. Your boyfriend's name is Serpent, he has scales and a big snake. Running away now is a big waste of time.”

“Do you really think Serpent can love me even though I'm a serpent person?”

“I don't see why not.”

He convinces her not to flee the city.

“Tell him to come see me if he can forgive me. I'll be at the Cypher Lodge; they probably need my help in the wake of this.”

“OK. Well you probably shouldn't leave this way. You can change form, right, just come out the front.”

She changes into the guise of a male gendarme and escapes.

We have exited the lighthouse and stand amidst a hundred milling gendarmes. Sindawe is recovering his spear when we notice the water level in Riddleport Bay is rapidly receding, exposing wrecks and fish on the bottom of the ocean. “Huh, that’s odd,” says Serpent.

“Anyone see any treasure?” asks Sindawe.

Wogan begins babbling about the “revenge of Gozreh” and saying Gozreh is about to send a big wave to flood the city. He tells Salvadora to get the gendarmes to safety.

We all flee at top speed up the tower again to get away from the approaching wave. A thin white line in the distance approaches with terrifying speed and we see it’s a wave some twenty feet high. It sends roars of spray up on either side of the Cyphergate as it strikes. We quickly get to safety, except for Wogan, who is puffing and struggling up the many flights of stairs. Wogan comes running up to safety just as the wave crests and hits the base of the lighthouse, causing it to shudder.

A wall of churning froth crashes into the waterfront, pitching ships into the city itself. Salvadora orders the gendarmes to go out and help the populace. We say we're going to go help the populace too, but first we go grab our pile of loot from where we stashed it immediately below the lighthouse; it was a little battered and drenched by the tsunami but was easily scooped back up.

The crimelords, gendarmes, and other power blocs of Riddleport pull together to help with the recovery; they put out fires, rescue drowning people, and quell irate sea critters stranded in alleyways.

## YOU GOT REAVED!

As the first major plot arc comes to a close, we all get a much deserved level! Everyone advances to fifth level and gains an Infamy Point.