

JADE REGENT SESSION SUMMARY 01/08/2012

Attendance

We find ourselves back with reasonable attendance today. *Ernest* speaks with enthusiasm about the Pip die-rolling app for his iPad. *Chris* speaks with equal enthusiasm on the subject of the Ironbeer root beer he is drinking. “It is from Cuba!” he exclaims. *Tim* shows up and starts asking questions about marketing iPad apps – specifically, how much folks would pay for one. All agree that \$5 is good for a tryout, and \$20 is probably the tops – but then only if there is a really compelling reason to buy, more than just a couple of screen caps and a description of the bug fixes in the most recent version. *Bruce* notes that he’d pay just about anything for an app, if only it included girls crawling through filth. *Paul* pretends very hard that he didn’t hear that comment, just like everyone else will pretend that they didn’t read the last sentence.

Ernest describes some of his responsibilities as a moderator on the RPG Stack Exchange website. In particular, he had to cut a guy out because the fellow couldn’t restrain himself from responding to posts in lengthy Old High Gygaxian (as if there’s any other type).

It is at this moment that the Tea Fairy brings Bruce some tea. Ernest warns him, “Get out of the house! There’s someone else in there!”

Bruce reassures him that it is only the Tea Fairy.

Tim points out, “If you’ve got fairies in your house, you’ll need to leave teeth out on your pillow at night – they go for those. Also, you can’t leave babies unattended!”

Patrick sends along word to the effect that he’s having his knuckles glazed. Nobody really understands what he might mean by this.

Matt sends a text message suggesting that he will be late owing to lunch, and suggesting that he might be very late owing to other things.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Level</i>
Harwynian Fallingleaf	Bruce	Elegant Elven Transmuter	2
Yoshihiro Kaijitsu	Ernest	Tian Reckless Mounted Archer-Knight	2
Jacob Frostfang	Matt	Ale-Loving Kellid Party Sorcerer*	2
V’lk	Chris	Mute Feral Elf Stabber	2

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Level</i>
Gobo Samarillian	Patrick	Blind Gnomish Fortuneteller	2
Bjorn the Unlucky	Tim	Ulfen Woodsman	2

*Kellids = Powerful barbarians from the Frozen North

Here Come the Reefclaws!

The characters are outside the walls of the castle at Brinewall. *Gobo Samarillian* had just released a swarm of reefclaws from the body of a decaying giant sea drake on the beach. He protests, “I distinctly recall taking precautions against just this outcome! But still it happens!” This isn’t completely facetious: the NPC *Spivey* had warned the characters that there were creatures about that sounded quite like reefclaws.

Yoshihiro Kaijitsu observes, “Reefclaws are aberrations, and I think that may be because they have more intelligence than we do, even though they subsist upon a diet of muck and garbage. This really makes me uneasy.”

Bjorn the Unlucky suggests, “I don’t think their intelligence will make much difference in this encounter, so if it makes you feel any better you can imagine that they only have INT 1 or INT 2.”

The characters watch as two small reefclaws charge the unfortunate Gobo. He takes a hit from a claw, but otherwise seems to survive the encounter without too much injury, except for being grappled in such a way that he will slowly be crushed to death. He objects very much to the reefclaw’s apparent characterization of him as a tasty land mammal. This leads to quite a bit of speculation upon the precise nature of the “unnatural creation” of the reefclaws at the hands of the Runelords.

Bjorn the Unlucky charges! *Harwynian Fallingleaf* moves over to Yoshihiro and casts *Magic Weapon* upon his glaive. Yoshihiro howls and attacks a reefclaw with a mighty power attack, cracking its shell open to expose the delectable flesh inside. A tooltip shows up, “Reefclaw flesh is very tasty and particularly prized in Korvosa and Cheliah!”

The second reefclaw goes for *V’lk*, latching its claws around his body and clearly resolved to tear him into succulent morsels. Yoshihiro steps over and casually destroys the creature. A whistled version of the Darth Vader theme plays softly in the background.

What Killed the Sea Drake?

With the reefclaws cleared away, Gobo is able to take a real look at the dead sea drake. He concludes that it was killed by several axe blows to the neck, perhaps two weeks ago. From what Spivey told the characters, it fought against a ship full of men from the lands of the Linnorm Kings. It ate most of them, but there may be one survivor hiding up in the ruined castle. Beyond that, the castle is full of the dire corbies that mostly depopulated the original inhabitants.

Up the Path and to the Castle!

The characters venture up the path to Brinewall Castle. The gates are closed, but in poor condition: it looks like it would not take much to break them down. Yoshihiro, remembering his experience with charging headlong into a goblin village, suggests pausing a moment to gather some observational intelligence. The characters find some trees to cover their approach and watch from the treeline.

Their attempts at stealth are not particularly inspiring. The dire corbies up on the battlements quickly spot them, or at least they spot Yoshihiro. They set up a chorus of alarm calls, “Ca-caw! Ca-caw!” The creatures look like big, flightless crows with arms, clothing and massive, hulked-out musculature.

Yoshihiro tries simply stepping out into the road, hoping that the corbies only saw him. The corbies respond by heading down to the gate-house and opening the gates. Five of them stand in the opened gateway.

Yoshihiro steps backward, asserting that he is merely an innocent traveler. The corbies croak at each other in a language that sounds like a pack of elderly smokers clearing their phlegm-coated lungs. Then they charge him. Yoshihiro sets his glaive against the charge, hoping that the others actually do have some ideas on executing a plausible ambush.

As the corbies charge they leap into the air in acrobatic arcs, launching themselves at Yoshihiro. V’lk takes a bowshot at one of them, winging the creature and slowing it with poison. That corby’s leaping attack is spoiled by the arrow, but its companion succeeds and gets *four* attacks against Yoshihiro. Bjorn is amazed, “That

creature is kind of like a quad lawn dart!” Yoshihiro manages to deflect most of the creature’s attack. He doesn’t think Bjorn’s joke is particularly funny.

Bjorn charges out at the wounded corby, slashing it open with his axe. The corby is stricken, but continues to fight on with animal ferocity. Bjorn (who gets bonuses against animals) rather hopefully asks, “Does this mean it’s an animal?” The others tell him that it is not. Bjorn grumbles about the relative lack of animals in this world. Next thing, people are going to be telling him that bunnies aren’t animals but “lagomorphs”.

Yoshihiro slashes at a second corby, wounding it but not ending it. V’lk moves in and slashes as well. The corby turns and slashes back at him twice. V’lk reels from the impact as he pantomimes how his greatest hope is that they normally don’t get four attacks unless they use acrobatics.

The remaining corbies leap and dash their way across the battlefield, much to the consternation of the characters. “Ca-caw! Ca-caw!” their raspy cries echo between the trees.

Gobo catches three corbies with a *Color Spray*, catching and knocking them all out (unconscious, blinded *and* stunned). The others are greatly cheered by this development.

Harwynian casts *Enlarge Person* on Bjorn. Yoshihiro steps back as Bjorn hulks out and roars with a primal fury. A staggered, frenzied corby in front of the barbarian responds by clawing at him. Bjorn swings back and clocks the creature in the beak with his shield.

Yoshihiro chops another hunk of flesh out of a corby but the creature just keeps on frenzying away. Harwynian launches a *telekinetic fist* at the creature and kills it dead. It is hard to say who is more surprised: Yoshihiro, Harwynian or the corby.

An unwounded corby leaps at Yoshihiro and delivers a painful but minor slash. Yoshihiro responds with an iaijutsu draw of his longsword and a slash across the corby’s throat. As with so many similar wounds, the corby fails to treat this as a serious event.

Harwynian moves in to cast *Magic Weapon* on V'lk's shortsword. V'lk takes advantage of this to deliver a pair of very respectable hits on a corby. The creature is badly wounded and staggered but (as per usual) still fighting on.

Jacob Frostfang steps into the action. He spends a moment to prepare, then with one definitive strike cuts the corby V'lk wounded into two pieces.

With V'lk's corby struck down, there are only two remaining on the battlefield: one facing Yoshihiro and one facing Bjorn. Both are staggered, with massive visible wounds. V'lk and Jacob make short work of them.

And Then There Were Mutants

The characters enter the castle. All hear strange slapping and grunting noises; V'lk sneaks forward to investigate and reports two mutants slapping and beating each other in the garden. They don't look precisely human, but they look a lot more human than the dire corbies.

The group attacks. The mutant with one huge arm and one shrunken arm cold-cocks V'lk and knocks him out with one hit. Everyone else spends most of their time slowly carving up the thick-skinned mutant until they (mostly) achieve victory by knocking the creatures down with (mostly) non-lethal attacks. If the mutants hadn't been so damaged to start out, the characters are convinced that they would not have survived.

Wake Up, V'lk!

The characters retreat back to the garden and administer first aid to V'lk. They do their best to tie up the two mutant ogrekin. Jacob spots a wheelbarrow in the corner of the garden. They use it to cart the mutant prisoners and the unconscious V'lk back out to the graveyard. They snap off the gate handles on the way out to prevent the next shift of dire corby guards from closing the gates. Whether or not this will work depends a lot on just how smart and organized the dire corbies are. Available evidence on that ranges from just barely smarter than the reefclaws to substantially smarter than the characters ("If they're so smart and they're just hanging out in ruins murdering strangers, what do they know that we don't?")

It turns out that Spivey is a cleric with some substantial skill, able to channel positive energy multiple times per day. She heals all who are wounded.

Interrogating the OGREkin

Yoshihiro takes the lead in interrogating the two ogrekin. He learns that they were prisoners, and didn't leave because they were too afraid of the spiders in the stable. Trivial Sense Motive checks suggest that they are lying. Badly. They aren't really capable of bluffing.

They explain that they were fighting just to have a bit of fun. "Would you like to play with us? You look like you could be a good wrestler."

V'lk silently grumbles, "If you're ogrekin, everybody has a pretty mouth."

Yoshihiro notices the ogrekin staring at Spivey with their little, piggy eyes. He cautions, "Watch out, that little fairy can melt your eyes. And then she'll lay eggs in your skull. So, who's in charge of the bird-men?"

One ogrekin rumbles, "The bird-things are bossed by the big birdie with the red face." The red-faced creature is named *Kikkonu*. He has both arms and actual wings, and a very long nose. He is armed with a chain-thing. Subsequent efforts to clarify how many corbies are lurking in the castle amount to nothing. Harwynian suspects that this is because the ogrekin are not actually able to understand numbers larger than three.

The characters are able to figure out that the ogrekin saw a woman captured by the corbies a little while ago. The corbies gave her over to *Slugwort*, "sort of a relative" who lives down in the dungeons. The other ogrekin indicates that Slugwort generally uses his club on prisoners. Their sister *Matilda* also lives in the castle somewhere. She doesn't dance, because she's always too busy eating but she never gains any weight: she's still really gangly. The characters get the idea that Slugwort is probably a full ogre, whereas the ogrekin have some human blood in them (and less appetizing stuff).



V'lk draws an illustration of Kikkonu, more or less to the ogrekin description. He thinks that the creature attacked his family's caravan, killing everyone but him. He also saw the creature cast magic. Nobody else really knows what the thing is, but we are happy to refer to it as a "hellclown" hereafter.

The ogrekin indicate that the dire corbies and Kikkonu worship a tentacled goddess (or possibly god) and have a shrine to her in the dungeons. Aside from religious services, they tend to not spend a lot of time in the dungeons. Several characters, led by Gobo, start musing about writing some monster porn titled *Kiss of the Tentacle Man*. They think that this might have a much better return than adventuring, at substantially lower risk.

Spiders in the Courtyard

The characters decide that they will return to the castle and sneak down into the dungeons to rescue the captive Linnorm woman. They leave the two ogrekin in Spivey's care, which in practical terms means that the ogrekin break their bonds and escape a couple of minutes after the characters leave.

The characters re-enter the courtyard to find that the earlier excitement was enough to draw the interest of the spiders, or in particular two giant spiders and a uniquely emaciated ettercap.

V'lk starts out by firing an arrow into the ettercap. Yoshihiro sends an arrow into one of the spiders. The creature moves forward to bite Jacob, who finds himself quite poisoned. He feels his Dexterity leaking away. The spiders attack Jacob and Bjorn. V'lk and Yoshihiro end one of the spiders; as is customary, the creature flips over onto its back with all its legs in the air when it dies. Bjorn steps in behind the spider engaging Jacob and slashes it with his axe.

The ettercap lunges in and nips another chunk out of Jacob, once again filling him with poison. Jacob's motions start to slow very noticeably as the poison drains away his Dexterity.

In an effort to save Jacob, Yoshihiro steps in with his glaive and cuts the ettercap badly. Gobo lights off a Desnan candle and starts sending random starfire towards the spider. Noting that Jacob will be paralyzed long before the fireworks kill the ettercap, he abandons it to shoot in random directions in favor of providing some quick first aid to give Jacob a bonus to his Fortitude save.

V'lk flanks the ettercap and stabs it clean through, killing it instantly.

Bjorn steps in with a wild axe swing and a well-placed shield bash, crushing the last life out of the spider.

With all the spiderkin gone, the drama moves to center around Jacob's desperate fight to throw off the ettercap poison. He manages to stop losing Dexterity with 6 points down. Two potions of *Lesser Restoration* bring back all but one of those.

V'lk starts carving spider legs off. He hopes that they will prove to be good eating.

The Stable

The characters' hopes of treasure in the stable are swiftly dashed. The structure is ancient and dilapidated, and all they come up with are some skeletons of woodchucks and deer.

The Side Door

The characters open the side door to the castle, the passage the ogres normally use. They come upon a former utility room occupied by Matilda. She is huge and horrible, with triple-jointed legs of obscene length and milky eyes that drip greenish pus. She wears a spiked gauntlet on one hand. She is chewing on some raw poultry.

Yoshihiro tries negotiating, “Oh, you must be Matilda. Your two brothers decided to get the heck out of Brinewall. How would you feel about joining them?” She howls and charges.

Jacob pulls a throwing dagger from one of V’lk’s sheathes and flings it at Matilda. The weapon harmlessly glances off her thick leather armor. Matilda pulls out a flail that glows with magical energy and goes after V’lk with it. He takes a hit that stops just short of cracking him open like a dropped egg. It turns out that she has Ranger levels, with “elf” as a favored enemy.

Harwynian fires a *Reduce Person* spell at Matilda, but she easily throws off its effects. Jacob casts *Icy Slick* at her weapon (think *Grease*), but again she manages to hold on to the hilt.

Bjorn slashes at her with his axe, drawing blood and a horrible shriek. Bjorn mourns, “Oh, this is going to have repercussions, isn’t it.”

Matilda’s next strike goes to V’lk, dropping him to the ground. He spends a Fate point in grim refusal to die: if he falls now, then how will he get his vengeance against the long-nosed bird-man for the deaths of his family? She looks up and straight at the other elf in the party. Harwynian shudders.

Jacob and Bjorn move in on Matilda. Jacob places a *Frost* enhancement on Bjorn’s axe. Bjorn obliges by slashing Matilda badly. Matilda turns her attention from Harwynian to Bjorn, losing her grip on her morningstar in the process. She hammers away at him with her massive spiked gauntlets.

Harwynian hits her with a *telekinetic fist*, softening her up for Jacob’s sword thrust, which downs her like a pole-axed steer.

V'lk recovers thanks to some first aid and a couple of *Cure Light Wounds* potions. All the treasure the characters find is on Matilda's body:

- +1 *Flail* (going to Bjorn)
- Spiked Gauntlet
- 77 gold pieces

The Mad Choreographer

Yoshihiro carefully scouts beyond the utility room, down a narrow corridor. He hears a high-pitched, creepy male voice screaming from behind a door:

- “No, no, you’ve taken my wings!”
- “Dance better, you incompetent sluggards!”
- “That’s only a prop sword, don’t thrust so hard!”
- “You moron! You’re supposed to be a raven who woke in a human body! Play up the pathos!”

He decides to not investigate that door. He and V'lk move further along. They find a washroom. After a while, they move back to listen to the mad choreographer again. After some (silent) discussion they arrive at a plan: V'lk will crack the door as quietly as he can, get an idea what is going on, and then explain to the others. How he does this without speaking is an interesting question.

Someone is inside the room staging a play with four corbies. That someone is the hellclown yamabushi tengu Kikkonu with the long nose and the wings. And he totally sees V'lk.



Kikkonu asks the elf rogue, “So, you’ve come to see my masterpiece? Come in! Sit down!”

V’lk runs.

Kikkonu screeches out, “Get them! Get them all!” The four dire corbies rush after V’lk. Yoshihiro blocks the door with an ogre corpse. Everyone runs for it. Harwynian finally has a chance to use his *Expeditious Retreat* spell, he runs twice as fast as everyone else.

The characters run down the road and into the ruined town of Brinewall where they hide in abandoned buildings. It is only at that point that V’lk is able to explain to them what they were running from, and by that point Kikkonu has taken wing and provided reconnaissance for the dire corbies, telling them which building the characters are hiding inside.

Kikkonu hovers over the lagoon, howling out, “There they are! Let the play continue!” Yoshihiro takes an arrow shot at him just to back him off. Then Yoshihiro and Bjorn arrange themselves on either side of the door and wait for the dire corbies.

A dire corby comes through the door and rends at Bjorn, inflicting fairly dramatic harm upon him. Bjorn responds with his new flail and his shield, almost (but not quite) flattening the corby.

Harwynian and Gobo both light up Desnan candles and fire them through the door at the corbies. They are exactly as inaccurate as the others expect. Sparks fall everywhere, but don’t quite set the building on fire. V’lk sets off a skyrocket at the corbies, engulfing the area outside the building in fire and burning two dire corbies. One of them is blinded by the explosion, the other is deafened.

As the corbies fight, Kikkonu casts *Ventriloquism* to broadcast the lines of his play through their mouths, “Unfeather my foes, so they’ll feel my blows!” The characters don’t find this all that threatening. The corbies seem to find it deeply disturbing.

Bjorn slams once again into the corby in the door, crushing it into the ground. He calls out, “Next!”

Harwynian turns his Desnan candle on the blinded corby visible through the window, hitting it square on (1 point of fire damage, 1 point non-lethal!). He notes that the possible secondary effect is to set the building on fire. As usual.

High overhead, Kikkonu transforms. V’lk mourns mentally, “He *is* a pokemon!” Kikkonu’s new form is much more birdlike and much less human-like. V’lk thinks, “Oh, now that’s completely reasonable.” He stabs the blind dire corby, then evades its return attacks.

Bjorn lines up on another corby. Between flail and shield he bends, folds and mutilates it. “Next!”

A corby blinded by fireworks croaks out, “Even if we all die, we’ll just ascend into the sky!” The characters do not think that the words mesh well with the corby’s actual thinking.

Bjorn cracks up yet another corby with his flail. It lives, but not by very much. Yoshihiro does the honors and kills the thing. Bjorn runs right past him to attack the last surviving corby outside. Harwynian follows, shooting his Desnan candle at the corby but missing and setting fire to the building instead. Jacob rather desperately follows along with *Ray of Frost*, trying to put the fires out.

Yoshihiro strides out of the burning building and swings at the corby, which dodges. He tells Bjorn, "Finish it!" Bjorn obliges. Jacob finishes putting the fires out.

Overhead, Kikkonu is incredibly upset. He howls, "You're ruining it! You're destroying the play! Barbarian! You don't understand art!"

The characters respond by making rude gestures at Kikkonu, and telling him about how his play is awful.

Kikkonu snarls, "I hate critics!"

Jacob seems to want to write a better play and to sleep with Kikkonu. Or at least to get him to approach closer to the ground. Kikkonu draws out his composite longbow and sends an arrow at Jacob. This doesn't match at all well with any of Jacob's desired outcomes. Fortunately, Kikkonu follows up the arrow with a screechy soliloquy and a magical departure to Brinewall Castle. He departs, challenging the characters to follow him.

The End of the Session

The session ends with the characters preparing to attack the Brinewall castle again, to challenge the yamabushi tengu Kikkonu. The characters all rise to third level.