

Rise of the Runelords Session Summary 09/23/2007

Attendance

Chris (Roscoe Dillon) describes a book on tape a co-worker of his recently listened to. He explains, "It starts out with a colony ship populated entirely with men. And the author was really fascinated with describing love scenes with..." *Chuck* (Phiravno) cuts him off, "That's enough right there. We want this to stay a family-oriented session summary." *Paul* points out, "Be serious! Haven't you figured out that the Internet has completely transformed the meaning of 'family-oriented'? Stuff like this is all over FaceSpace and MyBook!" *Ed* (Artkel Certor) mutters, "They better not invade Second Life. That'd just be too much. Grmrgmrgm..." *Bruce* (Hulmar Benk) just wanders off into a bizarre fantasy about silicided mushrooms with really low sheet resistance. He starts to explain this to *Chris*, who offers, "You be quiet or I'll lower *your* sheet resistance."

Matt (Prince Eyorak) wanders in afterwards, carrying a link of sausage. Everyone bursts out laughing. He asks, "What? What? What am I not getting?"

Patrick (Maru Maru) answers, "I've got no idea. When I walked in, they were all just engaging in retching contests."

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Class & Level</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Hulmar Benk	Bruce	Human	Scout 1	Chelaxian. Military veteran.
Roscoe Dillon	Chris	Human	Cleric 1	Shoanti, Skull clan. Cleric of Gorum
Phiravno	Chuck	Human	Swordsage 1	Varisian.
Artkel Certor	Ed	Human	Fighter 1	Shoanti, Spider clan.
Prince Eyorak	Matt	Human	Rogue 1	Shoanti, Sun clan
Maru Maru	Patrick	Human	Monk 1	Shoanti, Sun clan

The Swallowtail Festival

It is the first day of Autumn, and all are out in the commons of Sandpoint celebrating the Swallowtail Festival to dedicate the new (stone) cathedral. *Mayor Kendra Devrerin* leads the speechifying with an inspiring speech about this wonderful day. Then the *Sheriff Hemlock* stands up to give a depressing speech about keeping everything safe

and legal. By this time, *Hulmar Benk* is bored enough that he doesn't hear either the theater master *Cyrdak Drokkus* or the priest *Ezakien Tobyn* speak. He heads over to the Yarning Contest at the *Hagfish*, in hopes that his boring stories will be long enough to win him a free week's drinking. Sadly, he doesn't win. He does manage to get extremely drunk on cheap booze. He notices *Artkel Certor* and *Roscoe Dillon* each paying a silver piece to drink a tankard of water from *Nora's* tank. Neither lasts long enough to claim the pot (currently at 31 silver pieces).

Phiravno is standing off at the butcher's stall, eating a 5-silver Variety Plate. He explains to a bystander, "All I've eaten for three days is ship-rat! Say, you should try the goblin-snake!" From there, he goes to the *Rusty Dragon* inn to ogle innkeep *Ameiko Kaijutsu's* impressive torso and drink expensive booze. Roscoe Dillon staggers in later to hear two locals bickering over which of them loves Ameiko more. Roscoe does his best to prompt the two of them to fight over her. He doesn't think either of them has a chance, but figures it'd be interesting to watch the two of them beat each other bloody.

Maru Maru wakes up early in the morning and proclaims, "I am an *adventurer!* I think I shall see what sort of adventures I can have at the Swallow Tail Festival!" He is ever so disappointed when he realizes that it is actually the Swallowtail Festival and that it is all based around a type of butterfly. Then he runs into the local priest, *Father Zantus*, who is putting together a simple shrine to *Father Tobin* and his daughter *Nualla*, both killed five years ago in the fire that destroyed the original temple. He exchanges small talk with the priest and then heads off to look at the market stalls.

Free Lunch!

All of the characters come out to eat the free lunch offered by the local tavern masters. Except for the so-called *Prince Eyorak*, who makes an abortive attempt to steal the contest coins from the *Hagfish* (He gets shooed out by the tavernkeeper before he can steal anything).

The Goblin Raid

At sundown, Father Zantus sets off a thunderstone to draw attention to the podium. He starts to speak, but then a series of small, shadowy forms scamper through the town, cutting and slicing as they run. The goblins' song chitters through the air.

Hulmar Benk thinks, “Goblins are attacking, and I’m drunk! What great fortune!” He runs over to a goblin and cuts it in half. He cries out, “I’ve just started playing and I already love skirmish more than life itself!”

Phiravno unwraps his bladed scarf, calls upon the *Shadow Blade Technique*, and slashes a goblin’s throat. He exults, “Skirmish nothing! I’m a master of a dark fighting style!”

A third goblin leaps up onto a table and swings his dogslicer at Prince Eyorak. The blade shatters, leaving the goblin flat-footed and unarmed. Prince Eyorak grimaces down at the creature, “Stupid little freak!” and clubs it down.

Roscoe Dillon and Hulmar Benk move up near a goblin looting a book-seller’s stall. Hulmar’s swing surprises the goblin, but goes well wide. The goblin curses, “Stupid longshanks!” Roscoe is about to cut the creature down when Maru Maru sneaks in and steals the kill from him.

The characters look up to see that chaos has engulfed Sandpoint. Goblins are running around, cutting and looting indiscriminately. A bloom of fire rises from the north, accompanied with the sounds of cackling and shrieking goblins. Roscoe Dillon calls out, “They have fire magic! Let’s go that way, there must be something valuable!” The others follow him. Phiravno remembers that the cart with fuel for the bonfire is in that direction, but he stays quiet.

The Goblin Warchanter

The burning fuel cart is surrounded by goblins. Most of them look like the goblins the characters have already faced, but one is different: it wears a variety of charms and totems and generally has the demeanor of a shaved cat. The characters deduce that it might be female.

Maru Maru leads the charge, punching a goblin in the throat and taking it down in one hit. Artkel Certor rushes forward and kills another. The female goblin wraps a whip around his legs and trips him. The other goblins immediately move to dogpile (well, goblin-pile) him. Phiravno decides that he’d best put an end to this right away and cuts her down.

Two goblins scamper up to Roscoe Dillon and hit him with torches, almost killing him. Maru Maru leaps to his defense, dispatching a goblin with a swift kidney strike. Then the goblins flee as fast as their little legs can carry them.

The characters cooperate to pull the burning cart away from buildings. All around them they can see the goblin raid disintegrating.

The Goblin Dog-Rider

The characters see an aristocrat threatened by a goblin mounted upon a goblin dog, right in front of the *White Deer*. The aristocrat cowers as the mounted goblin dispatches a guard dog with his horsechopper. A crowd of additional goblins hide nervously around the marketplace, scared by the dog.

Artkel Certor charges with his scythe only to be bushwhacked by two goblins. Roscoe Dillon moves to support him and quickly finds himself overwhelmed as well. Maru Maru and Hulmar Benk run forward to pull him out of the fire, killing one goblin and burying another underneath an overturned stall. Maru Maru follows up by kicking another goblin to death.

Artkel and Prince Eyorak attack the dog-rider, crippling him. Phiravno tumbles over and executes a *Sapphire Nightmare Blade* strike against the goblin-dog. The dog falls. Then the surviving goblins flee. Phiravno sees the goblin commando trying to run and kills him with a quick bladed-scarf strike.

The aristocrat is appropriately grateful for being saved. He introduces himself as *Aldrin Foxglove*. He says that he is staying at the *Rusty Dragon* and will be there for a few more days. He urges the characters to come by later on to he can appropriately thank them.

By this time, the battle is thoroughly decided. The goblins are in full retreat, with some of them throwing themselves off cliffs rather than risk capture. The characters gain a new appreciation for the craziness of the goblin race. The townsfolk care for the (thankfully) few injured and dead. Roscoe Dillon hands the goblin commando's small short bow and arrows to the first kid he sees. Pretty soon, Roscoe finds that his name is common knowledge among the youngsters of the town. He was also the worst wounded among the characters, which for some reason seems to really impress the women of the

town. In particular, it allows him to almost get into trouble with the grocer after he follows the fellow's young daughter down into the basement for a few quiet moments ("I need your help with the rats down in the basement!").

The Real Goal of the Raid

Hulmar Benk spends the evening stalking around the edges of the town, searching for signs of goblin survivors. He finds that most of the goblin chaos appears to have been a diversion to allow a small group of goblins and a single medium humanoid to sneak into the graveyard and steal Father Tobin's body. He also notices that while there is a monument for Tobin's adopted daughter Nualla, there was never a body there.

Our Just Rewards

Aldrin Foxglove gives each of the characters fifty gold pieces and invites them on a boar hunt with him. He turns out to be a young noble scion from Magnimar who is just up for the Festival. He's also quite taken by Phiravno: he thinks that the Varisian is a romantic hero type and can't get enough of his stories.

The Boar Hunt

Aldrin Foxglove takes the characters by the *Goblinsquash Stables* and buys each of the characters a light riding horse ("Wow! This guy is *loaded!*"). The characters note that the proprietor of the stables is consumed by his hatred of goblins. He has goblin ear trophies on the walls, each meticulously labeled with the owner's name (which the goblins believe steals the soul).

The characters ride out of town south, to the Teakwood Forest. Prince Eyorak embarrasses all the other Shaonti in the group by trying to find poison to put on his long spear. Aldrin tells stories about the cultured life of Magnimar.

The manservants spot a boar and flush it out to the characters. Hulmar, Phiravno and Roscoe brace their spears and stab it to death. Prince Eyorak simply stands around and defends his plan to poison the boar.

That evening, the characters enjoy a boar dinner at the *Rusty Dragon*.

The Goblin Infiltrator

During dinner a tearful woman clutching a baby in one hand and an older son in the other runs up to the characters. “My son Aaron saw a goblin light a cat on fire, and since then he’s been having terrible dreams! He said that he saw a goblin in the closet, but we found nothing! But then our dog was killed! And there are goblin scratches on Aaron’s arm! My husband is investigating the closet, but I fear he will just get himself killed! Please help!”

The characters go to the house, but find it silent. The characters search through it, but find it empty. They find the husband lying upstairs. He is quite dead, the flesh of his face and upper torso eaten away. The characters drag the body back. Roscoe comments, “No goblin did that!” Just then, an insane goblin attacks him. He screeches, “What! What’s going on?”

Maru Maru explains, “Didn’t you read the briefing? They’re cannibals, and they’re all crazy! This one must have been left behind by the others, and now he’s got that retard strength going for him.”

A brief encounter follows, ending when Maru Maru ties up the goblin and drags him out of the house. The characters are able to determine that the goblin chewed a hole in the back of the closet and concealed it with a bit of fur. The characters torture the goblin for information, learning only that it was lead by “some longshank” and has very confused ideas on why the town needed to be attacked. It is from the Mosswood tribe, which is “no bad”.

The widow has a complete breakdown when the characters let her know what happened. Roscoe Dillon drops her off with a neighbor and fetches the Sheriff.

Tracing the Mosswoods

The characters inquire with the Sheriff, who takes them to talk with the Mayor and *Shalelu Andosana*, the local elf goblin-hunter (and unofficial member of the town guard). She explains that there has been quite an increase in goblin raids all along the Lost Coast road. Just yesterday, a nearby farm was attacked and burned. She claims that goblins are tenacious and fecund little runts, like weeds that bite. There are five local tribes. They normally keep each others’ numbers in line, but recently they’ve been

cooperating. This probably indicates that they now have a new big boss. Shalelu knows of five prominent goblins who might qualify:

- *Big Gugwut*, Mosswood.
- *Corruvus*, Seven Toths, magic longsword but vanished months ago.
- *Vorka*, Brine Stump Marsh, hero to everyone except the Licktoads
- *Ripnugget*, Thistletop.
- *Bruthasmus*, bugbear ranger who hates elves.

The mayor indicates that he wants to send word south to Magnimar for reinforcements while Shalelu patrols the area and the characters protect the town. The characters swiftly agree.

Even several days later, local people are pulling drowned goblins out of rain barrels in the town.

The Missing Aristocrat

Several days later, a timid elderly halfling woman approaches the characters. She has a problem: she is a maid at the *Rusty Dragon* and she reports that Ameiko Kaijutsu is missing. She didn't sleep in her bed last night, and the maid found a note from her (half-elf) half brother on the side table. The half-brother grew up in an orphanage and left Sandpoint some time ago, but Ameiko has always kept contact with him.

The characters look at the note. The original is in a strange alphabet that the characters can't read, but the maid's translation on the back suggests that Ameiko's father has something to do with the goblin incursion and arranging a meeting with her at the glassworks.

The characters head to the glassworks. They find that the doors are locked, so Prince Eyorak picks them. The characters make their way into a supply room with a variety of raw materials and an opened (empty) safe. Beyond that, the great furnace room is alight, but the place is overrun with goblins. The goblins appear to have murdered most of the staff and poured glass over many of the bodies. A dozen goblins run amok in the room.

The characters run up and engage the goblins. Prince Eyorak takes a pounding and hits the floor swiftly. The other characters chop their way through goblins at a steady pace, until they flee. Three goblins manage to escape.

The Basement

The characters follow the goblins down into the basement. They find a wide variety of supplies, and a brick wall that has been broken down to reveal an underground passage to the south. Hulmar Benk is able to spot both human and goblin tracks around the tunnel.

Prince Eyorak follows the goblins into the tunnel. He sees the goblins talking to a half-elf with a tiny head. Eyorak deduces that the half-elf must be Ameiko's brother. Eyorak comes around the corner and shoots him with a crossbow. *Tsuto* looks wounded.

The characters charge. The goblins don't last long, but *Tsuto* is able to slip past into a long, winding tunnel underneath the town. Phiravno calls upon his *wind stride* and gives chase. Prince Eyorak sends a crossbow bolt at *Tsuto*, who simply knocks it aside. *Tsuto* crows, "He's a monk!" Phiravno ignores him and simply strikes the fellow down.

Ameiko Kaijutsu is tied up in one of the basement rooms. Roscoe Dillon unties and revives her. She tells the characters that her brother told her that he and several other mercenaries were led by Nualla, who supposedly died five years ago in the fire. He told her that she wouldn't want to be in town when their plans came to fruition. He suggested that she should join his allies at Thistletop. She refused, whereupon he set his goblins upon her.

To add to the unfortunate events, Ameiko's father (head of one of the local noble families) is dead up in the glassworks. She's not much of a glassworker, which makes the future of the glassworks somewhat questionable.

The characters also loot *Tsuto*. They find:

- A potion of *Cure Light Wounds*;
- A composite short bow (+1 STR);
- A ring (eventually deduced to be a *Ring of Protection +1*);
- Masterwork thief's tools;
- A masterwork flute;

- Silver earrings (worth 25 gold pices);
- A journal;
- Six pouches of gold dust (returned to the Kaijutsu);
- Eight pouches of silver dust (returned to the Kaijutsu); and
- Ten platinum pieces

Tsuto's journal includes several maps of Sandpoint, most of which seem to be attack plans with anywhere from thirty to several hundred goblins. One plan for thirty goblins is circled, along with some comments on how well the attack went. He has also made several erotic illustrations of Nualla. Most are normal, but one shows her with various demonic features (horns, claws and so on). His color commentary suggests that he is smitten with her, and that she is engaged in a physical transformation care of the goddess *Lamashtu* that he isn't totally enthusiastic about. He speaks of a much larger upcoming attack, which should result in the destruction of Sandpoint.

The characters head off to get healed and notify appropriate authorities.

The Smugglers' Tunnels

With Tsuto in custody, the characters forge onward into the smugglers' tunnels. A thousand feet down the tunnel branches. Hulmar Benk reports that the goblins and whatnot used the main path, and that nothing appears to have used the branch recently. The characters take the main path. They ignore one other side branch.

The end of the main path appears to dead-end, until the characters manage to find the secret door. That door opens onto a small cave on the beach. The cave is strewn with goblin refuse and the remains of a goblin camp.

The characters backtrack and check out the second branch. They find an area that was once bricked up but has now been reopened. The remaining bricks look very old. Hulmar Benk, Phiravno and Prince Eyorak sneak down the tunnel, with the others following some distance afterwards.

The tunnel ends in a rough cavern occupied by a rather terrible-looking creature with a bifurcated jaw. Prince Eyorak waits until he has a clean shot, then hits it twice with a crossbow. The bolts go true. Phiravno's *Burning Blade* ends it.

A search of its cave demonstrates that it didn't spend a lot of time accumulating treasure.

The characters continue picking through the tunnels. They find a finished room with a single stone door on the north wall. Prince Eyorak confirms that the door is safe, so the characters open it and continue through to a narrow passage. Hulmar Benk reports that the tunnels have seen use by creatures similar to the thing the characters just killed. The characters manage to find an ancient shrine with a black marble altar. Roscoe Dillon thinks that it is an altar to Lamashtu, and that the liquid pooling in the top of the altar is actual unholy water.

The Buried Cathedral

Shortly after, the characters come upon a truly nightmarish buried cathedral chamber. A tiny creature sits upon the edge of a roiling pool of filthy water bordered with human skulls. Roscoe Dillon reports, "That *might* be some kind of outsider!"

She shrieks, "I am the queen! How dare you intrude in the mother sanctum!" She slashes her wrist with a dagger, allowing some blood to drop into the pool. The pool's glow fades and another of the stalking monsters emerges.

Artkel and Maru charge forward. The quasit responds by turning *Invisible*. Its created creature lunches at Maru. It fastens onto his throat and starts to chew. Maru feels thoughtless rage billowing up in his blood, but suppresses the feeling. Artkel takes a swing at the creature, leaving a reasonable-sized gouge. Maru follows up, knocking it down.

The quasit attempts to *Shatter* Artkel's scythe. He manages to overcome the spell. This makes her visible, allowing both Hulmar and Eyorak to make ineffectual attempts to shoot at her. She starts casting spells, which prompts Phiravno to hit her with a thrown star knife. Hulmar follows up with an arrow shot that scratches her. By this time, the characters deduce that the quasit has both Damage Resistance and Fast Healing.

Maru Maru decides to try touching the pool. He finds that it is life-threateningly cold. It drops him, but not before filling him with a murderous rage.

The quasit finally manages to get a spell off. She summons up a fiendish dire rat next to Phiravno. He evades its bite, then kills it. The rest of the characters organize a

fighting retreat down the corridor. Roscoe Dillon closes the temple doors and jams them shut with a dagger. A voice from the inside squeaks out, “And don’t come back!”

The characters regroup back in the town after blocking up the tunnel with rubble.

The End of the Session

Each character gains 1133 experience points, which is enough to push all of them to 2nd level. Hulmar Benk exults in his second level of scout.