

Rise of the Runelords Session Summary 05/18/2008

Attendance

Ernest (Valgrim Battlehorn) calls ahead to confess, “All of my child-care plans have come to naught! Naught! I shall be late! Late!” *Chris* (Roscoe Dillon) mourns, “He’s always so overdramatic. Why can’t he just say he’ll miss lunch like a normal person.” *Chuck* (Phiravno) points out, “Just how many so-called ‘normal’ people do you actually think are in this group?” *Paul* points this out by offering, “Hey, in the new *Pathfinder* rules all mental attribute boosting items are hats, and all physical attribute boosting items are belts. Plus they’ve added a new monster: the Belt-Eater!” *Bruce* (Yenneck Grumman) chuckles senselessly.

Matt (Vaelyn) and *Patrick* (Maru Maru) show up on the doorstep. Bruce urges Chris, “Turn on the sprinklers, there are some riff-raff out there...”

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Class & Level</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Hulmar Benk	Bruce	Human	Scout 7	Chelaxian. Military veteran.
Yenneck Grumman	Bruce	Human	Ranger 9, Warblade 1	Another Chelaxian, a Black Arrow
Roscoe Dillon	Chris	Human	Cleric 10, Warblade 1	Shoanti, Skull tribe. Cleric of Gorum
Phiravno	Chuck	Human	Swordsage 5; Swashbuckler 3; Rogue 3	Varisian. Recently killed by a lamia, hopefully soon back with us.
Artkel Certor	Ed	Human	Fighter 9	Shoanti, Spider clan.
Prince Eyorak	Matt	Human	Rogue 2	Shoanti, Sun clan
Apollo Eternium	Matt	Human	Fighter 6	Shoanti, Sun clan
Maru Maru	Patrick	Human	Monk 6, Tattooed Monk 5	Shoanti, Sun clan
Valgrim Battlehorn	Ernest	Dwarf	Conjurer 3; Master Specialist 2; Paragnostoc Apostle 1; Malconvoker 5	Fascinated by all manner of unusual creatures.
“Gutterspike” Zook Beren	Tim	Gnome	Divine Mind 7	He rides a clawfoot, and he admits that gnomes have stupid names.
Vaelyn	Matt	Human	Gold Dragon Shaman 11	Shoanti, Sun clan

Unloading the Loot

The characters return to Fort Ranneck and then quickly arrange for a shopping trip out to Magnimar, courtesy of *Valgrim Battlehorn* and his newly-learned *Teleport* spell. Disposition of items from the last several sessions amounts to:

Item	Source	Qty	Unit Value	Disposition	Rate	Total Value
3306 silver pieces	3/23/2008	3306	0.1	cash	100%	330.6
Barrels of Brandy	3/23/2008	3	400	sell	55%	660
Carved mammoth-bone statuette of a mammoth	3/23/2008	1	700	sell	110%	770
Eyepatch with a mock eye of blackstar sapphire and moonstone	3/23/2008	1	900	sell	110%	990
Jeweled dwarven gold crown	3/23/2008	1	4000	sell	110%	4400
<i>Large Clubs +1</i>	3/23/2008	4	2300	sell	55%	5060
<i>Large Hide Armor +1</i>	3/23/2008	4	1180	sell	55%	2596
Mithril anklet	3/23/2008	1	1000	sell	110%	1100
<i>Ring of Protection +1</i>	3/23/2008	4	2000	sell	55%	4400
Silver Pieces	3/23/2008	6000	0.1	cash	100%	600
Black opal	4/6/2008	1	8000	cash	100%	8000
Fifty-three additional gems	4/6/2008	1	3500	cash	100%	3500
Fire opal	4/6/2008	1	200	cash	100%	200
<i>Flail +2</i>	4/6/2008	1	8308	Yenneck	0%	0
<i>Flail +2</i>	4/6/2008	1	8308	sell	55%	4569.4
Full plate armor	4/6/2008	1	1500	sell	55%	825
Gold pieces	4/6/2008	1435	1	cash	100%	1435
Gold pieces	4/6/2008	3403	0.1	cash	100%	340.3
<i>Halberd +2</i>	4/6/2008	1	8310	sell	55%	4570.5
Incense burners of silver chased with mithril	4/6/2008	2	400	sell	110%	880
<i>Large Longsword +1</i>	4/6/2008	1	2330	sell	55%	1281.5
Large warhammer	4/6/2008	3	24	sell	55%	39.6
Longsword	4/6/2008	12	15	sell	55%	99
One rich blue diamond	4/6/2008	1	1600	cash	100%	1600
One water opal	4/6/2008	1	1000	cash	100%	1000
<i>Periapt of Wisdom +2</i>	4/6/2008	1	4000	Roscoe		0

Item	Source	Qty	Unit Value	Disposition	Rate	Total Value
<i>Periapt of Wisdom +2</i>	4/6/2008	1	4000	sell	55%	2200
Phiravno <i>Raise Dead</i> costs	4/6/2008	1	-5000	sell	100%	-5000
Platinum idol of the Runelord Karzoug, Lord of Greed	4/6/2008	1	5000	sell	110%	5500
Platinum pieces	4/6/2008	23	10	cash	100%	230
<i>Ring of Protection +2</i>	4/6/2008	1		Valgrim		0
<i>Ring of Protection +2</i>	4/6/2008	1		Vaelyn		0
Silver idols (of various subjects)	4/6/2008	5	600	sell	110%	3300
Silver pieces	4/6/2008	2987	0.1	cash	100%	298.7
Silver pieces	4/6/2008	23145	1	cash	100%	23145
<i>Staff of Heaven and Earth (7 charges)</i>	4/6/2008	1		Roscoe		0
Tapestry of Monks Sparring in a Courtyard	4/6/2008	1	600	sell	110%	660
<i>The Medusa Mask</i>	4/6/2008	1		Maru Maru		0
<i>The Snakeskin Tunic</i>	4/6/2008	1		Phiravno		0
Dire bear skull	4/20/2008	1	0	on Mantle	0%	0
<i>Ghost Touch Gauntlet +1</i>	4/20/2008	1		Roscoe	0%	0
<i>Large Breastplate +2</i>	4/20/2008	2	4550	sell	55%	5005
<i>Large Ranseur +2</i>	4/20/2008	2	4310	sell	55%	4741
500 gold pieces in diamond dust	5/4/2008	1	500	cash	100%	500
A huge and ancient-looking key	5/4/2008	1		keep		0
A set of ivory runestones	5/4/2008	1	1400	sell	110%	1540
Amber and sapphire necklace	5/4/2008	1	4000	sell	110%	4400
<i>Bag of Holding (Type II)</i>	5/4/2008	1		Maru Maru	0%	0
<i>Bracers of Armor +4</i>	5/4/2008	1		Maru Maru	0%	0
<i>Defending Spell-Storing Greatclub +1</i> (storing <i>Vampiric Touch</i>)	5/4/2008	1	18305	sell	110%	20135.5
<i>Fog-Cutting Lenses</i>	5/4/2008	1		Valgrim	0%	0
Gold pieces	5/4/2008	12000	1	cash	100%	12000
<i>Large Full Plate +1</i>	5/4/2008	1	4150	sell	55%	2282.5
Large masterwork full plate	5/4/2008	7	3150	sell	55%	12127.5
Large masterwork half plate	5/4/2008	4	1350	sell	55%	2970
Large masterwork heavy steel shield	5/4/2008	7	190		55%	731.5
Mokmurian's spellbooks	5/4/2008	1		Valgrim		0
Platinum pieces	5/4/2008	1100	10	cash	100%	11000

Item	Source	Qty	Unit Value	Disposition	Rate	Total Value
<i>Robe of Runes</i>	5/4/2008	1		Valgrim	0%	0
<i>Runehill Hatchets</i>	5/4/2008	1	2812	sell	55%	1546.6
<i>Runehill Hatchets</i>	5/4/2008	1	2812	to Garrison	55%	1546.6
<i>Scroll of Contact Other Plane</i>	5/4/2008	1		Valgrim		0
Various arcane lab equipment (several tons)	5/4/2008	1	1500	leave to rot	0%	0
Various books on spellcraft	5/4/2008	1		Valgrim		0
<i>Wand of Bear's Endurance</i> (13 charges)	5/4/2008	1		Roscoe	0%	0
<i>Bracers of Armor +2</i>	Maru Maru	1	4000	sell	55%	2200
<i>Impaler of Thorns</i>	Xanesha	1	4500	Vaelyn		0
<i>Human-Bane Ogre Hook +1</i>	Roscoe	1	8300	sell	55%	4565

Total Value	166871.8
Shares	6
Share Value	27812

Back to Sandpoint

With various shopping expeditions done (during which time the characters collect something like 27,000 gold each and promptly burn it on shiny magical objects), Valgrim teleports the group and their rescued hostages back to Sandpoint. A huge drunken frenzy ensues. *Roscoe Dillon's* wife (who had been waiting for him for quite some time) drags him off; the others don't know where. Or why. They're just clueless that way.

Long after the characters are far too drunk to understand what they're talking about, the Mayor and the Sheriff attempt to interest the characters in some kind of sinkhole. *Phiravno* slurs out, "Don't you have some kind of first-level group around here to give this to?"

Late that night the characters hear a fearsome howling in the distance. This prompts Valgrim to stagger over to the Sheriff's house in his nightshirt and hammer on the door, yelling, "What's this about sinkholes I hear? You get out here and tell me! Cause if it's monsters, then I'm going to be too drunk tomorrow to listen to background!"

The Sheriff explains that shortly after the characters departed a mysterious sinkhole destroyed part of the garrison. Nobody was hurt in the collapse, but a team of

men sent into the hole never returned. And every night, terrible howling sounds waft from the hole. This is enough for Valgrim. He slaps on a helmet and tries to kick the others awake. They're all hung over, so they tell him to come back in the morning.

Seriously, In The Morning

The next morning, the town officials send over a bashful acolyte of Desna to tell the characters that *Father Zantus* wants to see them in the church, to talk about the sinkhole. Roscoe and Valgrim spend some time terrorizing the acolyte while the others get ready.

On the way over, the characters examine the sinkhole. At the bottom, they are able to see a narrow opening at the Northwest corner, apparently leading to a tunnel. Both *Sheriff Hemlock* and *Mayor Deveran* are waiting with *Father Zantus* at the cathedral. They explain the situation, compliment the characters endlessly, and then look rather hopefully as they wait for the characters to announce that they're going to go in and kill off whatever is making the howling noises. Valgrim agrees, at the price of a bottle of whiskey (in advance) for each character. The Sheriff hands over the booze, grateful that the price is so low.

The Sinkhole Tunnels

The characters climb down into the sinkhole (or fall, in Valgrim's case) and examine the tunnel. They quickly conclude that the corridor is similar to the catacombs they've already seen under Sandpoint, and that the sinkhole was caused by a partial cave-in of the corridor. *Maru Maru* leads the way. He finds that most of the tunnels are familiar to the characters, except that a stairway that had previously been blocked by rubble is now clear. The characters descend.

Thick sheets of webs clog the stairways. Signs of recent work scar the walls. And then the stairs end, apparently at a dead end. Valgrim looks at the wall, grumbles, "Couldn't they even *try* to hide the door?" and opens the secret door. The corridor beyond is full of fog. Valgrim puts on his *Fog-Cutting Goggles* and checks the situation out. He sees a room ahead, with nothing dangerous visible. He reports that the fog is magical and is strangely reminiscent of a *Guards and Wards* spell. He details the specific

effects to the others, most of whom find they can't manage to keep themselves awake through the whole description.

Maru Maru speaks for the rest when he says, "This sounds very annoying but not fatal. But there's definitely a high-level caster around."

The characters move into the room and find that there is Thassalonian writing on the walls in a variety of media (ink, blood, carving, etc.). Most of the writing seems to consist of prayers and hymns to *Lammashtu*. While Valgrim is examining it, a voice challenges them in Thassalonian. It sounds fairly out of touch: it asks Valgrim a lot of questions on who rules the lands above, what has happened to mighty Thassalonia, and where the sources of power above are. The characters answer the voice's questions, but only remember to ask some of their own after the voice knows all it wanted to know and won't answer them.

Yenneck Grumman tries looking for tracks. He finds one set of footprints that has moved around quite a bit, but hasn't left. Maru Maru exploits this to find a door hidden by an illusion. He opens the door, finds a small room, discovers that it is empty, and beyond it finds another door and beyond it *another* small room. He starts to feel like he is in a *Bugs Bunny* cartoon. And then he comes upon a room containing a round stone pool of clear water. The ceiling above is a greenish dome. There are runes carved around the walls. Valgrim translates and reports that, as usual, this place is sacred to *Lammashtu*. He supposes that this might have been a birthing-room for *Lammashtu*.

The Shrine of Monsters and Madness

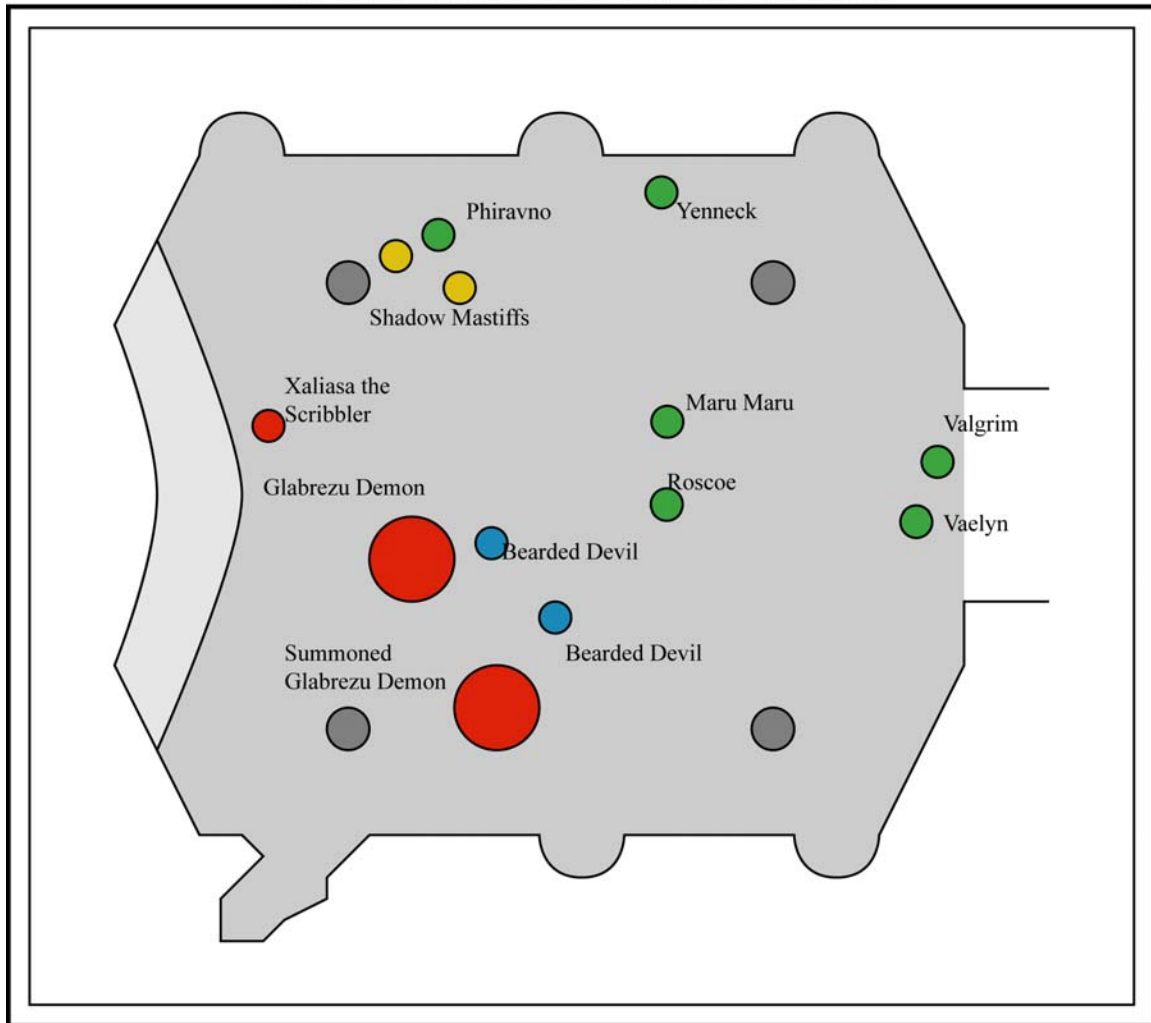
Valgrim summons up a fiendish spider (which has blindsense out to 60 feet) and has it scout around for invisible or hidden foes. The spider scurries into the Shrine and immediately becomes quite agitated. The characters examine the place; it is quite impressive, though partially collapsed. Several alcoves contain statues of a jackal-headed woman with a crocodile's tail and two kukris crossed over her chest. And the voice is back. Valgrim interrogates it, learning that the voice is *Xaliasa the Scribbler*. He remembers this name from the Sandpoint map taken from *Mokmurian's* lair: *Xaliasa* is the officer who is described as having betrayed *Karzoug*. They talk for a while on life, lost loves, and the current status of *Runeforge* and *Karzoug* until *Xaliasa* decides that he knows as much as he needs and orders the characters' deaths.

The characters deploy into the Shrine. They see nothing. Then Roscoe Dillon casts *Invisibility Purge* and reveals the crazed shape of the Scribbler and a glabrezu demon.

Phiravno gasps, “*That was invisible?*”

Roscoe offers, “At least we know that they’re there now.”

The Scribbler and the Shrine of Lammastu



The Scribbler leads by summoning some shadow mastiffs as a swift action. Phiravno howls as they bear down upon him, but he does not even understand how deep his pain will become: the glabrezu summons another glabrezu. Not to be outdone, Valgrim summons two bearded devils to engage the glabrezu.

Vaelyn moans, “All these summoned creatures are making my head spin! No more, please!” The Scribbler obliges by summoning a barghest, keenly aware of the way

that Yenneck is chopping one of the shadow mastiffs into shadow giblets. For their part, the shadow mastiffs howl and panic Yenneck. One glabrezu casts *Reverse Gravity* and flings half of the characters straight into the ceiling. The other launches *Power Word Stun* at Valgrim, leaving him disoriented.

The characters regroup and steel themselves to face their unnatural foes. Then Xaliasa the Scribbler calls down the favor of Lammastu from himself and lays into Vaelyn, practically killing the dragon shaman in three mighty strikes of his unholy falchion. Vaelyn's skin and flesh peel away and blacken into putrescence as the unclean blade cleaves into him.

The bearded devils rumble and squeal as the glabrezu tear into them with spear, fork and claws. The devils are rent asunder; the glabrezu fling the steaming remains aside.

Valgrim, enraged by the sight of the destruction of his minions, casts *Dispel Magic* at Xaliasa the Scribbler, stripping away several of his magical enhancements. A cheer goes up from the other characters as they observe a much-diminished Xaliasa.

Vaelyn draws upon his inner resources to heal himself, and then invokes his *Bracers of Quick Strike* to lash out at Xaliasa. Xaliasa reels in shock. Yenneck steps in with his burning blade and executes a single devastating strike, tearing through ribs and heart and leaving the Scribbler stricken and dead. Tragically, this does not cause the terms of the glabrezu's binding to expire so they remain as a threat.

Phiravno decides to take the glabrezu threat on head-first. He slips into *Assassin Stance* and makes an *Obscuring Shadow Veil* strike. His unearthly scarf-blade shreds the glabrezu's side. Purplish ichor spurts onto the ground.

The glabrezu reels and makes an off-balance counterattack. Phiravno dances back with only a minor injury. The summoned glabrezu steps in on Valgrim, clawing him horribly. Valgrim grasps at his innards, desperate to hold them inside, as he launches a *Confusion* at the glabrezu. They shrug off the spell, contemptuous of mortal sorcery.

Roscoe watches as Maru Maru and Yenneck inflict a series of tiny nibbles upon one glabrezu as the other menaces Valgrim. He rushes to the summoner's aid, casting a substantial healing spell and sealing Valgrim's wounds. The glabrezu responds by clawing pieces out of Roscoe's back.

Vaelyn recognizes that the first glabrezu is actually quite badly wounded. He spears it through, driving it to the ground.

The second glabrezu claws and hammers at Roscoe, who responds by casting *Blessed Weapon* upon Vaelyn's *Impaler of Thorns*. Vaelyn uses it to slay the second glabrezu in a single mighty stab. And then there is looting. Xaliasa is carrying:

- *Breastplate +1*
- *Fanged Falchion (Unholy Falchion +1, plus on a critical hit it chews its victim inflicting 2 points of CON drain and forcing a DC 15 Fortitude save to avoid stun)*
- *Cold Iron Returning Dagger +1*
- *Cloak of Charisma +2*
- Diamond dust worth 750 gold pieces

In an effort to gather the necessary information as quickly as possible, Valgrim uses *Amanuensis* to magically transcribe the Scribbler's writings. Most of it is exhortations and prayers to Lammastu, but among it all is the following poem:

Each stone the grace of seven lords;
One part a key each ruler hoards;
If offered spells and proper prayer;
Take seven keys and climb the stair.

Valgrim indicates that he's going to dissect the glabrezu corpse (the summoned corpse simply evaporates into a bad smell). The others engage in some trophy-hunting. Roscoe takes a claw to make into a crib. He announces, "My wife is sure to love this to death! I'm certain because I understand women extremely well!" Yenneck takes some fingers to make into a necklace.

The Antechamber, Again

The characters go back into the Antechamber and search thoroughly. They find a fragment of a poem:

If magic bright is your desire;
To old Runeforge must you retire;
For only there does wizards' art;
Receive its due and proper start.

They also find double doors (previously hidden by illusions) decorated with a great jackal's head. The characters open them to find a passageway blocked with rubble. Some searching turns up three doors. One is a dead end. The second is partially collapsed. The third is a meditation chamber, with a poem carved into the wall:

On Eastern shores of steaming mirror;
At end of day when dusk is nearer;
Where seven faces silent wait;
Encircled guards at Runeforge gate.

Valgrim remembers that Lake Stormunder is known for its plentiful hot springs and geysers. He also recalls that there is a mysterious circle of seven stone heads on the slopes of Mount Rimeskull on the Northeastern shore of Lake Stormunder.

The Cavern Passage

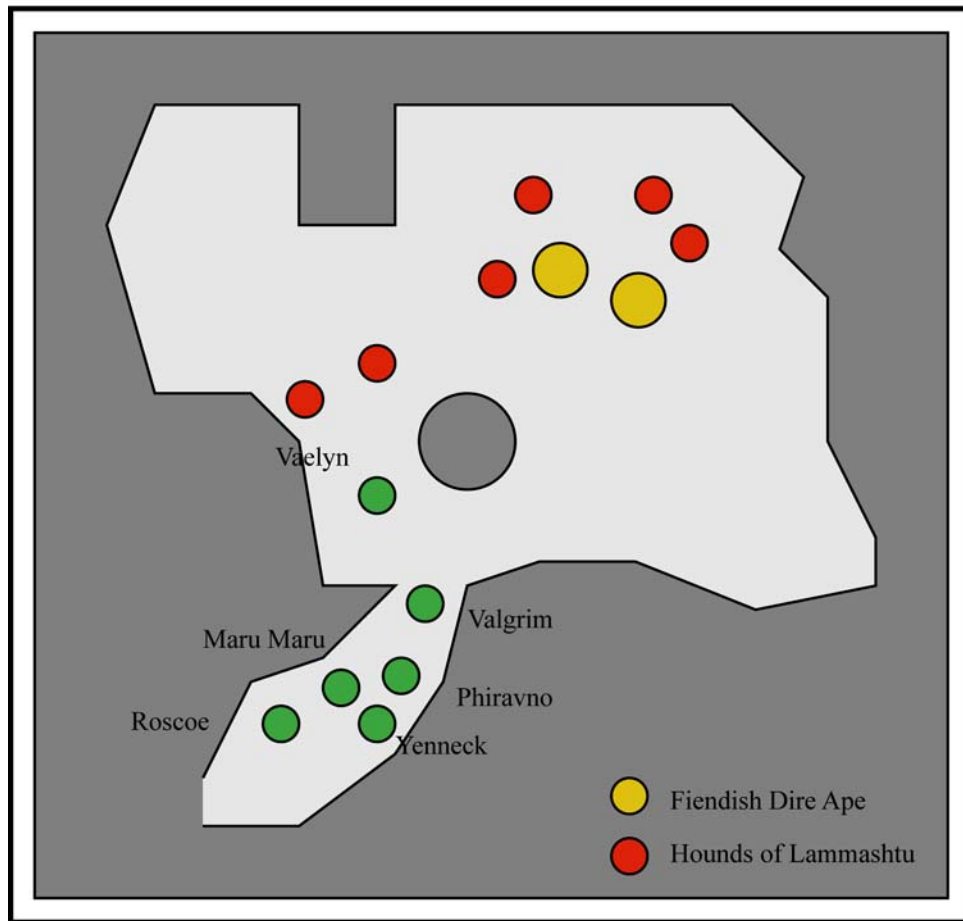
The characters take the southwest passage out of the Shrine. They find themselves in the midst of a battlefield, with clear signs of what happened to the guards the Sheriff sent down. Beyond the torn and shredded ruins of the guards are six Hounds of Lammashu, their spiked armor plates rustling like an evil wind through a cursed forest.

Vaelyn runs into the room. Valgrim howls, "No! Those are *dangerous!*" but then thinks better of it. He flings *Glitterdust* into the room and summons in a pair of Fiendish Dire Apes. The hounds respond by howling, which sends Phiravno fleeing in panic. The characters step in and execute the hounds.

By the time the characters finish with their messy work they recognize that it was the howling of the Hounds of Lammashu that was disturbing the townspeople's sleep. And there is another rhyme:

On frozen mountain Xin awaits;
His regal voice the yawning gates;
Keys turn twice in Sihaedron;
Occulted Runeforge waits within.

The Hounds of Lammastu



The Passage of Suggestion

The characters find another small corridor and follow it into a small chamber spattered with writing, including four lines carved into the stone of the wall above the door:

And now you've come and joined the Forge;
 Upon rare lore your mind can gorge;
 And when you sloth the mortal way;
 In Runeforge long your work shall stay

The characters grumble about damned Thassalonian poets, then head through the door. Maru Maru goes first. As he passes through, a voice whispers in his ear, "Your companions are secretly worshippers of Lammastu. They will try and capture you and sacrifice you to their horrible goddess!"

The others are a bit confused when Maru Maru turns and attacks Vaelyn. Maru Maru steps back, allowing Vaelyn to step through and also become convinced. He turns and breathes flame upon Phiravno and Valgrim. Phiravno invokes *Cloak of Deception* and attempts to sap Vaelyn. Valgrim decides to go to the barricades and casts a *Cloud of Bewilderment*, to relatively minimal effect. Yenneck attempts to get past, but is stopped by Vaelyn's attack of opportunity.

Roscoe finally manages to do something useful by casting *Dispel Magic* and eliminating the effect on Vaelyn. Vaelyn turns and attacks Maru Maru. The others pile on in. Maru Maru responds by tumbling past the entire group, evading Valgrim's *Web*, and then attempting to convince the townsfolk of Sandpoint that they must immediately fill in the sinkhole to trap the other characters because they're evil. He isn't too convincing, as he's speaking in a rapid-fire babble characteristic of the magically-influenced.

The Scribbler's Retreat

At the end of the corridor is a chamber decorated with flowing script. A human body, bloodied and broken, lies against a wall. A table arrayed with colorful bottled inks stands against the opposite wall. A peacock quill stands in a pen holder.

Valgrim enters and gets struck with a terrible (alignment-based) mental attack that leaves him with a tremendous splitting headache. He cautions the others to stay away, then examines the script. It turns out that the Scribbler had been interrogating the dead man (one of the guards, corporal *Jerron Basvir*) with *Speak With Dead* to learn about the world above. He wrote the results on the walls, along with his plans to send agents to Runeforge to collect various pieces of information.

Valgrim determines that the peacock quill is a minor artifact with a strong divination aura. He picks it up, and the ink.

The characters pick up the rest of the guard bodies on the way out and return to Sandpoint.

The End of the Session

10th level characters (which really means Yenneck) gain 5000 experience points. 11th level characters each gain 4000 experience points. Yenneck makes the jump to 11th level.