

## Carrion Crown Session Summary 05/26/2013

### *Attendance*

Technical problems are the theme of the early session, as *Bruce* finds out that he cannot hear anyone on the other end of the line. Contrary to everything that *Paul* might have expected, he takes this as a negative development. *Chris* works feverishly to correct the problems with his equipment, never suspecting that the actual issues are on the Richardson end of the line. *Ernest* chirps in with various helpful technical advice, some of which is not appropriate for a family audience and mercifully deadened out by the sound problems.

*Matt* and *Tim* realize that this is a long weekend and simply absent themselves from the proceedings...

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Level</i>
Oswald Bainbridge	Bruce	Grizzled Crossbowman	Fighter	2
Vladimir Vampijérovic	Matt	Pale-skinned Stranger	Hungry Ghost Monk	2
Nigel Snodgrass	Patrick	Emo-Gothic figure	Dirge Bard	2
Doctor Jegen Vaus	Tim	Elvish Eurotrash in leather pants	Alchemist	2
Sredni Vashtar's Girl	Ernest	Troubled Vudran Girl	Witch	2
Icobus Basilisk	Chris	Pale, poor nobleman	Oracle	2

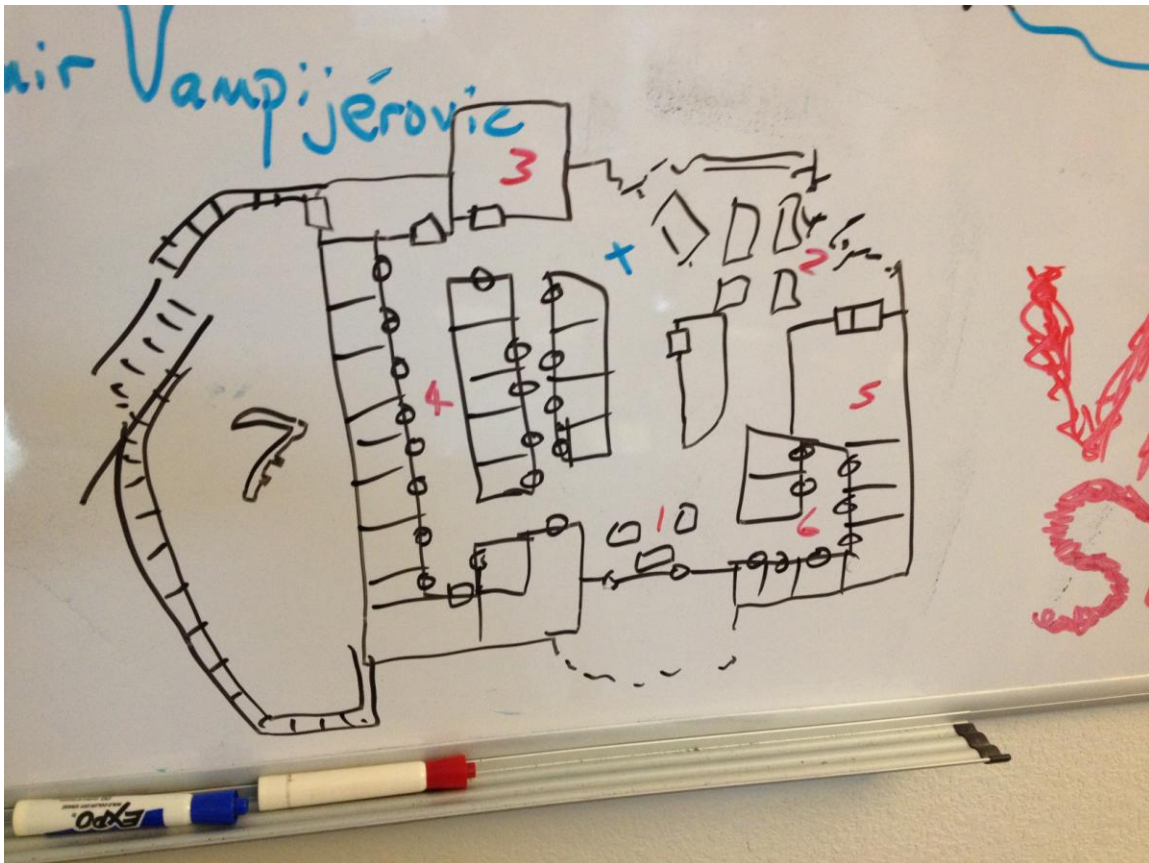
### *How Can We Eliminate the Piper?*

Before fleeing from Harrowstone Prison the characters decide to have another try at the *Spirit Planchette* to learn how to properly dispel the *Piper* for good – apparently the characters' previous heroic efforts only serves to temporarily banish the haunt. On the basis that she has the best Will save (for all that she is dominated by her familiar) *Sredni Vashtar's Girl* agrees to serve as the questioner.

The séance goes well, leading to the answer *Vasoriyana*. As this happens to also be the name of the dead Warden's wife the characters take this as a very promising bit of information.

### *The Second Floor of Harrowstone*

The characters move further into the second floor of Harrowstone. They move through to a large room along the north wall with a double door (area 3). The door is frozen in place, so *Oswald Bainbridge* wrenches it off its hinges to reveal... a privy. It was clearly intended for group use – there are a half dozen seats available along a stone bench. The smell is quite pleasant, considering that the place hasn't been used for fifty years.



The characters move on to a large hall full of a scatter of benches (area 2). The characters move carefully, with attention towards the cracked masonry ceiling, so they are not surprised when stirges fly out from above to attack!

Sredni Vashtar's Girl places the blessings of fortune upon Oswald Bainbridge then moves away, which unfortunately puts her out in the open. Three stirges flock down

upon her. Two of them latch on and start to drain her blood. Oswald Bainbridge shoots down the third. *Sredni Vashtar* rushes out of her robes and tries to bite one stirge, but it twists out of the way of his teeth. Oswald stabs it once, *Sredni Vashtar* tears at it, *Icobus* jabs at it, and then Oswald ends it.

### **Proper Burial for the Charlatan? Perhaps Not.**

Oswald, *Icobus* and *Nigel Snodgrass* array themselves against the double doors leading away from the main hall. They overestimate the strength of the old, rotting doors and plow right through them, sending the ruined doors out through the ruined wall and into the pond. They find that they are standing in the kitchen, a place that has long since been thoroughly looted out (mostly by random animals sneaking in to steal the foodstuffs).

The characters move on to find the guardroom, separated from a large prisoner's area by a row of iron bars. They continue on to check the cells. They find a skeleton in one cell dressed in robes embroidered in religious symbols. The skeleton is wrapped in heavy chains and lead weights marked with holy symbols of various gods. Oswald blurts out, "This might have been that blasphemous priest!" The more knowledgeable characters agree that this was probably *Father Charlatan*, sentenced to bear the weight of the gods he sinned against.

The characters decide to take the body back to a graveyard for proper burial. As the characters are moving it out, *Icobus Basilisk* starts to choke. He falls to his knees. *Nigel Snodgrass* touches him and notes that smoke rises from his skin where he was touched. He proclaims, "I think it's a haunt!" Suddenly, *Icobus* falls dead. Ghostly chains and weights appear upon him, similar to those on the body of *Father Charlatan* except that the religious symbols are twisted and warped.

*Nigel* and the Girl rather desperately try casting *Cure Light Wounds* spells. Oswald looks around desperately, clutching his crossbow and searching for something useful to do. Seeing no other options, he shoots the corpse. The corpse of *Father Charlatan*, that is.

*Icobus* opens his eyes. The chains upon him shatter. He reports that he had a vision of his old family priest telling him that he was killed in the prison, that he is still

quite weak and that he shouldn't struggle. He struggled anyway because the family priest was wearing much finer clothing than he remembered: his family was very, very poor. That was apparently enough to free him from the influence of the haunt, at least for the time being.

The characters take the body down to the cemetery, where Nigel Snodgrass persuades old *Father Grimborough* that even though Father Charlatan was a blasphemer, he needs to be buried in consecrated ground. There is a funeral, though Father Grimborough really doesn't have many encouraging things to say, beyond the idea that all souls will go along to their eternal reward... or punishment.

### *More Marks on the Statue*

The next morning, *Kendra Lorrimer* tells the characters that another letter has been painted on the Warden's Statue. The red lettering is now up to V-A-S-O-R, half way through Vasoriyana's name. This is in spite of the fact that the old man *Gibbs Hephanous* is in custody. He has been much quieter of late, with none of the insane ranting that he enjoyed when he was first confined.

The characters decide to try the *Spirit Planchette* again. Sredni Vashtar's Girl takes the lead again. Everyone is surprised when she tries to strangle Oswald Bainbridge, all while speaking in tongues. The characters restrain her. After the fit passes she is unable to describe what happened.

### *Can We Clear the Stirges?*

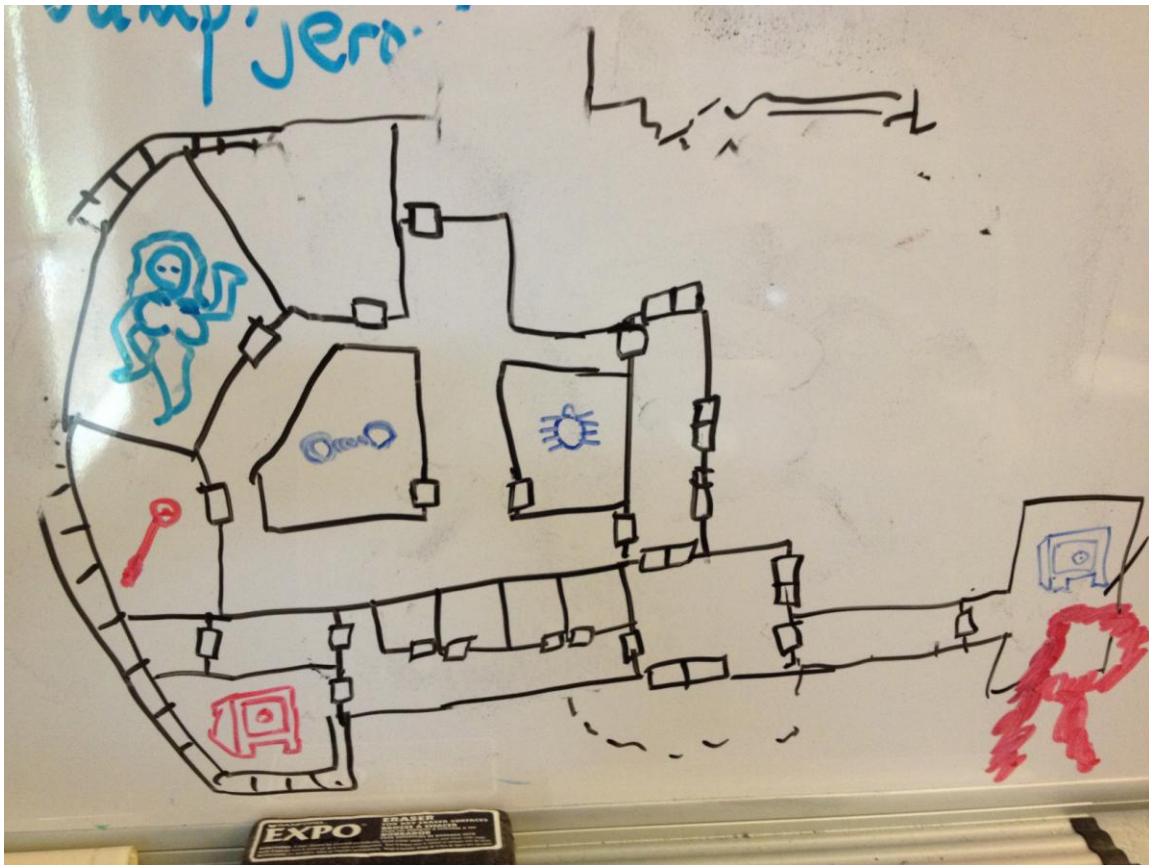
The characters buy a pig and parade it around the prison while Nigel Snodgrass sings his best stirge-attracting song. They hope to attract stirges, but this plan doesn't work out all that well. The characters decide to bring the pig with them when they head back into the prison.

### *Back Into the Prison*

The characters head back into Harrowstone, choosing to pass through the front door this time. This will allow them to investigate the first floor, hopefully without entertaining too much danger of sudden floor collapses.

The characters enter a chamber covered in a thick gray carpet of mold. The doors are in surprisingly good shape. Sredni Vashtar suggests running straight across. Oswald thinks this is a terrible idea. Icobus Basilisk ignores Oswald's pitiable cowardice, puts on a handkerchief over his face, heads over to the far doors, and opens them up. Everyone else follows, with Oswald last in line.

As Oswald passes through the double doors into the corridor beyond, a vision of shrieking, burned faces appear in the doorways and they all slam shut. Oswald freaks out, but only for a little while.



### **The Chapel - It's Full of Spiders!**

The first doors in the corridor are askew and lead to what might have been a temple to Pharasma. The characters look inside and observe that the place is overrun with dog-sized spiders! Spiders!

Sredni Vashtar's Girl steps back and manipulates the forces of dharma to bring misfortune to one spider. Her curse saves Nigel Snodgrass from an awful biting. Oswald

shoots one, Icobus clubs another one to death, and the misfortunate spider tries biting the pig. Oswald shoots that one twice, leaving it unconscious.

Icobus lines up on the last spider and slaughters it.

Then the characters search the place. They quickly zero in upon a cabinet containing:

- Five vials of holy water
- A scroll of *Lesser Restoration*
- A wand of *Cure Light Wounds* (15 charges)

The characters distribute the holy water amongst themselves. Icobus gets the scroll and the Girl gets the wand.

The characters are just a bit surprised to find that the shrine has not been desecrated. There has been, after all, nobody around to desecrate it.

### **The Holding Chamber**

The characters move on to a room lined with rotted benches and rusted chains. They suspect that it was once used as a group holding pen. Sredni Vashtar's Girl hears a faint sobbing and is filled with a feeling of hopelessness. A pair of manacles rises up and rushes for her wrists.

Oswald is able to snap off a fast shot at the manacles, but inflicts no damage. Nigel manages to slash at it. He draws sparks as his blade scrapes steel upon steel but again inflicts no damage.

The manacles grab onto Icobus. He tries using *Cure Light Wounds* to harm it. The manacles squirm and burn to his touch. Nigel grabs on and casts another *Cure Light Wounds*, destroying the thing.

The characters search the area and find three old sets of manacles. In spite of their recent experience, they decide to keep them. You never know when you might need some manacles. Some *cursed* manacles.

## **The Branding Room**

The characters move on to find a chamber decorated with an array of brands hanging upon the wall. The brands appear to be letters and numbers, and were likely used on special prisoners. Several characters smell the faint odor of burning flesh.

Nigel Snodgrass decides that the branding irons are very interesting. He walks towards them. Sredni Vashtar's Girl quietly steps backward and closes the door. Four branding irons, their tips red hot, rise into the air and lash at him.

Both Nigel and Oswald are struck and scarred. Icobus dodges away from the iron that attacks him. The fourth buries itself in the door trying to get at Sredni Vashtar's Girl. And then all four irons fall to the ground and lie motionless.

## **Vasoriyana Manifests in the Tailoring Shop**

The characters break through another door. Tangled mounds of moth-eaten fabrics are piled on the ground of what looks like a tailoring workshop. An apparition appears from a mound of clothes from which a skeletal arm protrudes. The apparition is of a beautiful young woman clad in a tattered blue dress. Smoke comes from her mouth when she speaks. "Oh, you must be the new guards! You must be sent to replace those cowards who locked me here in this room! Do not worry about me, I will be fine now that you have opened the door – but you must do something about these prisoners."

She urges the characters to ensure that the horrible criminals her husband spent his life confining must not be allowed to escape. Her husband's spirit was able to contain the ghosts for many years until some robed figures used magic to take him away. Her own strength is fading, due to something the *Splatter Man* is doing. She might be able to help them if they can bring her her husband's badge of office. He died below in the dungeons, and that must be where it is. In the meantime, the characters can use items that the five prisoners valued in life against them – those things will be in the prison property room, but they will probably be cursed.

## **The Property Room**

The characters find that the property room has a metal door to it, a door that takes a remarkable amount of bashing and smashing to get through. The room is lined with

shelves scattered with unusual antique objects, all of them labeled with names. Sadly, none of the names match the names of the five prisoners.

After some searching, the characters are able to find a small vault behind a secret door. There are five items stored inside:

- A blood-stained *Hand Axe +1* (The Lopper)
- A collection of a dozen holy symbols on tangled silver chains (Father Charlatan)
- A moldy leather-bound spellbook (Splatter Man)
- A masterwork smith's hammer (Mosswater Marauder)
- A tarnished silver flute (Piper)

The characters take these items, handling them carefully on the premise that they are probably horribly cursed. The Splatter Man's spellbook is mostly ruined, but still contains the spells *Comprehend Languages*, *Dispel Magic*, *False Life*, *Illusory Script*, *Levitate*, *Mage Armor*, *Magic Missile*, and *Summon Monster IV*.

Oswald Bainbridge is a bit concerned about carrying an axe murderer's axe. In spite of that, he agrees to carry the *Lopper's Hand Axe +1* and a *Silver War Razor* from the general storage as well. The masterwork smith's hammer functions in battle as a light hammer. Icobus carries it. Girl takes the holy symbols and the spellbook. Finally, Nigel takes the tarnished flute.

The characters move on to a hallway with small offices on it. The characters find some old records detailing daily life in the prison, to a level of detail that is incredibly dull to contemplate. Sredni Vashtar's Girl collects them up and indicates that she will organize them later that night.

There is a safe in the Warden's Office. The characters consider various strategies for opening it, eventually deciding that trying to find the key on the Warden's body is the best choice.

### *The Infirmary*

The characters move along, finding the old prison infirmary. As they enter, something appears in the center – a twisted, ghostly, skeletal being. It does its level best to scare all of the characters, succeeding in frightening Sredni Vashtar's Girl. She is clearly ready to run for the hills.



Icobus Basilisk, with nothing to do to help Sredni Vashtar's Girl, casts *Protection from Evil* on Oswald. The Girl screams and flees. *Mr. Squeakers* (the pig) also screams and tries to run, but Icobus Basilisk hauls back upon the rope and instructs him to be a man, not a swine. Oswald shoots the apparition with a standard crossbow bolt (which does nothing) and an *Undead Bane* bolt (which inflicts a fairly good amount of damage).

The apparition raises up a bone saw and sends it flying at Icobus. Oswald splashes a bottle of holy water at the thing, dispelling it.

The characters retrieve Sredni Vashtar's Girl from the dark corner she had found and then pick through the infirmary inventory for useful items. They find:

- 2 healing kits
- 3 vials of antitoxin
- 2 vials of antiplague
- 3 vials of blood block
- 3 doses of smelling salts
- 2 doses of soothe syrup
- 4 potions of *Cure Light Wounds*

These items are distributed among the characters. Some of the have very handy effects – soothe syrup, for example, wards off the nauseating effects of awful

## **The Furnace Room**

The characters continue along to the furnace room, a room dominated by a furnace large enough to fit a moderate sized child inside. As the characters look around, they smell the faint scent of burning flesh. Then the furnace starts to move, standing up and advancing upon them.

Oswald shoots the furnace twice with his crossbow, to no effect. The Girl blesses Icobus with fortune (because he has the smith's hammer) then steps behind him. The furnace roars at the characters and lashes out at Nigel with a tongue of flame.

Icobus rushes up and bangs upon the furnace with the hammer. He has no more effect upon it than Oswald did. Nigel starts to play, inspiring courage. Oswald decides that now is the time for holy water. He flings his last vial at the furnace and is dismayed to see that the liquid has no effect.

Knowing that the only reliable way the characters have found to affect haunts is positive energy, Sredni Vashtar's Girl uses her newfound wand of *Cure Light Wounds* on it. It shudders and howls as it burns as the energy runs through it. Icobus and Nigel follow up with two more *Cure Light Wounds* spells, eliminating the haunt. The furnace goes back to looking like a normal furnace.

The characters search around the furnace and the piles of coal nearby. Icobus dives straight in. He comes up with a few bones and a skull. Even though the furnace is cold, the bones are still quite warm to the touch.

### ***We Are Tired. And Hurt. And Scarred***

The characters decide that it is time to head back to town. Along the way, Sredni Vashtar whispers helpful advice into the Girl's ear: "You shouldn't use up your spells so quickly! Let your companions exhaust their power first, so if they turn on you you will still be more powerful than they are!"

The characters go back to Lorremor's house, clean up a bit and then head out to the Warden's Statue to guard it through the night. Along the way, Icobus Basilisk drops off the warm bones with the Pharasma Temple with instructions to have them properly buried next morning. The characters also warn the Sheriff on their plans, and ask for assistance. The Sheriff provides his part-time deputy *Larimore*.

It isn't too long before the characters see the alchemist *Jomendra* show up wearing a nightgown. She has a paintbucket and a brush with her. The characters raise the alarm, causing her to drop her bucket. Larimore leaps out of the bushes and runs at her.

Sredni Vashtar's Girl wakes up (she'd been off-shift at the time). She casts *Light* on her punch dagger and stands up.

Jomendra is clearly deeply under the influence of the Splatter Man – she flings a cold bomb at Icobus, splashing upon Nigel and the deputy Larimore. The characters pile down on her with the goal of subduing her. Icobus, all grown up with his *Enlarge Person*, clocks her with a mace. This does not drop her: she is clearly granted unnatural vitality by the Splatter Man's possession.

Jomendra catches Sredni Vashtar's Girl with another cold bomb, chilling and staggering her. Sredni Vashtar's Girl places the evil eye upon her, dropping her attack rolls, and then her armor class.

Oswald decides that he's had enough of trying nonlethal attacks. He shoots her with his crossbow. Icobus closes back in and clobbers her again with his mace, dropping her at long last.

The characters decide to patch up Jomendra and then cart her off to the Sheriff's office. Confidence that he will keep her under control is reduced by the fact that he is sweet on her. When she comes to, she is completely normal once again. The Sheriff *Benjen* is very concerned about her. Just like the old man Gibbs Hephannous, she is unable to offer any good explanation of what happened.

### **Back to the Spirit Planchette**

The characters once again attempt to ask the Spirit Planchette how best to put Father Charlantan to rest. Again, they get the answer "Vasoriyana". Apparently this is the answer to everything – to no particular surprise.

### ***A Morning Trip to the Prison***

The characters head back up to Harrowstone the next morning and venture further into the first level. They pass into a room with a stage where the air is slightly chilly. Nigel heads up onto the stage. He notices nothing out of the ordinary until the temperature drops catastrophically and he gets hammered by cold magic. His dirge bard powers include resistance to effects like that, so aside from being damaged and covered with icicles he's perfectly fine.

The northeast wall is partially fallen, allowing the waters of the pond to flow in. Several training dummies fallen on the ground suggest that the area was once used to train the guards. There is a hole in the floor with scorch marks around the edge.

Looking down through the hole, the characters see a 20 foot drop to the floor below. It looks dangerous, but most of the unstable edges have long since fallen away. The area below is a cavernous chamber, almost completely collapsed, with water covering the center of the floor in a dark, murky pool. The ruins of an iron lift are visible below.

While the characters debate their next moves, three skulls levitate up from the rubble and catch on fire. They scream and rush at the characters. Nigel shoots one down with a shortbow: the skull explodes in flame and frustration. Sredni Vashtar's Girl blesses Oswald with fortune just as a skull attacks him. Icobus crushes one with his morningstar. Oswald shoots the last one into pieces.

The characters manage to find stairs up and down, though the stairs down have been long since blocked off by a deadfall. The characters decide that their next step will be to scale their way down through the burnt hole that was once the prisoner lift.



### *The End of the Session*

The session ends with the first floor of the Harrowstone prison fully explored. Next session, the characters will head down into the dungeons under the prison.