

REAVERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE - SESSION SUMMARY 09/25/2022

TODAY'S EPISODE: STATUE HOLES

Our heroes aboard the *Chainbreaker* are shipwrecked on Hot Springs Island thanks to a welcoming committee of infant dragon turtles. The crew is busy with repairs while our heroes investigate a nearby abandoned ancient elf city. Our heroes entered that city, looted and fought, then fled the city before dark. They decided to set up a new base camp in an ancient park and scout the vicinity before returning to the city for loot. And then they found a cyphergate.

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).

Cyphergate Found!

Our heroes Sindawe, Wogan, and Serpent, plus Jacinth Deepwarder, are returning from a short day of exploration carrying ostrich sized corpses for dinner when they come across a shallow pond containing white lotuses and a cyphergate. The gate is a large white stone arch with bronze filled glyphs carved into its surface. The pond has a number of large cut stones around its perimeter. Most of these stones include a carving or two of elf maidens performing everyday duties.

Wogan states definitively, "Cyphergate. It's a cyphergate."

Serpent wades into the pond to examine it closer. Everyone holds their breath, waiting for a monster to attack. None does, though they do spot several long, squat wildlife with bony heads watching them from the tree line.

Serpent taps his orichalcum staff on the gate. The orichalcum substance is known to interact magically with cypher gates and the creatures that populate the other side of those gates. The cypher glyph embedded in his body blazes so hot that he can smell burning. He is suddenly surrounded by shadowy terrain and buildings. He stands in the middle of the ring that stands upright; it is the same ring from the pond. An immense creature eases itself out of a nearby body of water, revealing a huge protean body lifted by even larger bat like wings, masses of tentacles covered in suckers, a huge beaked mouth and a pair of intelligent and malevolent eyes.

A huge tentacle reaches for him, so he pulls his staff away from the ring. The tentacle brushes against his left arm, robbing it of strength and health. Then the shadowy world dissipates. The others see none of this and are alarmed when Serpent runs out of the pond. Wogan smells burnt flesh and examines Serpent for wounds. He finds a scar on Serpent's arm, which is an incomplete outline of a tattoo they have encountered previously that indicates the wearer is a servant of the Kraken.

Jacynth asks questions and takes notes with great interest.

Serpent says, "Let's go get my wife and have her figure out how to shut this thing down."

Sindawe replies, "Sure. Do you want to scout around and see if anyone else has been visiting this place?" Serpent finds that yes indeed, bipedal creatures with footwear have visited the pond several times over the last month.

They return to their base camp in the park-like glade. The buzzing bees make a pleasant background to the occasional bucolic cries from several very large herbivore dinosaurs. But the sound of laughter at a party through a wall stops our party in their tracks, which is then interrupted by the sounds of combat.

A Short Time Ago

At the base camp, Nemo, Harp, Harvard, Mitabu, Saluthra, and Samaritha's various activities are interrupted the sound of a polite party as if heard through a wall. Mitabu sits atop a large cut stone and believes he is hallucinating. The others quickly note four automatons of happy elven children dangling from the mouth of a tiger are roving back and forth across the clearing, stopping to pick up glass whether whole or broken.

The happy child/tiger automatons, one by one, come over to stare at Samaritha. She decides their creepy smiles and behavior are unsettling, so she casts *fly* on herself just as they lunge at her in unison. Several lay hands on her, interrupting the spell. Samaritha struggles to free herself. Harp enthusiastically attacks one with long sword (23pts). Harvard flanks the same automaton, running it through the eye with his magical rapier (41pts). Its jointed, puppet mouth flaps open releasing a small baleen carving of an elven man... it hits the ground, which erupts into flowers which burst into flames. Then erupts into flowers, which burst into flames. This repeats several times.

Mitabu pours an oil flask over Samaritha, allowing her to slip free of the automatons grappling with her. She completes her *fly* spell, leaving the automatons on the ground reaching for

her. She telepathically orders Saluthra to attack them; she responds by wrapping around a statue and squeezing (23pts).

Harp grapples one of the automatons, seeking to pull out its control device, the carving of a tiny elf. Harvard helps Harp, getting punched for his trouble. Mitabu and Nemo work on the other automaton, flanking and attacking with their magic weapons. They slowly pick it apart.

Sindawe, Serpent and Wogan arrive and immediately take to attacking the automatons. Serpent's axe busts one up. Harp rips the control statue from another child in tiger's mouth automaton. It drops bonelessly (or gearlessly?) to the ground. Sindawe ends the last automaton by also tearing out the little control statue.

The miniature baleen statues turn out to be the source of party noises. The statues cease their noisemaking only once they are dropped into a *bag of holding*. Jacinth and Samaritha examine the automatons. Sindawe digs through the glass each one was carrying.

Samaritha states the small statues that animate the golems are similar in nature to the *chime of opening* that the party once owned. She explains, "The baleen statue can open doors. Not generally, but very specific locks." Each statue had bands of pink trachyte.

Serpent tells his wife Samaritha about the cyphergate. As an ex-Cyphermage, she wants to investigate immediately, but Sindawe points out that they should back track the statues, which Serpent points out "came from the northeast". Wogan examines Serpent's slightly withered arm more closely. Serpent asks his wife to pull out otherworldly scrawling they got from Aeron Chambers' quarters back in Riddleport so they can compare the to the glyphs on the cyphergate.

Sindawe asked if the bees did anything interesting while he was gone. He is told that they didn't like the group having a campfire, which they blew out with their wings (and probably magic).

They break camp and head back to the cyphergate.

Wild Life

They are attacked while walking a game path close to the gate. Sindawe hears the rumbling first. The others watch him run from the lead to the rear of the group. Serpent joins him. Nemo and Jacinth enter the denser jungle to hide. Harp and Harvard move back-to-back.

The rumbling is a herd of charging quadruped bear-sized creatures covered in quills. They love charging and trampling. Luckily, Serpent and Sindawe are in their way. Sindawe gets trampled and tusked by two waves of the tuskers.



Figure 1: Quilled Tusker

The tuskers slow down and pile up on each other, revealing that there are many of them. The tuskers trample, gore, and otherwise crush Sindawe (80pts). Samaritha uses *major image* to bring a draconic t-rex into their line of sight, behind our heroes, giving the tuskers pause! Serpent goes into a rage and swings his ax (16pts)! Their quills tear at him, but do not penetrate his armor. Saluthra bites the tuskers closest to her. Mitabu throws his second bomb into the tuskers (12pts).

Wogan casts *blessing of fervor* to everyone's relief. The tuskers push past Serpent to threaten Harp, Harvard, and Wogan who greet them with longsword, rapier, and gun fire. Jacinth sneaks into the press to deliver a *potion of false life* to Sindawe (11 temporary hps).

The trampling continues for Sindawe, Serpent, and Jacinth. Wogan presses in to heal Sindawe (41pts)! Samaritha casts *rope trick* while yelling, "Go up the rope! Its magic!"

Everyone climbs the rope. Saluthra climbs an extra tall tree to take refuge with three other local snakes. They all agree in hisses that the tuskers are bad news.

Samaritha does not climb because the rope trick is at maximum capacity, so she stays behind! Her companions wait 5 minutes before emerging to see a well-trampled area of jungle. She walks out of a bank of fog, much to their relief!

At the cyphergate, Samaritha is able to determine that it is not the only such gate in the area, based on its markings. She is unwilling to touch it personally, as she has a fragment or two of cypher gate shrapnel in her flesh which makes her more attuned to the device. Wogan summons a weasel to test the device though like Serpent it does seem to behave differently when it touches the cyphergate.

They set up camp while Samaritha, Wogan, and Jacinth study the gate. Serpent picks local flora to provide “spices” for the roasting ostrich sized birds.

Sindawe and Mitabu are suspicious of nearby rustling in the bushes but before they can call out a warning, Jacinth starts farting and doesn't stop! It goes on and on. She is alarmed and embarrassed while the others laugh. Mitabu gathers his wits and sneaks off to check on the rustling.

An automaton of a lovely elfin woman finely dressed above the waist but wearing nothing below emerges from the jungle, making no noise. It walks up to the laughing Harvard and Harp. Sindawe notices its lack of a moving mouth, then spots a hole near its butt. He summons all of his Korean energy for a kancho punch at the automaton's hole. His reward is a mighty slap (12pts) back from it! It also grabs Harvard's magic rapier and attempts to bend it into a pretzel! Harp also tries the kancho.

Serpent grabs it from the front in a bear hug. It responds with a head butt and butt clench (11pts to Harp). Nemo kanchos it too, but pulls back nothing! Luckily, Sindawe's kancho hits; he retrieves a red crystal carved in the shape of elven children. Jacinth's farts continue until the red crystal is shoved into *bag of holding*.

The female shaped automaton collapses. Later, Nemo drags it into the jungle for a bit of R&R.

They dine on ostrich meat throughout the day while Samaritha and Jacinth study the cyphergate, and decide that the black tarnish on three of the glyphs is supernaturally resistant to removal. And Serpent's experience makes them sure it is unsafe for anyone to touch. Guards are

set. Wogan studies the gate for a bit, long enough to find symbols that match the cypherglyphs that Samaritha, Sindawe, Serpent and himself absorbed into their body earlier in their career.

Several boars show up to investigate the cooking ostrich. Wogan uses his *mace of terror* to chase them off with FEAR! Several run away immediately, followed by the others.

That night Sindawe wakes up from a deep sleep, realizes he was on watch with Samaritha and she is gone.