

REAYERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE - SESSION SUMMARY 10/10/2021

TODAY'S EPISODE: HOTBED OF DISEASE

Our heroes of the *Chainbreaker* teamed up with the *Nightslink* are at port at the Sharkjaw Docks cargo pit in the Pearl Eye Atoll, where they await ship repairs, search for a good meal, and look for leads on Old Makana, a Mwangi witch with a magic hold over the ghost or spirit of Captain Jacob Razor. If they can convince her to release his spirit, then he will reveal the location of Garr Bloodbane's treasure.

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).

Waiting at Sharkjaw Docks

The crews of the *Chainbreaker* and *Nightslink* are waiting for ship repairs before they'll put to sea again. The costs associated with this are:

- docking fees (20gp/day) negotiated with Dock-master "Scuttler" Khoren
- repair costs (two hull sections, mast replacement) at 500 gp in materials and 100 gp in labor.
- purchase of a replacement longboat – to be determined

Our heroes went looking for entertainment and a meal in the pirate and sullen native infested town. They find little more than cheap booze, cheaper prostitutes, no restaurants, and one brothel worthy of having a memorable name. Sindawe gets a lead on locating Old Makana. And

they investigated a murdered bounty hunter with blood biography, putting them on the lookout for someone called “Baruka Ball-breaker.”

Magpie, the manager of the almost memorably named brothel, appears dockside mid-morning to invite them to meet his mistress Sandra DeLoure for a mutually beneficial business arrangement. They agree after extracting a promise that Sandra is not a vampire or succubus. Magpie agrees that his mistress is neither of those. The pirates concur that this certainly rules out her being anything dangerous.

He leads them to the Pearl Bed brothel, then up to a second floor office where Sandra awaits. She is an attractive woman of middle age, dressed well, and with great make-up and hair. The office is full of ledgers, boxes, and loose papers.

She greets them, then continues, “We are having a problem you might be able to help us with. Several of my girls have fallen ill to a malady that we cannot identify or effect. Your man (motions to Wogan) might be able to help them. Yes?”

The sick girls are dwarven women and their brother seems to be equally sick.

Wogan agrees and asks, “How much?”

They settle on 150gp apiece (two sisters and the brother), some information dumps, and brothel services. In return, Wogan will cure the girls (she is indifferent about the brother) and make it stick for longer than a week. Both parties agree to the bargain.

Sandra tells them a bit more:

- B’tward the Ravager is the brother, a local notable, and it would be bad form to let him die.

He visits his sisters, Mithril and Brassy, here regularly.

- Cure medicine and native balms have not worked or have at best made the sickness retreat for as long as a week. Sandra's hirelings have even tried curse removal magics to no avail.

The trio are held in a private room that smells of sweat and vomit as the three dwarves writhe in obvious misery. All three are kept in bed via silken cords. The sisters are able to communicate their symptoms to Wogan through clenched teeth: fever, vomiting, lockjaw, and few more.

Serpent assists Wogan with the examinations. Brassy is clearly sick with fever, stomach pains, and nausea. After examining Mithril, Wogan decides there is something magical involved. Sindawe announces, "My cypher glyph is itching. Maybe they have something under the skin or some beastly is hidden in the room."

Wogan deploys a few divination spells as Serpent uses his Azlanti orrery to analyze it with spellcraft. His cypher glyph starts to itch too. There is a spell at work, but not a known school of magic. Sindawe asks, "Maybe it is something implanted?"

The supernatural ailment is causing Constitution and Charisma damage. Wogan tries *invisibility purge* but nothing is revealed. Serpent is still guessing, "Some supernatural creature is responsible."

Sandra says from outside the room, "They stayed in town when not here." She names off a half-dozen places in town they frequented.

Ravager, the brother, is examined next. His body is covered in scars, both wounding and ritual scarification in nature. He is sicker than his sisters. He is not lucid, though he is muttering something which Serpent eagerly leans closer and listens too. A wave of pain hits our heroes in the pit of their stomachs (Con save); they seem to shake it off. Their cypher glyphs burn.

The dwarf starts to transform, gaining translucent skin and long fingers and claws. His claws slash at Serpent, then at his silk bonds. Sindawe punches it repeatedly and Serpent hits it with his ax. Wogan casts *dismissal*, but it shrugs the spell off.

Wogan notes that creature is a mixture of the dwarf host and a phantom (a generic term for the shadow creatures associated with the cypher gate).

Phantom/Ravager flips his bed over and onto our heroes then flies up to the ceiling (10'). Serpent and Sindawe climb onto furniture to attack, knocking it unconscious. It falls to the floor. Wogan channels positive energy with his orichalcum holy symbol flask, causing the creature's regeneration to cease. The field also strikes the dwarven sisters causing them to vomit.

Wogan searches the body but finds nothing unusual. Sindawe recommends an autopsy.

Wogan tries *remove disease* on each sister, but it makes no changes. Sindawe opens the door to find Magpie and Sandra arguing at the top of the stairs. Sandra bravely pushes Magpie into Sindawe before realizing things are under control.

Sindawe catches them up on Ravager's death, phantom illnesses, etc. Wogan asks, "What method caused the sickness to retreat for a full week?" It was *remove disease* by Old Makana.

Wogan casts *lesser restoration* on each sister; that won't cure the disease but treats the symptoms (4pts for Mithril, 1pt for Brassy). This does help, so Wogan uses a *pearl of power* to cast it again on Mithril. He figures this bought them both a few extra days.

“The three were cured last time, but never left town. So, they had to get sick here in town, right?” Sindawe nods.

Sandra asks, “What can I tell you to help figure out where the sickness is coming from?”

Sindawe asks a battery of questions that reveal:

- Baruka Ball-breaker works the protection racket.
- Scuttler Khoren is the dock-master. He is the most powerful individual in the area.
- There’s also a cargo pit master.
- Neither of them will cross the very violent Baruka.
- Dragons Den does operate in way that leads to overdoses and other unfortunate things.
- A weird gnome alchemist came to town a while back on the *Salty Harlot*. He left earlier than that ship did but she is not sure when or how.
- Captain Bravencello of the *Sara Belle* – the crew are normal pirates, but the captain and first mate are overly peppy and share a love of musical theater. But unless he has an evil play that comes to reality by having folks run lines, doesn’t seem like an unusual threat.
- The island itself has dangerous animals that steer clear of the town.
- Ravager hung out in town. Magpie volunteers, “He rented a room. Spent time in the Dragon’s Den.”

They examine Ravager’s personal belongings including studded leather armor and a minor magic spear. Nothing unusual there. A personalized dragon smoke pipe with a slight sweet, floral taint that seems familiar... it smells of the same batch that our heroes smoked some months

back in Barret's Barnacle, supplied by Garrig and his first mate. They were associated with the drug maker Bonegnawer (a gnoll).

Sindawe asks, "Okay, our investigation will take us to the Dragon's Den. It will be violent. Who runs that place?"

Sandra replies, "Margaufen the Smoke Monger. The place is well guarded since their customer base is pirates and drug-users. Also, could you avoid walking over there directly from here?"

Sindawe nods.

Selling Cargo

Our heroes take their leave of the brothel, then wander the small town looking for alerts from their cypher glyphs. They encounter a man beating a surprisingly attractive beggar woman. Serpent asks, "Why are you beating this woman?"

The man answers, "She owes me money."

Sindawe replies, "He's coming right at me!" then murders the man with a flurry of blows. He is robbed of his meager coins, which are given to the woman, who slowly walks away slowed by bruised ribs and other injuries.

They return to the ship to find crewmen waiting for payout of the latest looting missions. It is clear they are hurting for money, having lost it all the first day in port. Quartermaster Serpent announces, "Okay, we will sell our loot today or soon. Here's what we have to sell..."

- baleen (150')
- ambergris (35gp gallon, 25 gallons)
- sperm oil (10gp gallon, 300 gallons)
- supplies (3 tons)
- 9 crates of clothing
- 2 big bundles of tobacco
- 1 crate of armor

A short time later our heroes are at the cargo pit, selling their goods. Negotiating starts:

- Scuttler Khoren states, "I will buy at 50% value!"
- Sindawe, "I will sell at 95% value and I won't kill your family!"
- Scuttler, "Very well! Bring me the fish whiskey drink!"
- Wogan bellies up for negotiating and drinking, declaring, "I have never drank such a thing. Sounds awful!"
- The drinking and negotiating goes in rounds: 1st round to Scuttler, 2nd round to Wogan, 3rd round goes to Scuttler.
- Our heroes decide to continue as Wogan declares, "I am not feeling this whiskey fish sauce."
- Scuttler slurs, "You probably have one more trip to Port Shaw before word arrives there of your piracy!"

The drinking and negotiating continues!

- 4th round – Scuttler’s slurred speech is starting to make sense,
- 5th round – Serpent switches to Intimidation, leading to a mark improvement in aiding Wogan’s negotiations.
- 6th round – Wogan notes, “We are looking... losing.”
- It continues! 7th round – goes to Wogan.
- 8th – Sindawe is feeling his liquor.
- 9th – goes to Scuttler.
- It continues as Serpent realizes they are losing – he declares, “We need to keep going!” Wogan groans, “Okay.” Scuttler succumbs to the alcohol!

Sindawe grabs the contract and notes it is for 55% of the goods. The rules state the percentage is locked in when one or the other party goes unconscious. Sindawe rages until Serpent points out, “We have to split this with the crew, so it really doesn’t matter if it is for 55 or 75% because we don’t make much.”

Sindawe nods in agreement, then steals Scuttler’s boots and in the process discovers new smells. The shares come to 126.50gp!

They take a mostly full of bottle of fish whiskey and leave. Later, they pay the crew their earnings and the crew cheers mightily at the handsome shares.

Our heroes remember some of the rumors that Scuttler lets drop:

- The gnome that came to town was a barber.

- Sandra DeLoure poisoned her own dwarf employees as part of an anti-short person conspiracy.
- Native shaman was talking smack about this place. Promised we would die of festering boils.

Wandering the Town

Serpent declares, “We should sing bawdy songs while wandering the town waiting for our cypher glyphs to burn!” Wogan and Sindawe think this a fine idea.

She Likes It In The Sargasso is ill received until 4:00PM when work knocks off. They note their crew wandering the streets with the ship’s rum ration bottles.

Nothing happens, so they return to their ship to see to the security situation there. They tag Falken Drango out.

They find Big Mike and a skeleton crew (Mitabu, Melella, Phamas Harcey, and Dum-dum) manning their vessel. Tommy greets them, so they let him go into town. He grabs a wig and heads to The Pearl Beds.

The other vessel, the *Nightlink*, is skeleton crewed by the tengu and Slasher Jim.

Sindawe orders biscuits then counters when he realizes that Dum-dum is not a cook.

Wogan descends below to check on the rum stores. He finds it strangely in order and undisturbed.

Serpent retreats to his cabin to write and send a letter to his wife Samaritha, who stayed back in Port Shaw.

They decide to spend the night, try curing the dwarf sisters in the morning, and then tackle the Dragons Den. Our heroes take turns on watch, listening to alarming sounds from over on shore. Their crew begins filtering back onboard in the wee hours.

Serpent and Wogan remember extra *remove diseases* in the morning and the trio head off to cure the dwarven prostitutes. Three such spells seem to have fended off the disease on both, then Serpent throws some *lesser restoration* on them (4 on Mithril, 7 on Brassy). Wogan adds in several more on Mithril.

Our heroes adjust their gear and head out for a long walk, then a brutal attack on the Dragon's Den.