

REAYERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE - SESSION SUMMARY 08/29/2021

TODAY'S EPISODE: THE SARGASSO SEA

Our heroes of the *Chainbreaker* fled Port Shaw after a failed kidnapping of Aeron Chambers, linked up with the *Nightslink*, and went to loot ships in a sargasso in the Pearl Eye Atolls.

Our 9th level heroes are:

- ^ Captain **Sindawe** of the *Chainbreaker*, the fist-punchin' Mwangi monk (Chris).
- ^ Chief Gunner **Wogan**, the pistol-packin' celibate cleric of Gozreh (Patrick).
- ^ Quartermaster **Serpent**, the staff-bashin' Ulfen druid/ranger and his snake Saluthra (Paul).

The Pearl Eye Atolls and Sargasso

Chainbreaker has 33 souls aboard after rescuing an away party, suffering a casualty (Melella being combat ineffective due to PTSD), and transferring some crew to Captain Falken Drango's *Nightslink*. The *Chainbreaker's* command staff has three missions and decides to pursue the first one on the list:

- Raid a ship stuck in the Sargasso
- Sell off cargo too sketchy to sell in Port Shaw
- Deal with an old witch with a hold over Jacob Razor's ghost

Falken explains, "I know where the Sargasso sea is roughly, but those things drift. And where the whaler is stuck, but that would have drifted too. We will have to run search patterns."

The weather is light and favorable as the two ships set sail for the Sargasso which is 100 nautical miles away. The ships make good time, seeing no other vessels. Captain Sindawe argues

for running at night with full lights to which the other others agree. He wants to be far away from Port Shaw.

They encounter fog later that night and decide to anchor. Semaphore communications keep the two ships in contact though conversation hurts for anything interesting. Karomander entertains his fellow crewmen with stories of the Skull Sargasso where skulls are supplied by sea related murders. The crew's entertainment turns to worry as their collective superstitions prey on their minds. Then they turn toward betting on the successor of the Skull Sargasso and settle on the Stomach Sargasso.

Sun breaks the next morning over a blustery sea with a windstorm removes the fog. The two vessels handle the rough patch of sea easily until the Pearl Eye Atolls come into view. Captain Falken signals via semaphore where to begin their search. Within the hour they spy a region of sea that is darker and lumpier on the horizon. Their work is made harder due to the high winds kicking up rolls of ocean.

On the approach they spot that the Sargasso has heavier and lighter portions with the heavier portions containing shipwrecks and the lighter portions being navigable. The *Nightslink* arrives alongside. They both opt for sailing the exterior and using spyglasses to recon the interior.

This goes well for the first hour allowing Serpent to spot a shipwrecked vessel at about 100 yards into the Sargasso. It is the *Taldan Queen* with intact cargo crates on its deck. Serpent uses *air walk* to cross over to the ship, picks up a single crate marked with a royal seal, floats it back to the *Chainbreaker*, then returns for another crate. The *Nightslink* maneuvers closer, drops sail, and sends a longboat to get in on the action.

Meanwhile Wogan and Sindawe work on opening the crate. Marr Eiderson declares, "That is the royal seal of Taldor!"

Serpent encounters a plant monster when he goes for the second crate. It reaches out at him with frond like appendages to which he counters with ax blows. Soon enough he is encumbered by grappling fronds that rob him of his will. "Bring more people to me," it commands him mentally.

Sindawe orders "Sails! To Serpent's rescue!" The ship's sails had not yet been dropped, so ax blows chop the tying ropes and sails are loosened again. The ship creeps forward at 2 knots. Serpent frees himself from the frond's and heads back to the ship at walking speed.

Wogan and a gun crew (3) aim a chase gun at the mass with Wogan's eye telling him the "monster portion" of the Sargasso is very, very big. The first shot goes wide.

Captain Falken orders the longboat cut loose as the *Nightslink* puts on sail to join the *Chainbreaker's* approach into the Sargasso.

The Sargasso proves tough and thick, cutting back the *Chainbreaker's* acceleration leaving it at 2 knots.

Serpent closes the distance and shouts, "Let's go fight it together! Climb aboard my back! I am strong enough to carry five of you!"

Wogan's second chase cannon hits! 25 points from the nine pounder!

The *Nightslink* is closer and Falken screams back, "Over here, Serpent!"

Sindawe orders crates opened by spare crewmen, while maintaining his orders to the rest of the crew to sail the vessel and arm themselves with axes. The opened crate reveals spices. It is an excited ship.

Serpent lands on the *Nightslink* and grabs at Falken, who slips away, "We'll aid you from the deck of this ship. Lead away!"

Serpent replies, “No, come with me!”

Falken, smelling a rat, bluffs Serpent with “Well, that’s different!” Before hitting him with an improved unarmed attack to the gut.

Wogan notices a rapidly approach stretch of Sargasso heading toward the *Nightslink*, so he hits it with a flame strike. Given Wogan’s warning, Sindawe cuts speed and aims to slide into position along that vessel. Grappling hooks are thrown to pull the vessels together.

Falken Drango pauses, also hearing the siren song of the sargasso. Serpent starts grabbing at slower crewmen.

Fronds attack the *Nightslink* and the *Chainbreaker’s* crew. Wogan hits a frond with *searing light*; seaweed chucks die! Sindawe hacks at a frond attacking his crew with a transformative magic weapon changed into an ax (22pts). He also yells to Wogan, “Hit Serpent with a *dispel magic!*”

Murder gun teams fire and rip up a bit more of the Sargasso. Another 10 man unit attacks the fronds with axes, trying to free Blacktop Bill, but the frond holds tight. Serpent tosses a *Nightslink* crewman overboard into waiting fronds. Falken Drango joins in and pushes another crewman into the water while shouting, “Go help that man!”

Fronds grab at the men in the water and nearly squeezes Bill to death (-2 hps)! More fronds grab the ex-slave Bel and Wogan, who were standing close to each other. Both are grappled. Wogan is unable to cast spells so settles for a healing burst of positive energy to heal all the badly beset crewmen.

Sindawe pulls Wogan free of the fronds using his grapple check, while the possessed or controlled Falken and Serpent continue to grab and toss crewmen overboard. The crewmen attack bravely with axes to find some axes are defective (no damage due to very low attack rolls)!

The Sargasso monster proceeds to squeeze crewmen it has grabbed, dropping most to negative hit points.

Wogan casts *dispel magic* on Serpent removing him from the Sargasso monster's influence! Sindawe shouts, "Thank Gozreh!" He hacks at fronds.

Serpent notes two crewmen in the water, one tengu climbing out of the water, and fronds everywhere on deck. He attacks with his magic ax, dealing dramatic amounts of damage! The fronds go slack; the creature is dead.

Miraculously, no crewmen are dead! Serpent uses *air walk* to rescue the men from the water. It takes time to restore order, pulling men out of the water, bringing the longboat back in, pulling seaweed off personnel and equipment, putting equipment away. Wogan performs another healing burst, then a second to bring them up to fighting strength.

The pirates recover barrels of sugar and crates of spices floating in remains of a shredded Taldan ship. There are eight such containers worth 50 gp each. The goods were seized from smugglers, so the goods are hot twice over.

Falken reminds them that the cargo pits of the Pearl Islands are patrolled by dragoon ships determined to stop those interfering with legitimate trade. They would consider such goods "stolen" by default without lots of paper to back them up.

The dragoon vessels are smaller in these islands, the size of the *Nightslink* but slower.

The Intact Whaler

Serpent uses the last of his *air walk* to climb high and act as a spotter. He spots it 35 ship lengths distance, deeper into the Sargasso. It is an intact whaler.

The Sargasso has varying layers of varying thickness. They decide to sail both vessels further in with the *Nightlink* in the lead, followed by the *Chainbreaker*, then join up and launch long boats from there. Longboats with their shallow draft seem immune to the Sargasso's clinging.

They stop after an hour and half, drop anchor, and move to long boating. They are two range bands in, with two more range bands of worsening Sargasso. *Chainbreaker* launches a long boat of six crew with Wogan, Sindawe, Serpent, and Saluthra. Falken's long boat includes two people loyal to him plus two ex-members of the *Chainbreaker*.

Orders are given for those remaining behind on the ships to turn the vessels about for a quick escape. The *Chainbreaker* takes Prand, Courtland, Kahina, Tanned Hank, Aelia, and Gareb.

Both long boats approach the *Whale Finder* with four and six crew rowing. Rowing grows harder as they get along side. The vessel is stuck but otherwise unharmed.

The vessel is 20 degrees askew thanks to the weight of seaweed on one side. Falken, Serpent, Saluthra, Wogan and Serpent climb up. They get to the top.

Sindawe barely hears a sailor swearing quietly and warns his companions. He says very loudly, "If you want off this ship, we will rescue you. Come out now. If you attack us or continue to hide, you will suffer the consequences."

They swept the deck finding the sails long gone, the mast is okay. The equipment is all over the place, indicating that they did not square things away before or after the Sargasso took them. They investigate an aft storage shed, which continues only a tangle of whaling gear.

Several of them hear a sailor whispering, "Be ready!"

They descend to the first deck from a forward entrance, which promises to be dryer than the aft. They head to the crew quarters sweeping the mess hall with no signs of recent usage. They move to the kitchen but Serpent leaves the column to investigate another whispering voice.

Serpent bursts into the rum storage which contains rum barrels and seaweed that has grown down and inside. But no sailors. He grabs a single barrel.

The kitchen smells of foods gone bad. But no evidence of recent life. The hard tack is present, yet Serpent explains, "Nobody has touched these in a while. Not even rats."

Wogan casts *invisibility purge* just before they head to the Captain's quarters. They decide there or the cargo area has to hold value or there is no sense in remaining here.

Drango hears voices from the sleeping area, so they enter prepared to sweep and clear. There is seaweed and ocean water in one corner, along with the personnel effects that gravity slide over there. Sindawe declares shenanigans and investigates the watery area, because this whispering stuff has got to end.

Unsurprisingly, there is a whisper before he is attacked from behind. The monster raises up from the water as it speaks in a dozen languages and voices all at once. It is not clear if is plant, animal or what. Sindawe is spared a horrific bite by reading the faces of his friends who witness the beast rise from the waters.

Falken Drango and Serpent leap to the attack, landing blows from a shark tooth club and ax respectively. Wogan attempts to cast a spell but the cacophony prevents it. Sindawe joins the melee by flanking, punching, and slashing (temple sword).

The cacophony increases in volume, confusing all except Sindawe. Another beast appears at the doorway. The beast already present bites his closest opponents hitting both Falken

and Serpent (26pts); both swing back in retaliation. Wogan breaks a rum barrel over his own head. Sindawe punches and slashes at the creature, whose impressive unnatural armor wards off half of the strikes.

The beasts tunes their cacophony to deliver painful sound attacks (17pts of sonic damage) to Sindawe and Falken. Wogan wins free of the confusion long enough to cast *silence*, removing the confusion effect. Sindawe punches and slashing (45pts), causing wounds and an excess of sea flavored fluids, yet the creature still stands.

It bites Sindawe for 30 points and withdraws through a small opening. And the other head does the same – a bit on Sindawe (29 points), then withdraws. Sindawe silently states, “They should have just been biting us the whole time!” He is barely standing.

Falken runs out of the chamber, probably heading back to the longboats. Wogan moves after Falken, then uses a positive energy burst (14pts) to heal his companions. Serpent follows him out but makes only 30’ thanks to still being stunned. Sindawe tries to charge past both, but succeeds only in knocking Wogan down, who then slides into an open chamber and into the water pooled at the far, deep end there. Sindawe runs after him and pulls him out.

The three with Saluthra in tow finally make the top deck to find both longboats still present. One is severely damaged (2pts left). A crab-bodied creature with false heads lies dead on the deck, slain by Falken Drango. The pirates had been confused, so Falken effectively saved their lives. They decide that the creature dead on deck attacked them simultaneously below decks with two of its false heads... they find weapon wounds on such a head.

Our heroes search the hold to find baleen (150’), ambergris (35gp gallon, 25 gallons), sperm oil (10gp gallon, 300 gallons), and supplies (3 tons). They estimate they can move all of the

cargo in three days using just long boats, which would fill most of the *Chainbreaker's* hold. There is whaling equipment aboard, but less worthwhile than the cargo.

They decide to bring in the *Chainbreaker* into the deep Sargasso and succeed via pulleys and longboats pulling. This allows them to offload the valuable cargo in one day. They take the baleen, ambergris, sperm oil, and supplies. The supplies are kept for repairs. They also take 20 whaling suits, for cold weather and disguises.

Bad weather strikes, driving the *Nightslink* further into the Sargasso, miring them (3 entangling ticks). The *Chainbreaker* is still free to move (1 tick).