

JADE REGENT SESSION SUMMARY 07/22/2012

ATTENDANCE

Chris makes some comments about folks living with their parents, then goes on to offer some political opinions that will surely keep him from attaining elective office anywhere except in certain Louisiana parishes.

Bruce calls in, but nobody can hear him say anything.

Patrick notes, “I think the technology is working fine. Bruce is just really good at lip-syncing.”

Matt shows up and contemplates taking Ernest’s normal seat. He relents because he fears that it might make Ernest angry.

Just at that moment *Ernest* appears. He reassures Matt, “I’m actually angry all the time – its part of my management training program.” Then he distributes Chinese food to the group. Angry Chinese food!

Paul notes, “Did you know that all music is produced by Nicki Minaj? It’s very much like the way that every summer one actor appears in every movie.”

Bruce takes that and runs with it, “So they’re the Theater King, sort of like a Year King? They appear everywhere for a year and then we sacrifice them to assure that Hollywood produces high-grade schlock entertainment for another summer? That’s an excellent idea!”

Paul grumbles, “Now you’re turning this into some kind of *Unknown Armies* moment...”

Ernest chooses this moment to speak up, “Hey! Everyone knows that this is the 20th anniversary of *Over the Edge*? Woot!” Based upon Bruce’s glazed, fanatical expression everyone wishes he hadn’t mentioned that. Except Bruce.

Tim manifests, deeply curious, “Did someone mention *Over the Edge*? And is that angry Chinese food I smell? I’m clearly in the right place!”

| <i>Character</i> | <i>Player</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Level</i> |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Harwynian Fallingleaf | Bruce | Elegant Elven Transmuter | 8 |
| Yoshihiro Kaijitsu | Ernest | Tien Reckless Mounted Archer-Knight | 8 |

| <i>Character</i> | <i>Player</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Level</i> |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Jacob Frostfang | Matt | Ale-Loving Kellid Party Sorcerer | 8 |
| V'lk | Chris | Mute Feral Elf Stabber (and Oracle) | 2/6 |
| Gobo Samarillian | Patrick | Blind Gnomish Fortuneteller | 8 |
| Bjorn the Unlucky | Tim | Ulfen Woodsman | 8 |

THROUGH THE GATES OF DESNA... AHM

Koya Mvashti is quite disturbed by the cairn of skulls the characters found just beyond the Gates of Desna. She tells the others, “The old stories say nothing about the Uq’taal people following Funeyoshi.” It develops that the Uq’taal people once buried their dead beyond the Gates of Desna. The look of the cairn suggested that it might have been there for many years, but not quite so many years as the Gates themselves.

Once the caravan clears the Wall of Heaven Mountains it will need to cross through the country of Muliwan and then the Forest of Spirits. The total distance to Minkai proper is another 1800 miles.

The journey through the Gates of Desna takes days of picking through strange caverns and pathways. Finding a good path requires a lot of scouting to avoid false trails and impassable tunnels.

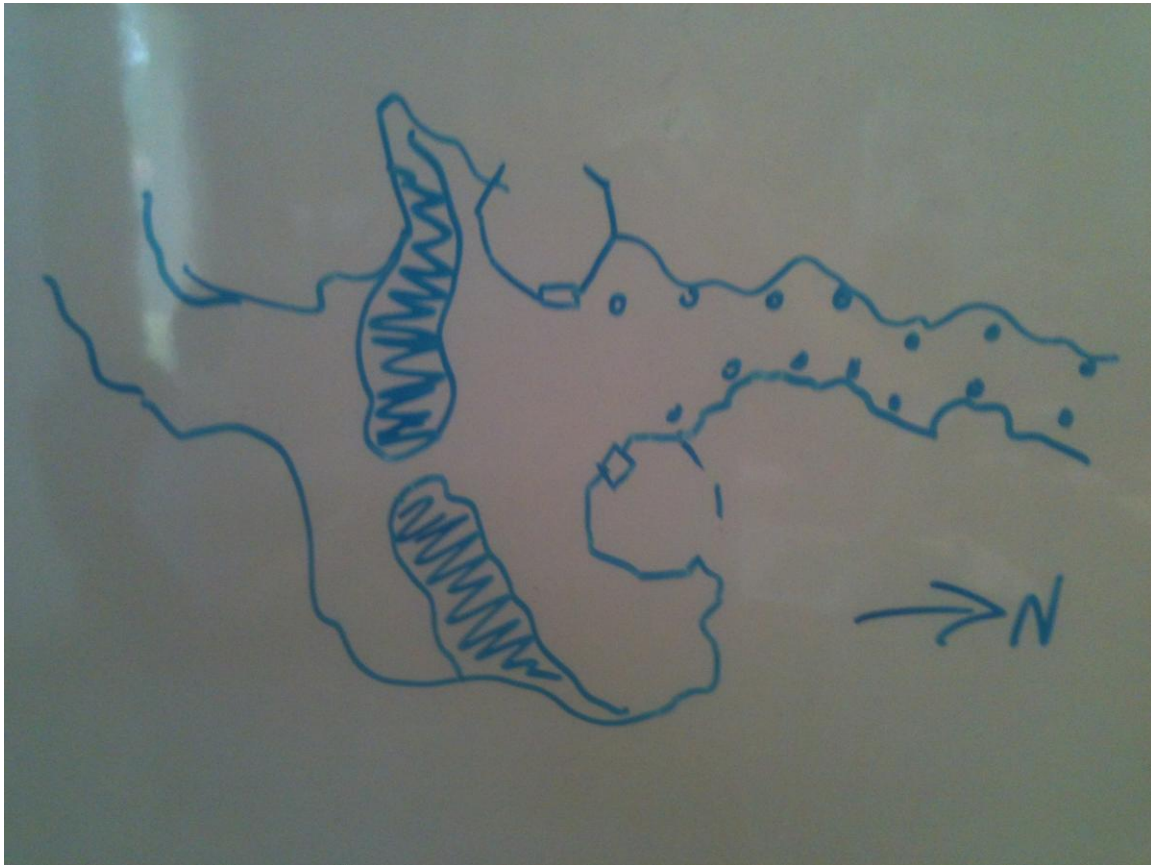
It seems like the characters have been struggling through the caverns forever when a group of *headless apparitions* appear in their path, perhaps marching from the necropolis to the Crown of the World as described in the old stories. The NPC caravan crew immediately decides that the best strategy is to abandon the path and go back to the High Ice. They try to back the wagons, managing only to damage several of them. *Yoshihiro* and *Ameiko* pull out their samisens and play morale-improving music to calm the staff and stop them. The apparitions continue on their way. The characters halt the caravan for repairs.

Koya Mvashti suggests that the headless apparitions are likely the spirits of those unfortunate souls killed by the evil cultists who have been creating the cairns of skulls and desecrating the necropolis of Desna.

THE GRAND CHAMBER

Several days into the journey the path becomes wider and straighter. The way is lined with ranks of skulls all facing to the North, carefully placed on the ground. Nobody knows which religion is likely to be arranging skulls this way, but the way they are painted suggests that those responsible are not Good. The characters decide to pick the skulls up and take advantage of *Harwynian's* unlimited-use *Prestidigitation* spell to clean them off.

The characters enter into a massive chamber divided by a deep crevasse. A stone bridge crosses the crevasse. Two octagonal towers with thin windows overlook the bridge. The area, road and towers are finely worked. Stars and a skyscape are painted across the roof of the cavern, clearly a symbol of Desna. The skulls lining the roadway and the bridge are much less indicative of Desna worship.



The characters leave the caravan behind and approach the towers (and the bridge) on their own. Gobo casts *Invisibility from Undead* to provide some stealth. They move

up to one tower and push open the heavy stone door to reveal two headless figures. The figures turn towards the door. As they do, swarms of bright floating sparks rush down to surround them, obscuring their locations.

The characters move forward as Harwynian casts *Haste*. The headless wights start to howl, paralyzing Yoshihiro, *Jacob*, *V'lk* and Harwynian with fear. The two headless wights emerge from the tower, joined by two more from the other tower. Most of the characters are covered by the *Invisibility from Undead*, and the headless creatures move about aimlessly, but one wight pierces through the spell.

That one wight attacks Yoshihiro, cracking ribs and leaving him gasping. Then the spirits surge around him, sickening him. He can already feel his flesh starting to rot. *Gobo* casts *Freedom of Movement* on him, dispelling the paralysis. Yoshihiro challenges the nearest headless wight, trying to draw it away from the paralyzed members of the group.

Jacob casts *Dragon's Breath* and blasts all the monsters. He sprays fire upon them and is very happy to find that they are actually vulnerable to fire. Even so, they are only lightly scorched.

Bjorn the Unlucky steps to a headless wight and chops at it. He finds that they have very good defenses. The headless strikes back, bloodying him with a well-aimed strike. The spirit cloud that descends after that leaves him even worse hurt, but (fortunately) not diseased. Another headless claws into *Gobo*, leaving him spinning and bleeding.

Yoshihiro notes that the headless things are not particularly fast. They also have trouble appreciating abstract concepts of beauty. He steps back out of reach and fills one with arrows. His volley is notably less successful than he would have liked. Jacob shows him how it's done: he catches three headless wights in a line of flames, turning two of them into roasting pillars. The third manages to survive, though its appreciation for cubist art is destroyed. Watching the dried corpses burn is like watching a paper effigy blaze.

Yoshihiro drops his bow and strikes his foe with *Suishen*. Harwynian contributes by emerging from paralysis, destroying one undead and warming up another with a series of *Scorching Rays*. The headless wight facing Yoshihiro is slashed and burned, but not down. It hits Yoshihiro forcefully enough to down a lesser man; it is only through his samurai's Resolve that he manages to stay upon his feet. Yoshihiro strikes back three times with Suishen's flaming blade, destroying the creature.

About a minute after the fight ends, the characters start feeling the effects of mummy rot. Yoshihiro loses 1 CON and 3 CHA as he starts showing the effects of leprosy. Jacob loses only 1 CHA, but 6 CON! For him, the disease started from the inside. Koya is not optimistic: the disease is not curable through normal means. The only way to stop it is to first remove the curse that sustains the sickness. She can help, but not until tomorrow. In the meantime, Gobo helps Jacob regain most of his lost CON points with healing magic.

Yoshihiro grimly insists upon continuing in the meantime, "We will sweep and clear these towers first! I shall rely upon my cavalierly toughness!"

INSIDE THE TOWER

Bjorn moves into one of the towers, ahead of the others (he is impetuous, of course). He finds a narrow stair leading up to an overlooking balcony, and a passage deeper into the rock. He finds a crypt chamber lined with alcoves, each containing a corpse adorned with grave goods of various types. He pulls out a duffel bag and starts filling it with the shiniest items, one alcove at a time.

When Bjorn returns several members of the group are horrified. *Spivey* gasps, "What do you think you're doing? You can't just go around desecrating people's graves! These are ancient worshippers of Desna, and while their bodies might have been desecrated by Funeyoshi cultists you can't go stealing their things!"

Bjorn tells them that they are right, but that there is also a door in the back of the crypt. The characters decide to investigate. They find a funerary chamber containing two biers. Pictographs of the dead rising to attack the living against an arctic backdrop adorn the walls. The two biers have the look of places where two headless watchers

might have rested. Harwynian estimates the average value of the burial goods at around 33 gold per body, not worth enough to risk the wrath of the dead.

AND THE OTHER TOWER?

Looks very similar to the first tower, right down to the back funerary chamber. The characters set up a guard as some of the Desna-worshipping party members reconsecrate the two tombs.

ACROSS THE BRIDGE

The characters, led by Bjorn, march confidently across the bridge and smack into a magical barrier. Harwynian takes a look at the effect and is confident that it is an *Anti-Life Shell* placed upon the bridge. Gobo simply places a moon bridge across a different part of the chasm and allows the group (and the caravan) to cross over. We all reflect on how useful the moon bridges have been, for a power that sounds like one of the lamest oracle abilities in the book.

The chasm turns out to be 80 feet deep, with thousands of bones in the bottom. V'lk is interested in exploring, but not so interested as to allow Harwynian to cast *Levitate* on him.

THE STONE TREE OF HUNGRY SOULS

The characters move forward into another chamber. A massive pillar resembling a stone tree stands in the midst of a pool of water. Light from the pool creates images of stars and clouds on the ceiling. A gilded door engraved with a demonic skull-tusked figure stands on the far side of the chamber, though most of the gilt has been scraped off. To the northwest, a passage carved with a series of steps goes upward. A well-equipped but desiccated corpse lies near the pool.

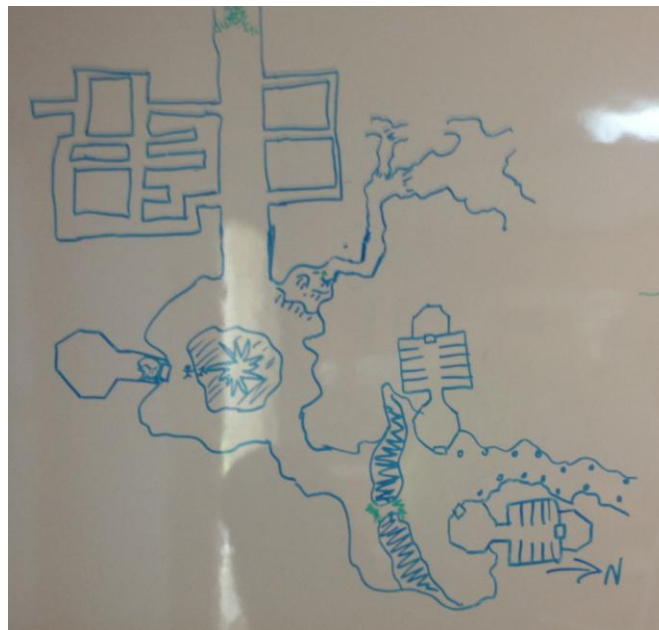
As the characters disturb the body, they see a translucent image of the man whose body lies next to the pool. The image glares, but does not respond to the characters' efforts to communicate. Jacob determines that the body has a magical sword, magical cloak and magical goggles.

While the characters investigate, a shadow creature oozes through the cracks around the door. V'lk decides that now is a good time for *Protection from Evil*. Harwynian boosts everyone with *Haste*. The mystical apparition in the pool chooses this moment to scream, glaring in hatred at the shadow creature. Yoshihiro uses his samurai resolve to stand firm.

The Shadow creature attacks Bjorn, who evades its touch. He tries shield-bashing it away and finds it to be completely immune. Yoshihiro calls out, "Spirit! Aid us against the shadow and we will destroy it!" He unleashes a flight of magical arrows at the thing. He thinks that the magic disrupted it a bit, even though the arrows passed clean through. V'lk tries a morningstar hit, with similar effects.

Jacob and Harwynian step up and start launching *Magic Missiles* at the shadow. This has a lot more impact, enough to persuade the creature to take a swing at Harwynian, inflicting 2 STR damage. Harwynian finds that he is now even weaker than a kitten.

Yoshihiro appeals to the spirit, "Spirit! How can we free you? Mind, we're quite used to this sort of thing." He fires more arrows at the shadow, dispelling it. As he does, the spirit loses animation, breathes a sigh of relief, and vanishes. Yoshihiro understands that he destroyed the spirit's murderer.



The characters try drinking from the water to cure their mummy rot. They find that it is normal, cool water – with no special curative properties. But as the characters approach the tree they feel it start to vibrate. Yoshihiro wades into the water towards it. As he does, the translucent, ghostly figures of two undeads emerge directly from the stone of the trunk. Their faces are twisted into masks of hatred. Yoshihiro retreats, using Suishen to cast *Sunlight*. He chose poorly: if he had used *Daylight* they would have been vulnerable.

One undead reaches out to Yoshihiro and drains away two levels! He retreats and finds that they are stuck in the pool. They howl angrily at the group as they ignore them to loot. The dead explorer's wealth includes:

- *A Rapier +1*
- *A Cloak of Elvenkind*
- *Goggles of Minute Seeing*
- A backpack containing masterwork thieves tools, 47 platinum pieces, and a lot of carved gold inlay (250 gold worth) scraped off the monstrous door.

The characters conclude that he was probably either a Pathfinder or a graverobber.

Spivey and Koya spend some time studying the tree. They conclude that at one time it was a real tree grown by the Uq'taal shamans of Desna. It was later petrified by necromantic magic and turned into a repository for the souls of those Uq'taal who refused to convert to the worship of Funeyoshi. Over the centuries those spirits have given in to their anger and fear and become specters. The best thing the characters can do is to use positive energy on it. Both Spivey and Koya are clerics and can do this. The characters join them in a ceremony to bless the tree.

After the first few waves of positive energy the angry spirits pour out of the tree and burn away.

CURING THE DAMAGED

Gobo rummages through his backpack and announces, "Hey! I have a *Scroll of Restoration!*" On closer examination, it turns out that Koya also has some useful magic:

scrolls of *Remove Curse* and *Remove Disease*. After a bit of scroll-using, Yoshihiro is no longer tormented by negative levels. Koya is able to remove the curse on Yoshihiro, but neither she nor Ameiko are able to remove the actual disease. Spivey finally succeeds in curing him.

CRYPT OF THE HIGH PRIEST

The characters open the door beyond the stone tree and enter an octagonal room decorated with red demonic faces. The chamber is lit by a flame within a crystal lamp. An armored skeleton lies upon a stone tablet. The armor is made in the Minkai style, and its sword has nine rings set into the back of the blade. Both the armor and the sword are magical. The armor in particular has strong abjuration magic, while the sword emits moderate conjuration magic. The skeleton also wears eight matching jade bracelets and eight matching jade rings.

Bjorn, never one to display caution, walks up to the skeleton and picks up the sword. He sees that it is crafted of silvery-gray steel. Streamers of blue and green silk hang from the pommel. Nothing bad happens.

Jacob comes in and identifies the blade as a *+1 Ghost Touch Nine-Ringed Broadsword*. It is both a monk weapon and a martial weapon. Each of the rings has a charge – when one is expended that ring stops glowing. Charges return at a rate of 1/week. Charges can:

- Add *Undead Bane* for 1 minute
- Attempt to banish any creature possessing another creature by striking the possessed creature. The possessing creature may resist with a Will save (DC 17).
- Attempt to destroy a single undead creature with a successful hit. The creature may resist with a Will save (DC 17). (3 charges)

The magic armor is substantially more powerful: it is *Ghost Mirror Armor*, crafted by Uq'taal spirit shamans. It consists of 4 polished steel plates harnessed together with leather straps. It provides protection as a *Breastplate +1*. The wearer may cast *Death*

Watch 4 times per day. When the wearer is attacked by incorporeal undead the armor casts *Protection from Evil* upon the wearer automatically as an immediate action.

The characters decide to equip Bjorn up with both of these pieces to turn him into a ghost-killer extraordinaire. Bjorn is pumped. He announces, “I’m a Ghost-Faced Killa!”

V’lk patiently explains with gestures and drawing that this is incorrect: Bjorn is actually a Ghost-Killer, Face. Bjorn is slightly crestfallen.

Harwynian guesses that the blade and armor were made by the ancient Uq’taal Desna shamans, but the body was probably a high-ranking member of the Funeyoshi priesthood.

The rings and bracelets are worth 100 gold each, and the mask is worth 1000 gold.

INTO THE REALM OF THE ICE APES

The characters examine their two options. The passage beyond the gates is worked, wide and smooth – appropriate for the passage of a caravan. The rising passage of flowstone is not appropriate to the caravan, but Bjorn is able to see that it has often been used by large creatures with simian feet and clawed paws.

The characters move up the passage. V’lk moves ahead, because he’s sneaky. It winds clumsily through the mountains, including several rocky shelves. V’lk moves into a chamber full of animal furs, debris and five huge, white, apelike creatures. They are nine feet tall with glowing eyes. V’lk sneaks back to tell the others about the five Abominable Snowmen. Harwynian thinks that they look exactly like the carnivorous white apes of Mars. Bjorn (bolstered with mysterious ranger knowledge) thinks that they are yetis. They are fierce, stealthy and immensely strong. They usually live in small tribes, hiding away from view. They are not typically violent – but they do exile those who show violent tendencies, explaining their typical reputation among humans.

The characters decide to bypass the creatures. They move back and find side passages, most of them used for Desnan burial chambers. None of them lead any further. The characters return to the main tunnel.

THE DEMON-FACES BLOCK OUR WAY

Two huge red demonic skull-faces carved into the stone block the passageway. There are two magical fields coming from the great faces. The two fields are overlapping *Anti-Life Shells*. *Detect Magic* says that the magical aura is strong (at least 12th level). Bjorn invokes *Freedom of Movement* and heads down the passageway, neatly bypassing the *Anti-Life Shells*. He sneaks up to a chamber where he sees a yeti King wearing studded leather and circled by an *Ioun Stone*. He has a couple of very fierce-looking bodyguards.

The yeti spots Bjorn. Bjorn tries to parley with them in Common. The King issues a command to his bodyguards. They move forward. Bjorn turns and runs, hoping that his *Longstrider* will keep him ahead of them. It turns out that yeti have a ground speed of 50', better than Bjorn even with his magic. He flees and makes it back to the *Anti-Life Shell* just barely ahead of their spears. Which they then throw... spearing him through twice.

Bjorn is deeply hurt, but also very angry. He turns and flings his starknife at one, resisting the creature's *Frightful Gaze* in the process. The other characters are able to see this and take action. Harwynian casts *Flame Arrow* on Yoshihiro's quiver. Yoshihiro fires a volley of arrows at the yeti bodyguards. With nothing more they can do to the characters, the yetis retreat back up the corridor.

THE YETI CHARGE!

The characters conclude that the two bodyguards will probably go back and tell their master that there are a lot of humans in the tunnel, and in response he will send his minions pouring down the flowstone corridor to kill them all. The characters move back to the stone tree chamber and prepare by casting spells and setting position.

Only a few moments later, Yoshihiro sees the yeti charging down the flowstone tunnel. He leads with a volley of arrows, taking one yeti down. Bjorn flings a flask of alchemist's fire as a follow-up, flashing fire across the lead rank.

The first rank of yetis charge in, with four more following behind them. Harwynian launches a *Firefall* to engulf all of them, blinding most of them (and a good number of the party in the process). The blinded V'lk decides that from now on he will use deeply impolite words to refer to Harwynian. No more "against the mud races!" solidarity to him: even Gobo treats him with more respect!

Yoshihiro uses his new samurai strategy skill to allow everyone to hastily retreat back to a rally point the devil room. Bjorn (not blinded) and Jacob (blinded) fight a retreating action. V'lk launches a skyrocket into the room, setting another yeti on fire. The entire room is full of flames.



The yeti move forward to the attack. Harwynian places a *Web* across the flowstone passage. Jacob manages a blind hit on one of the advancing yeti. Yoshihiro

fires arrows into several of the front rank yeti. Bjorn storms at another yeti, critically wounding it. Six yetis fall in rapid succession. V'lk, still blinded, casts *Invisibility* on himself on the idea that even if he can't see, at least the (unblinded) yetis won't be able to see him either.

Jacob tears into an ugly customer with a long nose who decides to retreat rather than stick around. As the yeti runs, Yoshihiro shoots him down with an arrow, following up with a shot that injures a yeti with rheumy, yellowed eyes. An otherwise undamaged yeti decides that now is the time to retreat, along with a cluster of yeti trapped in Harwynian's *Web*. The characters hold the field, having driven off the followers of the yeti king.

THE END OF THE SESSION

The session ends with the characters having driven away a pack of yeti. Next session, the characters will face the Yeti King!