

## Rise of the Runelords Session Summary 09/14/2008

### Attendance

*Patrick* (Maru Maru) asks, “How long does blindness last?”

*Matt* (Vaelyn) offers, “Oh, don’t worry. That’s just permanent.”

*Ernest* (Valgrim Battlehorn) points out, “Unlike when you get your arms and legs cut off. They’ll grow back. Right? Right?”

*Chris* (Roscoe Dillon) looks dubious, “Riiiiight. By the way, I saw *Tell No One* a little while ago. That really was a really good thriller.”

*Bruce* (Yenneck Grumman) agrees, “I particularly liked the way it went from a straightforward-seeming mystery to this huge pit of lies and conspiracy. That’s the way a thriller should be written!”

*Paul* offers, “I’m a schoolteacher! My entire life is a huge pit of lies and conspiracy!” *Chuck* (Phiravno) shudders.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Class &amp; Level</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Yenneck Grumman	Bruce	Human	Ranger 9, Warblade 5	Another Chelaxian, a Black Arrow
Roscoe Dillon	Chris	Human	Cleric 13, Warblade 1	Shoanti, Skull tribe. Cleric of Gorum
Phiravno	Chuck	Human	Swordsage 5; Swashbuckler 5; Rogue 4	Varisian. Recently killed by a lamia, hopefully soon back with us.
Artkel Certor	Ed	Human	Fighter 9	Shoanti, Spider clan.
Maru Maru	Patrick	Human	Monk 9, Tattooed Monk 5	Shoanti, Sun clan
Valgrim Battlehorn	Ernest	Dwarf	Conjurer 3; Master Specialist 2; Paragnostic Apostle 1; Malconvoker 8	Fascinated by all manner of unusual creatures.
Vaelyn	Matt	Human	Gold Dragon Shaman 14	Shoanti, Sun clan

### *To Take Arms Against a Sea of Giants!*

The characters resume the action standing shoulder-to-shoulder against an endless onrush of giants in every color of the rainbow. *Phiravno* examines the initiative chart

and groans, “Great. I get to go immediately before a named NPC. Who exactly are Viorian and Khalib, anyway?”

*Yenneck Grumman* opines, “Well, fire giants are usually portrayed as being somehow Arabic, so I bet Khalid is a fire giant. I wonder how he breathes the thin air up here...?”

*Valgrim Battlehorn* cuffs the ranger and instructs him, “By wearing the same kind of medallion all the rest of us are wearing, you oaf!”

Yenneck gripes, “I didn’t know, so I asked. That’s how you learn, dumbass! By asking!”

*Vaelyn* suggests, “You should probably refrain from calling Yenneck an oaf. That really does a disservice to oafs all across Golarion.”

It is at this point that the cloud giants start pouring out of Valgrim’s *Cloudkill*. Valgrim chuckles as he imagines all the damage his cloud is doing to the giants, until an unnatural shrieking reaches out and slashes the cloud into nonexistent puffs. Phiravno exclaims, “My ex-wife! How did she get here!”

Valgrim takes a more reasonable view, opining “I smell spellcasters!” He watches as a storm giant with beautifully flowing hair smashes one of his amnizu demons into paste. Yenneck steps in and takes vengeance against the giant with his *Bonecrusher*. The amnizus demonstrate that there is a right way and a wrong way to take vengeance: they volley *Quickened Fireballs* against all the giants and then fly up out of the giants’ reach. The giant with the flowing hair falls, stricken by the flames. His comrade, a brutal-looking specimen with cruel lips, also topples. And then the arrow demons open fire, sending a fusillade of misses into the surviving giants. Valgrim shrugs, “Ehh... some demons are just around to make other demons look better.”

*Maru Maru* ignores the others’ clever give-and-take. He runs in, tears a giant’s kneecap clean off, and crushes the creature’s throat as it falls. Phiravno moves forward and slashes an enraged giant with his scarf. *Vaelyn* joins him and crushes the creature’s kidneys with his earthbreaker. The giant crumbles.

### *Enter the Harridans*

Then the lamia harridans open up the door next to Maru Maru. He observes that they aren’t charging through it to be massacred. Instead, they’re just standing in the

doorway so they can cast spells at him. They start off with a *Blade Barrier* that delivers serious injury to Yenneck's cloak. The follow-up is a *Harm* spell that leaves Maru Maru looking green and sickly and a *Greater Command* that mildly irritates half of the group.

The arrow demons demonstrate the kind of self-destructive commitment characteristic of summoned entities as they step right through the *Blade Barrier* to send a volley of arrows at the lamia harridans. The amnizus out-do their comrades with a stylish synchronized dance maneuver in three dimensions that ends with another cluster of *Quickened Fireballs* rushing towards the lamiae.

### *And Now the Rune Giants!*

And then two towering black-skinned rune giants step in, their iron-like skins dancing with complicated runes. Each of them wears full iron armor and bears a blade so large it could bisect a house. Yenneck moans, "Such big giants... so big..." Valgrim wonders what portion of the giants Yenneck might be looking at. While Yenneck is distracted, Vaelyn moves in and crushes a wounded giant's ribcage with a huge earthbreaker swing.

Vaelyn celebrates his victory by noting, "I'm really hurt, guys. Can anyone heal me?" Roscoe hears his cries as a call to action. He flings himself through the *Blade Barrier* in a desperate effort to heal his comrade. Vaelyn is quite grateful.

Yenneck watches the lamia harridans healing themselves and preparing to unleash various forms of magical devastation. He responds by charging forward and chopping down a wounded lamia with his *Elder Mountain Hammer*. Maru Maru claps, just in time for a harridan to claw him lightly. He laughs at the incompetence of the harridans. Then the other harridan slashes Yenneck with her greatsword, leaving rather a mark.

Behind Yenneck, Valgrim orders his amnizus to attack the lead runegiant with their bewildering touch attacks. The giant collapses like a gargantuan pithed frog after taking 22 points of INT damage. It barely even has the awareness left to realize that Valgrim has stacked a *Hold Monster* on top of the amnizu attacks. Valgrim dances a short dance of victory.

Then two more runegiants stomp in. The giant the amnizus ignored leads the bloodletting with a massive sword strike that chops one amnizu into two irregular lumps. Vaelyn howls, "No! Not the amnizu! Not Fluttery! I liked him best of all!" He storms

at the runegiant. The runegiant looks down at him, suddenly aware that there is something clawing at its knees. And then the surviving amnizus caress the giant, dropping its INT by nine points. Noting that the giant is still standing, Valgrim launches a *Ray of Stupidity* from his wand, dropping the giant unconscious.

Yenneck steps up to a wounded lamia harridan and slices her apart. Lamia ichor covers him from head to toe. Maru Maru averts his gaze, but only so he can grab the other lamia's foreclaw with his right hand and break it with his left. The lamia howls in agony, but makes her Fortitude save to avoid perishing from massive damage.

The lamia harridan plans for her next strike, but she does not plan fast enough: Phiravno moves in, announces "Island of Blades!" and executes her.

### *The Double Doors Open*

The characters have just watched the second runegiant fall when the grand double doors at the end of the hall swing open. An armored woman ten feet tall bearing a curved blade steps forward with a sense of purpose. The Rune of Greed is carved upon her cheek. Three more lamia harridans flank her. She calls out, "I am Viorian! Who claims to be the strongest warrior here?"

After a moment of debate, Vaelyn nominates himself. She challenges him, "Come for me, then!" He moves in. She slashes him. He slashes back. Both of their swings go wild.

Roscoe turns for a moment and realizes that there are five runegiants stomping up the corridor. He casts *Sunbeam* down at them, hoping to blind them. Two of the harridans respond by hitting him with *Harm* spells and drawing him down to one hit point. Valgrim quickly casts a *Benign Transposition* to get Roscoe out of danger while Yenneck runs in to unleash the *Elder Mountain Hammer* upon one of the harridans. Valgrim's various demons swarm all over the giants, only to get whittled down by massive hammer and axe hits. Roscoe quickly casts *Heal* upon himself.

The female warrior *Viorian* attacks Vaelyn, slashing him with her blade. He lurches back as he realizes that she is wielding, *Chellan* the Sword of Greed. It is one of the *Allara-Hai*, the seven *Weapons of Conviction*. These weapons were made to be used by the champions of the Runelords, and only the strongest of mortals could wield them.

Valgrim rather helpfully offers that it is said that Allara-Hai is able to transform its victims into solid diamond upon a critical strike.

Vaelyn, confident that his *Brilliant Weapons* will bypass her armor and reach through to her heart, unleashes a full battery of attacks against Vorian. She staggers under the impact, but remains only moderately wounded.

Valgrim quips, “Looks to me that she’s actually the Champion of *Bleed!* Ha ha ha!”

Maru Maru dodges straight into a lamia harridan’s greatsword. He laughs in pain because her sword isn’t even magical: his supernaturally-resistant skin sloughs off much of the damage. Another harridan falls to fencing with one of Valgrim’s arrow demons.

Yenneck finds himself standing face-to-face with a lamia harridan. He grins for his good fortune and launches himself at her with two blades, shattering her utterly. He gives thanks for Roscoe’s *Fell the Greatest Foe* spell as he utterly eviscerates the creature, leaving only gibbets and ruin behind.

A second set of double doors open to reveal *Khalib*, a thin-faced human wearing the robes of a magician, flying some forty feet in the air. He makes a single sparse gesture and summons a huge earth elemental. Phiravno thinks, “Oh, this one is going to be trouble.”

Valgrim decides that he’s not going to let an enemy spellcaster ruin his day. He casts a *Feeblemind* and is quite dismayed to see that the spell simply ceases to exist without effect. The others are amazed at the number and creativity of dwarven curses he is able to bring to the situation. In his unthinking rage, he sends his amnizus and arrow demons at a runegiant and a lamia harridan. The runegiant smashes one amnizu and deeply wounds another. The amnizus retaliate by draining down the giant’s intelligence.

Maru Maru looks up at Khalib, safely out of reach of his melee attacks, and takes advantage of some of the dwarven curses he just learned. He consoles himself by storming a lamia harridan.

Phiravno takes to the air to attack Khalib. His gaze passes by his ground-bound monk comrade with a sense of reserved pity. Then his scarf lashes out and glances off Khalib’s stone-like skin. Khalib chuckles, “Hah! You fools think I don’t know when it

is a good time to spend 250 gold in diamond dust, but you are wrong! Wrong! Wrong!” Phiravno rolls his eyes.

Viorian launches another series of full attacks against Vaelyn. He staggers back, using his *Domineering Earthbreaker* to absorb the diamond transmutation effect of her blade. Khalib shoots a *Quickened Maximized Magic Missile* at Valgrim, who laughs because he’s protected by a *Shield*. Khalib scowls and follows it up with a *Disintegrate*. Valgrim chuckles and absorbs the effect with his *Domineering Hammer*. Khalib teaches the characters some old Thassalonian curses.

Vaelyn swings his earthbreaker in a wide arc, then back again with his *Bracers of Quick Strike*, smashing Viorian’s skull with the first hit and her spine with the second. He boasts, “Now *that’s* the best I can do! Match that, bitch!” Viorian gurgles feebly and dies. One of the surviving harridans moves forward to retaliate with a *Harm* spell. Vaelyn staggers but does not fall. The second harridan elects to cast a *Blade Barrier* to protect herself. This has the effect she desires: this persuades Yenneck to move over towards her *Harm*-casting comrade and strike her with the *Elder Mountain Hammer*.

Roscoe decides that Khalib has made quite enough of a nuisance of himself. He casts *Dispel Magic*. He strips away Khalib’s *Overland Flight* and *Cat’s Grace*. Valgrim agrees with Roscoe’s idea, but takes a harder core attitude: he casts *Disintegrate* at Khalib. Khalib vanishes into a cloak and a pile of dust just like Obi-Wan-fucking-Kenobi. Valgrim takes a victory lap for himself.

Forgotten on the wrong side of the battlefield, the last amnizu gets crushed to death by a runegiant. Nobody cries for it.

Phiravno finds himself inside the lamia harridan’s *Blade Barrier*. He invokes his *Cloak of Deception* to become invisible, drops into *Assassin’s Stance*, and launches an array of attacks against her. His scarf runs through her again and again, leaving shattered bone and torn muscle as the only remnant. There is no sound but the incessant clicking of the blades.

Roscoe unleashes a *Radiant Assault* upon the runegiants. Half of them fail to avoid the spell and become dazed and burned by radiant damage. The others are merely dazzled and slightly singed.

The lamia harridan facing Yenneck claws him, leaving quite a mark. Yenneck slashes back, leaving two marks in return. Phiravno leaps clean over the *Blade Barrier* and finishes the job, chopping down the harridan from behind.

Valgrim notices that one runegiant isn't either dazed or dazzled. He deals with the situation by casting *Charm Monster* and ordering the creature, "Save us! Destroy these traitors!" He doesn't get too much compliance from the creature.

Maru Maru decides that he's got no patience for this kind of sorcerous manipulation, so he simply pummels a runegiant to death.

Vaelyn staggers over to Roscoe begging for hit points. Roscoe sighs, "Oh, so now clerics are only good for healing. Fine." He casts a *Heal* and makes Vaelyn better. Meanwhile, Valgrim's arrow demons shoot the leading runegiant full of holes. Valgrim follows this up by blinding two runegiants with *Glitterdust*. The only runegiant that *isn't* dazed, dazzled, blinded or charmed takes a swing at Maru Maru. Maru staggers back, mourning his cracked bones and contused organs. He moves up and punches the giant solidly in the big toe. Vaelyn and Yenneck move in to help out, stacking on the damage. With the three of them concentrating upon it, the creature doesn't last long. Phiravno ensures that its blinded, dazed companion doesn't survive much longer.

The characters look around and determine that the only remaining opponents are incapacitated runegiants. They deal with them and move on, in particular to pick up a massive collection of loot.

- All the *Sirhadron Rings* the characters can carry.
- Lots of *Huge Full Plate +2*
- Many suits of *Gargantuan Full Plate +4*
- A suit of *Full Plate +5*
- A *Heavy Steel Shield +5*
- *Chellan*, the Sword of Greed
- *Amulet of Health +4*
- A *Belt of Giant Strength +4*
- A *Cloak of Minor Displacement*
- A *Ring of Freedom of Movement*
- A *Scarab of Protection* (10 charges)

- *A Staff of Size Manipulation* (18 charges)
- *An Amulet of Natural Armor +2*
- *An Evil Robe of the Archmagi* that grants a +4 bonus to INT rather than a +4 bonus to saves
- Khalib's spellbook.
- 5000 gold pieces worth of gemstone dust

Roscoe takes the full plate, the heavy steel shield, and the *Belt of Giant Strength*. Maru Maru takes the *Minor Cloak of Displacement*. Yenneck takes the *Ring of Freedom of Movement*. Vaelyn takes the *Scarab of Protection*.

### *The Reliquary of the Gem of Avarice*

The characters (well, Valgrim really) interrogate the charmed runegiant to learn about the Palace. He tells them that there are only two important places left. The Reliquary is where the *Most High Ceoptra* watches over the Gem of Avarice. There is also a hall with a strange device, watched over by mysterious acolytes who never leave the room. The characters decide to head to the Reliquary so they can kill Karzoug.

The characters break into the Reliquary, a place that is decorated with several statues of Karzoug in various sizes and a collection of burning pits. The chamber is protected by the *Most High Ceoptra* and her two lamia harridan bodyguards. Roscoe takes a look at them and comments, "Well, Ceoptra's really kinda hot." Phiravno ignores the cleric as he prepares to slaughter them all.

Valgrim leads off with *Cloudkill*. Everyone else groans. Roscoe leads with *Righteous Wrath of the Faithful*. Everyone else cheers.

Ceoptra runs out of the cloud and casts *Destruction* at Valgrim. He takes some damage and makes a terrible expression, but he isn't instantly destroyed. Maru Maru answers her by running out and punching her, to no effect. Ceoptra grins at the little monk, then orders her harridans forward to engage Vaelyn.

Yenneck realizes that one of the harridans has stepped right in front of him. He steps up and stabs her clean through the throat. The harridan gurgles and collapses. Yenneck offers his thanks to the Academy, and to Roscoe for his *Righteous Wrath* effect.

Valgrim decides that the harridans are well in hand, so he concentrates on Ceoptra. He hits her with an *Acid Orb*, leaving her with a series of ugly burns across her flank. Vaelyn advances in the wake of the orb, bringing his earthbreaker down upon her forequarters. Her foreclaw hangs limply, covered in a wash of lamia ichor.

Roscoe casts *Fell the Greatest Foe* upon Phiravno and urges him, "Go crush 'em, champ!" Phiravno unleashes his attacks upon the surviving harridan, piercing it through the throat and felling it. He reflects upon how apropos the name of Roscoe's spell is.

Ceoptra starts out with a *Quickened Cure*, erasing much of the damage inflicted by Vaelyn's strike. She follows up with a barrage of attacks against him. He takes four hits, including strikes from an *Unholy Dagger*. He clutches at his pierced abdomen as the red blood seeps out, only barely aware of the fact that he's taken seven points of Wisdom drain. He is completely unaware of Yenneck rushing past him yelling something about *Elder Mountain Hammers* and cutting the wounded Ceoptra in half. The other characters waste no time in looting her:

- A *Unholy Dagger* +1
- A *Periapt of Wisdom* +6
- A *Ring of Force Shield*
- A *Sirhadron Ring*
- Four pearl anklets
- A golden crown

The characters notice that Ceoptra also had a small tattoo at the base of her tail.

### *Into the Nether Against Karzoug*

Maru Maru sees Valgrim peering around the twenty foot tall statue of Karzoug with his *Artificer's Monocle*. He gets impatient and tries just touching the thing. Vaelyn doesn't offer any commentary: he's too busy healing his seven points of lost Wisdom back.

The characters learn that they are totally unable to *move* the Gem of Avarice, but the Domineering weapons they bear are able to sink through it like a spoon through jello. Vaelyn, Phiravno and Yenneck all strike the gem simultaneously. The gem breaks into three pieces, leaving a gateway hanging in space.

The characters go through, into a strange space both confined and infinite and surrounded by a strange maelstrom. Before them is a low blue pool, the Runewell. A strange crystal floats on top of a platform at the center of the realm. And floating forty feet above the surface of the Runewell is the Runelord Karzoug.

Vaelyn looks up at the floating Runelord and comments, “Gee, in some ways he looks just like Doctor Doom.”

Roscoe peers at the figure. “I disagree. He has gemstones stuck into his head. I don’t think Doctor Doom has that.”

Maru Maru and Vaelyn run to the attack. Karzoug responds with a *Meteor Swarm*, engulfing both of them. Maru Maru and Vaelyn both avoid the damage.

Yenneck comments, “Gee, that’s a pretty weak spell for a ninth level spell. What a waste.” Then he realizes that Karzoug launched the second meteor to hit him. Phiravno keeps his mouth shut, but that doesn’t stop him from getting hit by the third meteor.

The fourth and final meteor heads straight for Valgrim, who squeals, “But I’m invisible! How can he see me!” The others groan: they all realize that he’s an epic caster who isn’t troubled by things like *Invisibility*. By the time the meteors have all fallen, the room smells of burned player characters.

And then Karzoug casts *Quickened Time Stop*, which he uses to cast a few more spells, including a *Prismatic Wall* around the characters and a *Wall of Force* right above them, *and* a *Cloudkill* right in the middle. The characters start to understand just how overwhelmed they might be.

Valgrim yells out, “Get to me! I can *Teleport* us outta here!” Everyone clusters around him. He casts his spell, bringing the characters to the platform with the floating gemstone. He announces, “I think we should destroy the gem! That might trap us all here forever, but it might also trap him too!” Then he uses his *Belt of Battle* to get another action and launch out his *Greater Dispel Magic*. He is unbelievably surprised when Karzoug’s *Spell Turning* reverses the effect back upon him.

Maru Maru flies up into the air to punch Karzoug. Karzoug does not appear to even notice the attack. Vaelyn runs through the Runewell to reach the platform. He is more than a little bit surprised that there are no ill effects to running through a Runewell.

Karzoug's next trick is the *Wail of the Banshee*. Maru Maru falls from the air, stone dead. Everyone else just feels very, very bad. Then his glaive casts *Fireball* on the characters. The characters are rather surprised to find that the glaive doesn't have quite the potency that Karzoug does – everyone shrugs off the attack.

Phiravno flies straight up and unleashes the *Obscuring Shadow Veil* upon Karzoug, scoring a direct hit. Karzoug looks lightly wounded.

Yenneck decides that attacking Karzoug isn't going to go well. He attacks the gemstone with the *Elder Mountain Hammer*. His blade does a fair amount of damage, demonstrating that the gemstone is quite durable.

Valgrim does his mighty best to distract Karzoug by summoning two amnizus to launch *Quickened Fireballs* and then attack with their intelligence drain. Karzoug emerges from the conflagration looking mildly singed. Valgrim is just a bit disappointed to find that the Runelord is also immune to mind-affecting effects like the amnizu's intelligence drain.

Roscoe rather desperately casts *Revivify* upon Maru Maru, just in time for Karzoug's next attack.

Vaelyn slams into the gem as hard as he can. He is proud that the gem is starting to look slightly damaged.

Karzoug the Claimer uses his *Greater Quickening Rod* to hand everyone a *Horrid Wilting*. Maru Maru dies again. Then he casts *Maze* on Vaelyn, who promptly vanishes into his very own extradimensional space.

Phiravno unleashes another attack against Karzoug, delivering another moderate injury. Valgrim follows up with an *Acid Storm* that rather incidentally catches his own amnizus. The amnizus look very much worse for the experience than Karzoug does.

Roscoe looks at the body of Maru Maru, thinks quickly, and casts *Revenge*. The mostly-undead monk charges Karzoug, buoyed by the knowledge that he now gets +1 to hit against his killer. He slams into Karzoug, leaving him desperately injured.

Vaelyn realizes that Karzoug is almost dead. He climbs up on top of Yenneck and unleashes his breath weapon, finally destroying the Runelord. The energy of the greedy souls the Runelord are instantly released, healing everyone's wounds and restoring Maru Maru to life, but blinding Yenneck. The Runewell returns to its proper

place at the base of the Pinnacle of Avarice, where its waters quickly freeze. The occluding field surrounding the spires evaporates.

### *The Aftermath*

Most people in the world never realize that anything happened, but several weeks after the characters' return the Pathfinder Society asks them for their story. The characters collect various of Karzoug's magical artifacts and go off to further lives of drama and heroism. Except, of course, for Yenneck who just can't stop howling, "I'm blind! I'm blind! I'm permanently blind! I shall end my days as a ragged beggar staggering the streets of Magmimar, miserable and disease-ridden!" Roscoe is just a bit irritated when Yenneck continues to whine even after the cleric casts a *Cure Blindness* spell to restore the ranger's sight.