

## Rise of the Runelords Session Summary 10/21/2007

### Attendance

*Paul* asks the others, “Have you seen the YouTube clip where Christopher Judge learns about furrries? He was totally incredulous, and then he was all like, ‘Where do you get those *suits*?’ I guess he’d just led a very sheltered life.” *Chris* (Roscoe Dillon) points out, “Yeah, I wouldn’t know anything about that. Looking at inappropriate websites is almost the only thing that can get you fired out of a State job.” *Chuck* (Phiravno) asks, “You mean that killing your co-workers won’t get you fired? I thought that was your fondest dream.” *Chris* remonstrates, “I said *almost* the only thing... There *are* a couple of others.” *Bruce* (Hulmar Benk) offers, “I think there are some laws about that too, and the police sometimes do get involved in that kind of cases.” *Ernest* (Valgrim Battlehorn) mourns, “I’m so hopeful that Bush will manage to outsource the rest of the government before the end of his term. Things will be so much better when Blackwater USA is handling public order.” *Patrick* (Maru Maru) just shudders. He knows that there is no space for people like him in Blackwater’s world. *Matt* (Prince Eyorak) thinks to himself, “It’s a good thing I’ve got those photos of Erik Prince with a goat. Being in the same FFA chapter as the future CEO of Blackwater USA turns out to be useful at last!”

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Class &amp; Level</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Hulmar Benk	Bruce	Human	Scout 2	Chelaxian. Military veteran.
Roscoe Dillon	Chris	Human	Cleric 2	Shoanti, Skull tribe. Cleric of Gorum
Phiravno	Chuck	Human	Swordsage 1; Swashbuckler 1	Varisian.
Artkel Certor	Ed	Human	Fighter 2	Shoanti, Spider clan.
Prince Eyorak	Matt	Human	Rogue 2	Shoanti, Sun clan
Maru Maru	Patrick	Human	Monk 2	Shoanti, Sun clan
Valgrim Battlehorn	Ernest	Dwarf	Conjurer 2	Fascinated by all manner of unusual creatures.

### Crossing the Bridge

*Valgrim Battlehorn* asks, “How long is this bridge?”

*Hulmar Benk* answers, “Sixty feet.”

*Valgrim* continues, “And how many goblins are over there?”

*Phiravno* replies, "All of them."

Valgrim opines, "I'm not so sure we can do this. I'd really like to take some time out to rest and regain spells."

The characters decide upon a clever plan. *Phiravno*, *Hulmar Benk*, *Maru Maru* and *Prince Eyorak* will sneak up to the tops of the guard towers and massacre the guards. Then Valgrim Battlehorn and *Roscoe Dillon* will join them.

### **Gobbo Big-Ears Strikes**

*Maru Maru* and *Prince Eyorak* sneak up to the top of a tower without a sound. They find two sleeping goblins, their clothes covered in pickle juice. An empty pickle jar lies nearby. They coordinate a pair of coup-de-grace strikes and take the tower.

*Hulmar* and *Phiravno* are sneaking up to the north tower when they hear goblin words from above, "Ruk? Agvoo lok ambok?" *Hulmar* grimaces. *Phiravno* shrinks closer to the tower wall. They continue climbing, then find themselves confronting two armored goblins. *Phiravno* notes that the goblins were playing cards, apparently using a deck of 43 cards built up out of three separate decks. The goblins rush them in an effort to cut them away from the walls. *Phiravno* takes a cut in the hand.

Far away, *Roscoe Dillon* grumbles, "Great. Now we're going to have to call him 'stumpy.'"

*Phiravno* and *Hulmar* scramble into the tower as Valgrim sends a crossbow bolt into one of the goblins. The goblins move to engage. The one with bent ears snarls at *Hulmar* and stabs him. The one with a squinty eye feints at *Phiravno*, then catches *Hulmar* as he skirmishes. *Phiravno* stabs one down, while *Hulmar* staggers the second. The goblin begs for mercy, but *Hulmar* cuts the creature down and earns himself a Wrath Sin Point.

### **The Goblin Patrol**

*Prince Eyorak* notes that there is a so-called patrol of four goblins with rat-dogs out behind the compound. They have a gull tied up by one leg: while one goblin attempts to hit the gull with thrown rocks, another yanks the string around to make the game interesting. None of them are spending any attention on patrolling the stockade.

Maru Maru persuades Prince Eyorak to stop paying attention to the goblins and show some focus. The two of them sneak down to open the door for the others.

### *The Trophy Room*

The entry room turns out to be a trophy room. The prize item is a pair of harpy wings pinned to the wall with daggers. Prince Eyorak notices that one of the daggers has a pearl handle and is worth around 100 gold. He pockets it, rationalizing that he needs a “hip dagger”.

The characters find a variety of doors, including one that the goblins nailed shut. They decide that whatever the goblins nailed shut the characters want to be part of. It takes them three minutes to open it up. They find a storeroom including a broken pickle barrel that has given the whole place a stench of fouled vinegar and rotten pickles. While Roscoe Dillon holds forth on the wisdom of not searching a storeroom that smells of pickles, Valgrim and Hulmar search the place. They find nothing interesting.

### *The Throne Room*

The characters stumble through various doors and rooms until they blunder into the goblin Warchief’s throne room. They come face to face with the goblin Warchief himself, backed up by his trained war gecko, three of his goblin commandos, and a goblin warchanter.

The characters plow into the room. The warchanter responds by breaking into song. Maru Maru whines, “She’s a bard? And here I thought she was a threat...” The goblin Warchief kicks his war gecko into battle and rides down Maru Maru. The monk groans, “He hit me! He hit me hard!”

Roscoe runs into the room with mace swinging. He bashes a goblin into a small greasy spot on the floor. Phiravno uses a trick to set his own bladed scarf on fire and wrap it around the goblin Warchief’s head, severing it and roasting it in one smoothly disturbing action. The headless carcass tumbles away from the gecko saddle.

Maru Maru slips in and distracts the warchanter, giving Hulmar an opportunity to skirmish over and slash her from collarbone to hip. The warchanter falls.

Valgrim casts a *Grease*, bringing the two surviving commandos to the ground. The goblins attempt to crawl to safety. The characters surround them, prompting them to

surrender immediately. The characters spare them, then search the warchief. Between the warchief, the warchanter and the three commandos loot includes:

- Two potions of *Cure Moderate Wounds*;
- A masterwork breastplate;
- A *Small Dogslicer +1*;
- A dented crown worth 20 gold;
- A keyring;
- A potion of *Cure Light Wounds*; and
- A *Wand of Silent Images* (5 charges);
- A suit of small studded leather;
- A small shortbow;
- A dogslicer;
- 20 gold pieces; and
- Five potions of *Rage*

Maru Maru drinks down one of the *Cure Moderate Wounds* potions immediately. Hulmar Benk takes one of the potions of *Rage*. The characters interrogate their captives, asking where the longshanks woman who is becoming a demon can be found. They eventually figure out that she is “down the stairs.”

The characters search around. They find an armory full of goblin trash. Hulmar finds himself a masterwork dogslicer, which he keeps. Valgrim finds a silver holy symbol of Lammastu worth 40 gold. He puts that in his bag, over Prince Eyorak’s objections.

The characters continue clearing the first level. They find a number of examples of bad goblin housekeeping, and a barracks with six sleeping goblins in it. They swiftly slaughter the goblins and move on.

Valgrim finds a kennel including a selection of rabbits. Hulmar picks out a half-dozen to prepare for dinner.

### *The Courtyard*

There are two dead goblins in the courtyard, their heads bashed in. One of the doors across the courtyard is nailed shut, with extra boards. Valgrim listens at the door

and hears the neigh of a horse. Phiravno points out, “Goblins are very scared by horses. I’ll bet that is what killed the two in the courtyard.”

The characters mark that door, then try the next. Four goblin dogs come running out. Hulmar yells out, “Yipe! There’s something bad in this room!” He cuts a dog down, then backs off. Maru Maru and Phiravno run in and slice up another. The remainder don’t last too long: they’re stuck in their kennel, and the characters all have swords.

The characters make sure they have cleared the upper level of the compound, then seal the place and rest for the evening.

### *The War Room Downstairs*

After the characters gain their spells back, they head downstairs into a larger chamber. A carefully drawn and annotated map of Sandpoint dominates the place. The extra annotations make no doubt but that the recent attack on the town was planned here. Hulmar notes, “I feel like I am in the presence of History” On a more practical level, Valgrim points out that the notes on the map indicate that there will be a second attack against the town.

There are two doors out of the war room. The characters take one of them and find themselves in a room decorated with all manner of good and occupied by a dark-skinned, ominous-looking woman. She offers, “You seem to be a large party of heavily-armed folks. If you’re willing to just let me leave, then I’ll be on my way.”

Prince Eyorak asks, “What are you doing down here?”

The woman answers, “I was hired by Nualia for my knowledge of archaeology and my ability to read Thassalonian.” She introduces herself as *Lyrie Akenja*. She is from Magnimar, and works for Nualia primarily for the paycheck.

Prince Eyorak continues the questioning, “How far along is she towards turning herself into a demon?”

“Just her hand.”

“Which kind?”

“Red and clawed.”

It develops that there is an ancient Thassalonian compound buried far underneath the goblin compound. Nualia believes that there is a powerful entity trapped there, and

claims further to talk to it, though she isn't that stable so her claims are not totally credible. They haven't learned too much yet: there is a door down below that Nualia hasn't figured out how to open yet.

The characters notice that there is a part-open secret door behind her. The characters press on the matter and find that Nualia has also hired a bugbear and a human bodyguard. Nualia herself is granted spells by Lammashu. Beyond that, she has a *tentamort* scurrying around underneath the compound, in the caverns. Lyrie thinks that Nualia might be working for a larger organization, though it appears that her plans are more or less confined to turning herself into a demon and destroying Sandpoint.

The characters let Lyrie Akenja go. She leaves her notes behind for Valgrim to read.

### *The Thassalonian Compound*

The characters continue through the lower chambers until they find a large double door decorated with bas reliefs of horrible monsters clawing their ways free of pregnant females of all races. The characters are horrified, but open the doors up anyway. They are careful to be in their Kung Fu positions first.

The doors lead to a chamber dominated by a statue of a deity that is clearly Lammashu. The whole place is decorated in the sort of style that reminds the characters of heavy-metal illustrations done by high school students. The characters move forward carefully. Some of them spot something horrible hiding in the shadows near the ceiling. It looks like a floating jackal with flaming eyes.

Valgrim calls out, "It's a yeth-hound!" It becomes clear that it is actually two yeth-hounds. The creatures start baying in a frightful manner. He adds, "We need silver weapons to hit these things." Hulmar is afflicted by panic; he runs for six rounds. The yeth-hounds charge forward and overbear Prince Eyorak.

Maru Maru tumbles around to flank one hound. He stabs it with the silver dagger lent him by Valgrim Battlehorn. Valgrim decides to help him out by *Enlarging* him.

Phiravno decides that he doesn't need silver weapons to kill dogs. He attacks one with his bladed scarf and discovers to his dismay that the creatures are able to soak up at least 10 points of non-silver damage per strike.

The yeth-hounds turn out to be smart enough to recognize real threats. They both turn to attack Maru Maru. He dives for the floor, then Valgrim takes out one hound with a silvered crossbow bolt. The surviving hound tears at Maru Maru, staggering him. Roscoe Dillon steps in and heals the monk.

Valgrim attempts to hold the hound off with another silvered crossbow bolt, but the creature is unwilling to let go of its prey. It savages Maru Maru, taking him to the ground. Prince Eyorak grabs the silvered dagger from the ground, slashes at the yeth hound, and is in turn driven to the ground by the creature's counterattack.

Roscoe Dillon steps in, takes an attack from the hound, then stabs it with the dagger. He manages to wound it badly. The hound responds by tearing away at his neck and staggering him. He makes one last strike, felling the hound, then falls from his wounds.

### **Recovery. Again.**

Sooner or later, Hulmar shows up to see only Phiravno and Valgrim still standing. The characters pass around their various healing potions and bandage their wounds. They crawl back to Lyrie Akenja's chambers to rest overnight. Roscoe Dillon and Hulmar Benk fetch back the yeth-hound bodies so they can be skinned. Given the amount of injury the group has sustained, Dillon estimates that the characters will need a day or two to recover. While the characters rest, they dine upon rabbit as prepared by Hulmar.

Valgrim works on setting the captive horse free and reading through Lyrie Akenja's notes. He learns enough to get himself a +2 bonus on Knowledge (history) related to Thassalonian subjects.

### ***The Prison Behind the Altar***

Once suitably recovered, the characters venture back into the temple then into the chamber to the south. They find a six-cell jail and a torture chamber, with no prisoners in evidence. There is an adjoining room decorated in goblin-style that was apparently the jailer's room. The characters are able to find the cell keys.

### *The Goblin Harem*

Beyond the prison is, appropriately, the Goblin Harem. Roscoe Dillon howls, “No! Why couldn’t it have been the tentamort! At least it would only kill us!” The characters see that *Bruthazmus the Bugbear* is here, cavorting with four goblin-wives. Roscoe Dillon howls again.

Prince Eyorak demands that Bruthazmus give his surrender. The bugbear leaps for his bow. The characters swarm into the room as one of the goblin-wives gives Bruthazmus his flail. Bruthazmus uses it to cripple Prince Eyorak. Vargrim wafts him away with *Benign Transposition* as Phiravno strikes the bugbear with a burning blade, moderately wounding him. Hulmar fights his way past a crowd of goblin-wives to chop at Bruthazmus with his axe. Bruthazmus looks pained, giving Phiravno an opportunity to sever his throat with a *Sapphire Nightmare Strike*.

The characters determine that the goblin-wives haven’t left the harem in years. Their wills are thoroughly broken. The characters put them in cells. Hulmar restrains Valgrim from indulging some of his more carnal impulses. The others loot Bruthazmus:

- A potion of *Cure Moderate Wounds*;
- A heavy flail;
- A suit of studded leather armor;
- A masterwork composite (+4 STR) longbow;
- Four specialty arrows; and
- Four platinum pieces.

The characters agree to hold back on casting *Detect Magic* until they’ve found some of the other bosses in the place. Phiravno claims the heavy flail. Prince Eyorak takes the studded leather armor and puts it on, in spite of the fact that the “armor” seems to consist of nothing more than several straps, a belly piece, a metal shoulder pad, a reinforced codpiece and two nipple piercings. To his credit, Prince Eyorak doesn’t even cry out when the others pierce his nipples.

### *The Human Mercenary*

The characters continue working their way through the compound. They break into a bedroom and find a human warrior waiting for him. The fellow is armed with a

sword that implies that his personal attributes are nearly nonexistent and a shield broad enough to suggest that his childhood was unusually rough. He is *Orik*.

Phiravno yells out, “I recognize this guy! He helped slaughter my family! We need to take him alive! I need to interrogate and torture him!”

Roscoe points out, “Oh yeah, so says the guy who crits for forty points of damage when he crits with his scarf.”

Prince Eyorak attempts to negotiate a surrender. Surprisingly, they manage to come to an agreement. Orik hands over his gear, and the characters put him in a cell. They will interrogate him and then turn him over to the authorities at Sandpoint:

- *Banded Mail +1* (Roscoe Dillon takes this);
- Masterwork bastard sword;
- Masterwork large steel shield;
- 2 platinum pieces; and
- a potion of *Cure Moderate Wounds*

Orik explains that he attacked Phiravno’s family because they owed Captain Bones a lot of money. He had no part of the violence, because things got out of hand when the *Skinsaw* cultists they had along as backup went berserk. The cultists said that Phiravno’s family’s souls were polluted by greed and had to be expunged. Only his sister was “clean of the pollution”, so the *Skinsaws* took her to sell her to the giants. As far as he knows, these whacked-out cultists are based out of Magnimar. He assures Phiravno that he can forget about getting revenge upon Captain Bones, because after the cultists came back from killing Phiravno’s family they killed both the Captain and his lieutenants. Orik survived only because he ran like a girl.

Orik points out that he is wanted for crimes in Riddleport. His current job is as bodyguard to Nualia. So far, his duties have really just involved sitting in a stinking goblin-hole and getting paid for it. Nualia has done a lot of very questionable things recently, mostly relating to self-mutilation and kooky religious rituals. He claims that he is not attracted to her at all. In contrast, he’s fascinated by the dark-skinned wizard chick. The characters point out that they just let her go.

The characters leave him in a cell with some pickles and rabbit stew.

### **Tsuto's Chambers**

The characters find *Tsuto's* quarters. They learn nothing new, though they do pick up some incriminating documents. He's already dead, so there's only peripheral value to finding information to incriminate him.

### **Lyrie's Chambers**

Lyrie's room is down the corridor from Tsuto's room. They're very tidy, to the extent that it looks like she might never have used them. Roscoe Dillon picks up an *everburning torch*.

### **Nualia's Chambers**

Nualia's chambers are a mix of bedroom and study, and really speak to the fact that she is a crazy, self-hating prophetess of a demonic goddess. But she didn't leave anything remarkably valuable inside.

### **The Goblin Nursery**

Further along the characters find a grim chamber with three infant goblins inside. The characters drop them off with the goblin-wives in the cells, even though the goblin-wives protest that comforting and coddling the goblin children will only make them weak. Hulmar Benk points out, "You're all in a cell. Don't you be telling me that you want individual cells, now! How coddled do you want to be?" The goblin-wives seem satisfied with this.

### ***The Lower Chambers***

After a brief dalliance with the caves and some recollection that a tentamort lives somewhere around, the characters decide to head down to the next level of the complex. The lower level has an oddly-slanted floor and cracked walls. The craftsmanship of the corridors is much better than that of the chambers above, and the air quality is much better.

Maru Maru is leading the characters down a corridor when he hears a fateful click. He throws himself backwards just in time to avoid two portcullises and a blade trap. Roscoe Dillon comments, "They really didn't want visitors, did they."

Prince Eyorak attempts to disarm the trap. After one harrowing false start, he manages to turn it off.

After that, the characters progress down the corridor to the vault very slowly, with Prince Eyorak and Hulmar Benk in the lead. Both of them search for traps as they go.

### *The Vault*

The characters finally reach the vault and cast it open. Inside, they find Nualia (easily recognizable from her red demonic hand) and another yeth-hound. The rest of the chamber is loaded with all manner of forbidding specimens and gimcrackery: preserved creatures in jars, disturbing bas reliefs, bubbling alchemical retorts and cauldrons, really the whole bit.

Prince Eyorak rushes in and flings a jar of alchemical fire at Nualia. He sets her on fire. Phiravno calls upon *Desert Wind Stride* and closes right to her, but his strike goes wide. Hulmar moves up, drinking down a potion of *Rage* as he does. Valgrim puts the cherry on top by adding an *Enlarge* to him.

Then the yeth-hound howls and tears into Hulmar. Nualia steps back, activates a medallion, and casts a spell. Prince Eyorak, Maru Maru and Phiravno scream in panic and run.

Hulmar moves forward to smash into Nualia. She staggers under the impact of his suddenly large-sized great axe.

Valgrim summons up a *fiendish sea snake* and commands it to attack Nualia. The snake bites her. She turns slightly green from the effects of the poison, but not for long: Hulmar's second strike smashes her to the ground. Then the snake performs a coup de grace.

The remaining characters simply pound on the yeth-hound until it is unrecognizable glop. Then the looting starts. Nualia is carrying:

- A *Breastplate +1*;
- A *Bastard Sword +1*;
- A magical medallion with the seven-pointed symbol;
- A masterwork composite longbow;
- A gold holy symbol of Lammastu;

- Seven platinum pieces;
- Five gold pieces; and
- Nualia's notes and journals (several hours to examine)

Valgrim is immediately interested in Nualia's demonic taint. He finds nasty-looking scars on her abdomen. Her demonic hand is red, veiny and clawed. Roscoe Dillon picks out some of the less creepy-looking scrimshaw and artifacts for display on his mantelpiece. Most of them appear to be artifacts of Lammastu worship of no great intrinsic value.

### *The End of the Session*

The characters resolve to rest up for a while, regain spells, and then clear the remains of the compound next time. Each character gains 2225 experience points. This is enough for everyone to move to third level. As before, Hulmar exults in his third Scout level.