

Carrion Crown Session Summary 06/09/2013

Attendance

Ernest opens the session with the truly memorable comment, “I want to bang my Ewoks off her armored panels!” Apparently some members of the IDF have been using Facebook in unacceptable ways.

Paul continues on that theme with a second-hand tale of two very unfortunate would-be members of the Army who just couldn’t wait for don’t-ask-don’t-tell to expire. The overall theme is that alcohol and good decision-making don’t go hand in hand.

Matt does his level best to pay attention to *Chris*, who is describing some of the psychological oddities of his cats. He very much hopes that *Chris*’ discourse doesn’t head down the same path that *Ernest* and *Paul* followed so eagerly.

Bruce just wishes that he hadn’t adjusted the volume so he can hear everything so clearly. And, in some ways, so overwhelmingly.

Tim takes up the thread of cooking shows, noting the sad tale of one candidate who used sufficient spice that his customers could use the food to fold space. Oh, the possibilities! *Bruce*’s mind starts to race. And then *Tim* flees to do some errands and equip himself with snacks.

Patrick shows up a bit later, well after the conversation has moved to more polite territory.

<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

To the Lower Levels!

The characters contemplate the collapsed elevator shaft leading down to the lower levels of the prison. *Vladimir* points out, “My hit points are feeling a bit weak right now, so I’d really appreciate it if *Icobus* and *Oswald* could stand in the front lines for the moment.”

Oswald notes that he carries a crossbow and speculates upon the circumstances that would have him ideally suited to stand in front. He shrugs and hefts the *Lopper’s Hand Axe +1*. *Icobus* grumbles about the pack of panty-waists he’s stuck with in the group.

The area underneath the shaft is a large, irregular chamber. The chamber might have once been an underground cellblock. The walls are mold-covered. Broken, scorched wooden beams protrude into the chamber. A puddle of water stands right beneath the shaft.

The characters send a knotted rope down and clamber down, *Vladimir* first, *Oswald* second, *Icobus* third and *Sredni Vashtar’s Girl* last. All goes well until *Icobus* loses his grip and splashes into the water. It is at this point that two ectoplasmic spirits rise up out of the water and attack! Their horrifying screams send shivers through the characters’ souls. All except for *Icobus*, who is still sputtering and swearing because he’s soaked through. “Wool!” he grumbles. “My clothing is made of wool! I’ll never get this ghastly stink out of it!” The others are too polite to mention that the death-stench is an improvement over their previous scent.

Oswald proves that the creatures have better than normal insubstantiality by sending a *Crossbow bolt +1* clean through one with no measurable impact. Likewise, *Vladimir* demonstrates that he has more courage than sense by engaging one with his bare feet. He gets nauseating slime upon his foot. On the plus side, he does manage to hurt the thing.

Doctor Vaus appears above and flings a bomb down at the apparitions. One of them is torn apart in the explosion! *Oswald* carefully places his crossbow down and chops into the last one with the *Lopper’s hand axe*. He’s never before felt such a sense of joy and exultation when he killed something, but now it’s different. He really likes killing things with this axe! He looks around for other things to kill... perhaps his

companions? They would be very satisfying to kill, though now is not the right time – there are too many of them and they’d just gang up and kill him in return. Perhaps later, when they are sleeping and defenseless...

Doctor Vaus rather unwisely tries searching the bodies of the dead apparitions. He recognizes that their ectoplasm is quite toxic (through direct contact). Even though the stuff is evaporating very quickly he manages to capture a bit of essence of ectoplasm in a bottle.

Skeletons, Available in Job Lot Quantities

Vladimir explores down the tunnel to find a crossing intersection, each path marked by a bronze nameplate. He saw a cluster of eight fallen skeletons down on corridor, each wearing the burnt clothing of a prisoner. He sneaks back to tell the others. They all assume that the skeletons will stand up and fight on the slightest of excuses.

When the characters actually do arrive in the chamber they are not disappointed: the skeletons leap up and advance! Doctor Vaus flings a bomb at one and is pleased to see that they burn just fine. Then all of them start to smolder. They rush the characters with their claws! Icobus takes a nasty clawing!

Oswald ignores his crossbow in favor of his lovely, lovely hand axe! He steps forward and chops at a skeleton! It is so delightful! He strikes again, cleaving the thing in half! A savage smile splits his face!

Sredni Vashtar’s Girl demonstrates that holy water does a nice job on smoldering skeletons. She notices that Vladimir is not hurt by the holy water splash, and marks another ‘X’ on her logic diagram titled “What Could Vladimir Be?”

Doctor Vaus flings more holy water and demonstrates that he also does more damage than most people, even when he misses. Another skeleton falls into pieces.

The skeletons fall upon Icobus and try to tear him to shreds. They wound him severely with their sharpened claws, but do not kill him because he has resiliency! It’s keeping him alive, even if he doesn’t know what it is. Sredni Vashtar’s Girl thinks about casting *Cure Light Wounds* on Icobus, but finds herself caught in internal debate: should she waste the precious spell upon her companions when she might need it later for herself?

Vladimir ends the last skeleton, leaving the battlefield quiet. Sredni Vashtar's Girl counts up the total of holy water vials used and notes, "I hope that fight was worth 150 gold pieces."

Doctor Vaus indicates that he can use his alchemical tricks to make potions for other people, including potions of *Shield* and *Enlarge Person*. He makes potions of *Shield* for Oswald and Vladimir.

Where To Next?

The others note that for a burned, abandoned ruin the floors are surprisingly clean and tidy. Vladimir cleans off the four brass plates, which are not nearly as clean as the floors. The characters read the names on them. Their choices are:

- Oubliette – to the north
- Reaper's Hole – to the west
- Nevermore – to the south
- Hell's Basement (from which the characters came) – to the east

The Oubliette – Home of Awful Things

The characters go down the corridor to the Oubliette. They enter a chamber lined by old, moldy (but still serviceable) cots. As they debate how unlikely it is that a cot would remain serviceable after fifty years, a headless skeleton rises from the shadows. It has no head, but its lifesense works plenty well to target the characters. The others suggest that this might be the remains of the Lopper, who might have removed his own head. As they discuss, the skeleton ignites.

Oswald moves into the room, drinking his potion of *Shield*. Icobus storms in right next to him and strikes the skeleton. It strikes back at him, downing him in one awful strike! Doctor Vaus yells out and casts a vial of holy water at the thing, but hits Oswald in the back of the head. The skeleton avoids even the majority of the splash.

Sredni Vashtar's Girl slips in and uses her *Cure Light Wounds* wand to keep Icobus alive. Doctor Vaus flings more holy water, but throws horribly wide. Vladimir moves in with his nunchaku, augmented by *Nigel Snodgrass'* Dirge of Death. His strike is true, leaving the skeleton with cracked ribs. He strikes again, breaking the thing's spine and destroying it.

The characters search the area for treasure. They come up with a hand axe. It isn't a particularly good or bad hand axe, just a hand axe.

The Oubliette – Uneasy Rest for the Lopper

The characters move on into oubliette, passing beneath a rusted portcullis. There is a 10' square pit in the center, covered by an iron grating. There are seven (remaining) iron doors around the perimeter of the room – others have been buried by collapsing walls.

Oswald approaches the oubliette. As he draws near the iron grating flies aside and the Lopper leaps out with a blood-curdling howl. One of his legs is all broken and awkward. He carries a truly immense axe and has a chilling smile upon his face! Oswald strikes out with his axe, but the Lopper dodges out of the way.

Oswald strikes again and hits hard and deep. The Lopper hisses, "You hurt me!" It seems very displeased. His displeasure increases as Sredni Vashtar's Girl blankets him with a misfortune hex.

The Lopper strikes at Oswald, reaching right through his armor to open up a deep, bloody cut. His blade is cold with negative-plane energy. Blood streams from him into the Lopper, healing him as Oswald fades. Oswald howls madly, striking with the axe and opening another wound, though the Lopper seems only barely hurt.

Sredni Vashtar's Girl casts a *Cure Light Wounds* spell upon Oswald, restoring him and eliminating the awful, awful bleed effect. Then Vladimir tries to disarm Oswald. Oswald responds by chopping Vladimir. Vladimir tries again and wrests away the axe, then chops at the Lopper, delivering a nice strike.

The Lopper turns its attention to Vladimir, who handily evades its clumsy strike.

Oswald steps back and fires his one *Undead Bane Bolt* at the Lopper. In a million to one chance the bolt deflects off Doctor Vaus' sword and strikes the Lopper square in the head. Had the monster not been incorporeal, it would have been a fatal shot. As it is, it was only a moderately-damaging blow.

Vladimir continues to chop effectively at the Lopper as Icobus, Doctor Vaus and Nigel determine that most of their attacks are ineffective. Doctor Vaus flings a firebomb at him, a magical firebomb, and finds that works just fine to get rid of him.

The characters reason that unless the Lopper is dispelled he will probably come back. They venture into the oubliette pit to find the Lopper's corpse, plus some severed heads and other items. There is a broken rope leading down. The characters surmise from the loot that the Lopper managed to kill some guards, stored their loot in his cage, but then broke his leg when the rope broke and was unable to escape.

The Lopper's loot includes (in addition to 30' of broken rope):

- 120 gold pieces
- A broken masterwork heavy crossbow
- Masterwork longsword
- *Heavy Mace +1*
- A magical *Stone of Alarm*
- A ring of keys

The *Stone of Alarm* may be attached to an item with a command word. If the item is later moved by anyone who does not first speak the command word it emits a loud alarm (audible ¼ mile away).

Nigel claims the masterwork longsword. Doctor Vaus takes the *Heavy Mace +1*.

The characters examine the other cells around the walls (courtesy of the ring of keys and the Splatter Man's earlier efforts to unlock all cells). They find nothing of any value.

The Mosswater Marauder Wants Your Skull!

The characters next travel to Reaper's Hole. The corridor is longer, and ends with another portcullis (up) and two guard rooms. The characters enter one guardroom and find three broken skulls arranged on the table around a fourth skull, as if someone was trying to find a fragment of a specific shape. The body of a long-dead dwarf lies slumped behind the table.

Sredni Vashtar's Girl calls out, "It's the Mosswater Marauder! Hammer time!" As she speaks, the three shattered skulls re-form and float into the air. Several characters suffer splitting headaches as the skulls fragments start to collect – they are able to act swiftly.

The skulls scream! Several characters are shaken. As the skulls let loose, the spirit of the *Mosswater Marauder* leaps up, brandishing his hammer. He looks at Doctor Vaus and observes, “You have a very delicate-looking skull! I’m certain a piece of it will be the right shape!”

Meanwhile, Vladimir destroys one skull. It seems like this also hurts the *Mosswater Marauder*. A ghostly fragment of his own skull flies out, attempts to fit into the empty part of the fourth skull (that of a female dwarf) and then fades out of existence.

Sredni Vashtar’s Girl tries placing misfortune on the *Mosswater Marauder*. She gets the sense that there is nothing there.

Doctor Vaus destroys the second skull with his new mace. Again, the *Mosswater Marauder* recoils in pain, but then attacks Sredni Vashtar’s Girl. He hits her in the head, causing a ghostly fragment of her skull to fly out and fit into the fourth skull. It doesn’t match, and fades away leaving Sredni Vashtar’s Girl shaken.

Vladimir destroys the last skull, causing the *Marauder* to howl out again, but not quite vanish away. Nigel touches it with a *Cure Light Wounds* and sends it away, leaving him with his hand upon the corpse of a dwarf dead for fifty years.

The characters search the area for loot. Doctor Vaus finds a stone secret door in the back of the room. Unfortunately, it is locked. Doctor Vaus takes the masterwork thieves tools and opens it right up. Beyond is a small stone chamber filled with interesting items and gear:

- 6 suits of masterwork chain mail
- 6 suits of masterwork studded leather
- 4 masterwork longswords
- 4 masterwork heavy maces
- 2 masterwork heavy crossbows
- 120 normal crossbow bolts.
- 10 *Crossbow Bolts +1*
- A wand of *Hold Person* (11 charges)
- 4 potions of *Cure Moderate Wounds*
- A *Rope of Climbing* 60’ long

Oswald hands his heavy crossbow to Sredni Vashtar's Girl and takes one masterwork heavy crossbow, plus masterwork chainmail. Icobus takes a suit of masterwork chainmail. Nigel claims some masterwork studded leather and the wand. Doctor Vaus gets the other masterwork heavy crossbow. Vladimir takes the *Rope of Climbing*.

The Reaper's Hole

The characters move on to the end of the corridor and the portcullis. They raise it up and proceed in to the Reaper's Hole. It is another cellblock with walls lined by cells, all of them opened. One door does not lead to a cell – it leads through a barred wall into a torture chamber. Numerous grisly tools of torment decorate the walls. There is a well-used firepit in the center of the room, and a grim iron maiden off to the corner. The broken skeleton of a human in a guard's uniform is stretched across the rack.

As the characters move into the torture chamber the lid of the iron maiden slowly opens. Sredni Vashtar's Girl and Vladimir rush to it and try to close it. Suddenly, two severed hands fly up out of a bloody basket at the head of the table. They go for Icobus! They start to throttle him! Doctor Vaus rushes up and strikes one with his new *Heavy Mace +1*. He hits the hand so hard it flies across the room and strikes the wall. Oswald pins it with two crossbow bolts.

The lid of the iron maiden swings open... Sredni Vashtar's Girl resists the temptation to fling herself inside. She stabs the hand, and then Icobus crushes it.

The characters examine the situation. They swiftly understand that the tortured body is that of the Warden. They find both his badge and his keys – the prisoners plainly used both of them as torture instruments.

The characters take the badge and the keys and prepare to face the last ghost – the Splatter Man.

Nebermore – Demesne of the Splatter Man

Sredni Vashtar's Girl *Shields* up, takes out the Splatter Man's spellbook, and intones, "It's face-melting time!" The other characters aren't encouraged by her attitude.

The characters head to the southern corridor, once again finding that it is blocked by a portcullis. There is a guard room to the side.

The fires clearly spread into the guardroom, ruining the winch controls for the portcullis. All of the characters work together to force the portcullis, pushing it up out of the way and bracing it with an iron door removed from the guard room so it stays up.

The chamber of the Nevermore is ruined by fire. Water has leaked in and flooded part of the room, including the oubliette pit in the center. Some of the walls have collapsed.

Icobus notices that there are droplets of blood creeping up onto the walls, spelling out names. He shouts, "Watch out! The walls are bleeding names!" Nigel pays a bit too much attention to the blood – he sees it form into an "N", and takes Wisdom damage. The names are stealing his soul! He howls and attacks the wall! Vladimir doesn't see much of anything, but Doctor Vaus (first name "Jegen") howls and flings a flask of acid at the wall where he thinks his name is forming.

The next to succumb is Icobus. He also starts attacking a wall.

Sredni Vashtar's Girl tries casting a spell at the wall. It smokes. She is not sure what is going on, but she thinks the problem is coming from the walls.

Oswald has absolutely no idea what is happening, but everyone seems to be attacking the walls. He shrugs and buries a crossbow bolt in a random wall.

Doctor Vaus flings another acid flask at the wall. His efforts weaken the walls enough to dispel the haunt and to make the walls start to collapse. Timbers and stones start to fall. Oswald takes a serious strike across the ribs, leaving him coughing up blood. Icobus shows up and forces a *Cure Moderate Wounds* potion down his gullet, bringing him back up.

At this point, the Splatter Man appears as a glowing green skeleton. Sredni Vashtar's Girl opens the spellbook and sees her name written in it. In a fit of anger she pulls out a pen and writes his name in the book, crying out, "*Hean Feriman!* Sredni Vashtar wants your soul!" The page burns and the glowing skeleton blackens.

Oswald sees a green skeleton floating in the air. He fires two *Ghost Touch Crossbow Bolts* at it, striking with one and delivering a wound! The Splatter Man responds by casting *Summon Monster II* and bringing up two dire rats! *Infernal* dire rats! One of them bites at Oswald. Vladimir crushes it. Doctor Vaus consumes his mutagen,

transforms into *Ironface*, and squashes the second. The characters are not impressed with the Splatter Man's spellcasting acumen.

Icobus takes the *Cure Light Wounds* wand from Sredni Vashtar's Girl and heals her. Then she flips to the page of *Summon Monster IV* and writes his name upon it as well, burning the page and inflicting another wound. Oswald matches that with two more crossbow bolts, getting two very solid hits (sadly, only one of which is *Ghost Touch*).

The Splatter Man responds by flinging a spray of *Maximized Magic Missiles* at the characters. Sredni Vashtar's Girl laughs, because she has an infusion of *Shield* running that stops the missile from reaching her. Oswald very grimly strikes him with more crossbow bolts.

Nigel moves over to Oswald, pulls the *Hand Axe +1* out of Oswald's belt, and flings it at the Splatter Man. The Splatter Man responds with another volley of *Maximized Magic Missiles*, downing Icobus. Doctor Vaus shouts, "Icobus! Nooooo!" He raises his painstakingly-loaded crossbow and shoots the Splatter Man down.

Vladimir dives down to pull loot from the oubliette. He pulls up several items, all of them pretty nice:

- A *Keen Longsword +1*
- A *Mithril Dagger +1*
- A *Ring of Protection +1*

Nigel takes the *Keen Longsword +1*. Doctor Vaus wins the roll-off for the *Ring of Protection +1*. And Sredni Vashtar's Girl takes the *Mithril Dagger +1*.

Vasoriyana Expunges the Haunts

The characters return to the Laundry Room to speak to *Vasoryana's Ghost*. They give her the Warden's Badge. She notes that she will now be able to clean the place. She slowly fades, leaving the badge faintly glowing. Doctor Vaus checks and verifies that it is now a magical object, though he doesn't know what it does.

Icobus puts the badge on. He feels no different, but the characters do notice that the whole area feels different, much more comforting and bright.

Doctor Vaus uses the Warden's Keys to open the Warden's safe. He finds a variety of old legal documents, a small wooden rack loaded with potions, and a pouch of coins:

- 500 gold pieces
- 4 potions of Cure Moderate Wounds
- 3 potions of Lesser Restoration
- 2 potions of Remove Disease

A Final Message from the Professor

Oswald hears Professor Lorremor's voice, "All right, enough dicking around! Time to find my murderer!" He tells the others. They conclude that Oswald is just as crazy as everyone else in the ground.

The characters arrange for proper burial for the Warden, his wife Vasoriyana, and the four murderers. The Town Council gives the characters a 350 gold piece reward in thanks for removing the curse. The local merchants let the characters know that they can have a 20% discount. Likewise, the priests at the Temple of Pharasma indicate that they would be willing to make a wand of *Cure Light Wounds* for the characters at a 20% discount as well (600 gold pieces).

The End of the Session

Each character gains 60 gold pieces in cash, plus proceeds from sale of items that amounts to another 430 gold pieces. Everyone goes up to third level as well!