

REAVERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE - SESSION SUMMARY II/20/2011

TODAY'S EPISODE: A PIRATE'S LIFE FOR ME

It is the fore-noon watch (8:30am-12:30pm) aboard the pirate vessel *Teeth of Araska*, which is anchored in Sandpoint harbor. Her crew is busy making ready to sail for Blackcove in Cheliah. And there is much work to be done, because the ship has just finished repair work in the Sandpoint dry dock. A large supply of mantlets have to be stowed away (and then drug back out to give Captain Sindawe a demonstration), a new prow head (resembling Lavender Lil) mounted, and a small party sent ashore to gather up wayward crew.

Their long term mission is to collect the 2000 gold piece bounty on the Black Bunyip, a pirate vessel captained by Morgan Baumann. Riddleport Overlord Gaston Cromarcky set the bounty with these terms: return Baumann and her vessel to Riddleport, where she will publicly executed and the ship handed over to the Overlord's private navy.

The short term mission is... well, there are many. Suffice it to say, "It got complicated."

Our heroes are:

- Captain **Sindawe H'kilata Narr**, the fist-punchin' Mwangi monk (Chris)
- First Mate **Ref "Serpent" Jorensen**, the staff-bashin' Ulfen druid/ranger and his snake Saluthra (Paul)
- Gunnery Mate **Wogan**, the pistol-packin' celibate cleric of Gozreh (Patrick)
- Bosun **Tommy Blacktoes**, the staff-slingin' sneaky halfling rogue (was Kevin, now NPC)
- **Hatshepsut**, monk and high priestess of a lost civilization who doesn't savvy much Common and her cobra Naja (NPC)

- **Samaritha**, the wand-blastin' serpentfolk wizard in the guise of a pretty half-elf (NPC).
- **Lavender Lil**, a buxom, tiefling ex-prostitute (NPC).
- The rest of the crew:
 - Survivors from the ship's previous pirate crew
 - Ex-slaves escaped from their Chelish owner and recruited from their castaway island home
 - **Mace Venjum**, former Chelish captain, former prisoner, thumbless, and forcibly recruited pirate
- The new hires:
 - **Del**, merchantman sailor, released from Riddleport's Shoreleave prison
 - **Speg**, a peg-legged, though speedy climbing, sailor
 - **Rolf**, a big guy with lots of scars escaping a shady past in Riddleport
 - **Delmer**, a slow talking man with an impressive knowledge of knots
 - **Bojask**, male, human ranger and the sole shanghaied crew member. Previously he was the floor manager and animal wrangler for the Gold Goblin casino.

OCEAN'S EIGHT

Captain Sindawe gathers Serpent, Wogan, Samaritha, Hatshepsut, Lavender Lil, Sevgi, and Kahina. "We are going into town for breakfast and some planning. Bring your thinking caps." Serpent rolls his eyes because everyone knows that "thinking" is a circlet slot not a cap! The rest of the crew watches with envy as they head off with all of the female crewmembers.

They arrive at the Rusty Dragon, push together several tables, order, and settle in for some serious business. The ship's officers notice that the *Teeth of Araska's* former prow figure, an impressive dragon carving, is now a decoration for the Rusty Dragon.

After the food has arrived and the server has left, Sindawe announces, “I want to pull a pirating job after we leave Blackcove but before we sail west into the great blue. We discussed some ideas on our way back from Magnimar. There’s too much navy in those waters for us to prowl about looking for shipping. And we don’t have the time to develop the contacts needed to hit the ‘right’ ships.”

“So, we’re going to hit a small town, village, or villa along the Sallow Coast. The Sallow Coast is immediately north of Blackcove. It’s mostly Chelioxian citizens along there in small settlements. And no large towns, cities, or ports... at least according to this map.” He unrolls a map of the target area.

The Plan

A small party will be put ashore on the north end of the Sallow Coast. Their job will be to scout the settlements for one that is rich and weakly held. The party will be posing as adventurers recently returned from Viperwall where they were babysitting Professor Brol Limptkin, a member of the Pathfinder Society. They are currently on a follow-up mission for Professor Limptkin, who stayed behind in Magnimar, to locate a missing Pathfinder Society colleague named Professor Stella Rindheaver. They have weak clues pointing to the Sallow Coast. They’ll scout each settlement out while working their way down the coast to Black Cove, where they will link back up with the *Teeth of Araska*. This should take 5-7 days.

The group will practice their cover story before and during the mission. Samaritha and Tommy, having actually been to Viperwall, will fill them in on the pertinent details.

Meanwhile, the *Teeth of Araska* will sail onto Blackcove where the remaining ship's officers will take a ship's boat into town (there are too many ship-lethal rocks to sail in) to visit Jared the Jinx for intel, do some recruiting, and buy provisions. This will probably take several days, so Bel and Stoke will be left in command of the *Teeth of Araska*.

Sindawe finishes, "And if everything works out right the *Teeth of Araska* will have a juicy target by the time we are ready to leave Blackcove." The pirates go to work: questions are asked, ideas shared, and the plan comes together.

The Gear

Lavender Lil will equip the ladies from her own wardrobe, because adventurer garb tends to be a mix of "stripper" and "heavily armed psychopath". Being pirates makes the latter easy to fill. Having a high end prostitute dressing you gets the former.

Tommy promises to scrounge up enough weapons to make the group both heavily armed and not so standardized (adventurers love variety!). Heavier armor, if it can be found on board, will be also be used. Sevgi already owns a suit of studded leather armor.

The Crew

Tommy volunteers to lead the team and take care of the remaining planning. Lavender Lil will be the party's "face". Sevgi, Kahina, Little Mike, and Rolf will be the muscle.

Sindawe opted to make this party at least half female, because he believes them to be more reliable than the male crewmen. And outside of strip clubs and relationships men tend to not suspect women of nefarious intentions. Little Mike is selected because he is older, proven in combat, and used to be in the Chelioxian navy which might be useful in Cheliox. Rolf is selected because he killed an owlbear recently, and that has to be good for something.

AN ODDLY DECENT PROPOSAL

Sindawe heads off to find Trendas and Leora. The two and their child, Nitzah, are ex-slaves who were dropped off in Sandpoint by the *Teeth of Araska* some months ago. They have fallen on hard times since then, despite their willingness to work hard and Trendas' skill as an armorer. They are currently living in rented shed. Sindawe finds the two doing day laborer work.

Sindawe, "Have you figured out your expenses to open a shop here in Sandpoint? And keep a roof over your heads and food in your bellies until it starts paying for itself?"

Trendas replies, "Yes. 200 gp should be enough."

Sindawe does some math in his head, then says, "Are you sure? That sounds low for an armory. I don't want to return in a few months to find it wasn't enough."

Trendas hesitates, allowing Leora to blurt, "More is better!"

Sindawe takes them aside from prying eyes. He counts out 300 gold coins and hands them over. "This is buying you a new life here. A safe place to live, work, and have a lot of babies. In return, I need you two to front for my business. If I need something, you'll buy it for me. If I need something sold, it goes thru you."

The couple readily agrees.

What? Are We Suddenly Puritans?

Later aboard the Teeth of Araska, Sindawe takes Serpent and Wogan aside. “We need to talk to some of our people in the next few days. Slasher Jim is first on my list.”

Wogan nods, “Yeah, I’m pretty sure he killed that guy in Riddleport. You know, the one that was bothering Goat.”

Serpent, “Plus, he can probably tell us some more about Captain Baumann. I’m curious why he left her crew.”

Slasher Jim is ordered up onto the poop deck with the three officers. They ask questions about his service with Captain Baumann. Jim replies are terse and noncommittal. He finally says, “Look. It is bad form to talk too much about captains you have served with previously.”

This is a bit surprising to the officers who are still new to pirating. That damned “Pirates Code of Honor” seems to have a lot of inconvenient rules. Serpent grumbles, “Seems to be a lot of lawful behavior going on around here.” But the officers understand that Jim doesn’t want to talk and it’s covered under the “code”. Sindawe dismisses Slasher without even asking about the murder that got Goat thrown in jail.

Note: The GM has revealed that Slasher Jim is based on the character Tig from “The Sons of Anarchy” TV show. The players are also fans of the show, so this information is well received.

Serpent lies, “That went well.”

Wogan says, "Who's next?"

Sindawe pauses to gather his thoughts. "Well, I am worried about Tommy and Lil. I think we need to talk to Tommy." Wogan and Serpent just stare at him.

Sindawe is somewhat surprised by their response. He begins again, "They're always having sex." Serpent starts to laugh, but Sindawe presses on, "And they're doing it out in the open... and that attracts a lot of attention. And it is so frequent that I think that succubus might have them ensorcelled."

Wogan replies, "I think you mean ensorcelled. They are a bit loud..." Then making the universal "large breasts" gesture he adds, "But honestly, can you fault Tommy?"

Serpent laughs more loudly, "This is a pirate vessel! Let them have their fun." He walks away.

Wogan stares suspiciously at Sindawe for a second, then demands, "What's next on your list? Am I drinking too much for a pirate vessel?" He too walks away, whistling happily.

Sindawe shrugs helplessly.

The ship sails out of the harbor and to the southwest.

"NO GILLS" SEA ELYES!

Day One - Our first day at sea is chilly with some rain and winds that vary between lazy and strong. Banks of fog slowly cross the ocean, frequently limiting vision.

In one such fog bank Sindawe hears drumming. He calls for quiet and begins guiding the ship in toward the drums. After a short while the drums grow louder.

Serpent listens closely, then announces, “Those are Ulfen, I think. We use drums to direct the oarsmen.”

Wogan asks, “This far south? Even raiders shouldn’t be this far south. Riddleport Harbor is freezing up now... Their home port would have been iced over weeks ago.”

Serpent nods. “That’s a fast beat too. They must be chasing someone. Over short distances they are faster than most sailed vessels.”

Sindawe is concerned that Serpent might be unwilling to fight his countrymen. “Serpent, we might have to fight the Ulfen. Heck, they might have something we want. Are you OK with that?”

Serpent replies simply, “I don’t mind killing.”

Sindawe begins issuing orders. “Battle stations! Distribute bee’s wax candles to each crewman! Mantlets on deck!”

The *Teeth of Araska* emerges from its fog bank. In the distance a Mordant Spire elf skimmer, looking like some kind of Star Wars concept art, is chasing an Ulfen longship. The Ulfen vessel is maintaining its lead between its sails and furiously pounding oars. Or perhaps the elves are content to let the Ulfen wear themselves out.

The longship is longer than the *Teeth of Araska*. The skimmer is 55’ long with two sails, a main and a jib, hanging off a single mast. The skimmer design (think double-hulled catamaran) is familiar to Sindawe from his father’s diary.

Spells fire from the elf vessel’s deck mostly targeting individual Ulfen. A few Ulfen return fire at long range with bows, cautiously. Nobody seems to be winning.

Wogan asks, “Take the skimmer? They probably have better loot.”

Sindawe smiles and nods, "Let's kill some elves!"

Serpent joyously shouts, "Yeah!"

The *Teeth of Araska* gives chase. Wogan orders the cannons loaded. The swivel guns are brought out and loaded too. Serpent pilots while Sindawe decides on an approach.

Due to the rough weather spellcasters have to make concentration checks and everyone else has to make a Reflex check when doing anything requiring both hands. It is also wet enough that guns have to be covered with canvas to keep the powder dry.

You Talkin' To Me?

Serpent, at the wheel, hears a whispered voice, "This is the sovereign elf vessel *Fair Serpent*. What are your intentions?"

Serpent, "Does anyone else hear that?"

Sindawe looks over and says, "What?"

"The elves are talking to me." He then shouts toward the skimmer, "Surrender all your treasure!"

The whispering voice does not respond.

The *Teeth of Araska* parallels the chase waiting for cannon to be loaded. Then they maneuver to short range on the Fair Serpent and then again for a broadside. We figure out a ship's AC is 20 minus # of hull sections minus # of masts. Example: The *Teeth of Araska* with its 12 sections and 3 masts would be AC 5. It is the "broadside of a barn".

Wogan yells, "FIRE!" One cannon hits, one misses, and the last is soon to be premature exploding mess thanks a natural 1. Patrick spends a precious Fate Point to turn that one into a "successful and cool hit". Instead of blowing up the gun crew, the shell hits an ocean wave, skips beautifully, and slams into the skimmer. The pirates cheer as several elves tumble into the water. The skimmer slows noticeably.

The *Teeth of Araska* maneuvers to close range. Elves are on deck, pointing and aiming bows. The nasty weather does nothing for their aim! The swivel guns are ready! Wogan casts *Call Lightning*. The pirates throw grappling lines, hit, and begin pulling the *Fair Serpent* closer.

A velociraptor appears out of a poof of smoke near Serpent where he stands manning the wheel. It leaps at him in a fury of teeth and claws, but misses. The pirates on the grapple lines collapse to the deck, victims of a *Sleep* spell.

Mass combat rules kick in. Wogan's *Call Lightning* burns some sail and hits an elf marine. A volley of elf arrows rains down. Mostly they are stopped by the mantlets, but several drop Tanned Hank just as he places the last mantlet into place. Serpent jams the wheel into the place and critical hits the raptor with his staff. The blow lands with a "crunch" for 19 points of damage but the creature shakes off the other ill effects of the critical. Saluthra's mighty coils end the raptor. Wogan spots both elven spell casters and *Silences* one. Sindawe also spots a spell caster and has the swivel gunners concentrate fire on him, dropping the silenced elf.

Wogan berates his captain and the swivel gun crews, "No!!! You're supposed to shoot the spell caster who hasn't been silenced!"

The Ulfen longship locks its portside oar bank and spins to ram the *Fair Serpent*. The elven captain realizes what is about to happen but is powerless to stop

it. The Ulfen vessel narrowly misses the *Teeth of Araska* as it rams the *Fair Serpent*, breaking all of the grapple lines. A wave of Ulfen rush onto the elvish vessel. Wogan throws another lightning bolt into the elves. Sindawe orders cannon and swivel guns reloaded. The *Teeth of Araska* begins to circle the action. The rain and wind pick up noticeably. A lightning bolt blasts a group of Ulfen boarders. The elves fight bravely but the Ulfen numbers and great axes prove more than a match. Elf marines begin dropping more quickly than the Ulfen.

Eventually only the elf command staff remains. Serpent is the only one on board to see their last living moments. They are literally fighting back to back to give their spell caster cover for one last trick. The spell is completed; the elves simply disappear. Serpent screams, "They disintegrated themselves!" (A critically failed Spellcraft check by Serpent!) Then he adds sadly, "All of that magic swag... just wasted!"

The Ulfen celebrate their victory with a quick orgy of arson and corpse mutilation. The skimmer begins to burn.

You Talkin' To Me?

Captain Sindawe, confident now that the cannon are reloaded, screams across to the Ulfen vessel, "What will you give us in return for your lives?" The Ulfen captain responds by throwing a bundle of elf heads into the ocean in between the two ships.

Serpents screams to no one in particular, "I will swim over and kill them all!"

The *Teeth of Araska* closes to Short range and misses with its broadside thanks to a clever lock-oar maneuver by the Ulfen captain. They drop sails and turn into

the wind, rowing quickly. The *Teeth of Araska* keeps up using tacking, maneuvers to short and then close range, and shears their starboard side oars. Both ships rock from the impact. Grappling lines fly. Boarding actions begin.

The GM switches to the mass combat rules again. The crews are broken down into units of 10. The *Teeth of Araska* fields 2.5 units (AC 15, +9/d16+13). The Ulfen have two units (AC 14, +13/d12+17). Yikes! The PCs are individual units during this fight as are the Ulfen captain and his two lieutenants.

Wogan casts *Bless*. The Ulfen captain leaps across to the *Teeth of Araska* and attacks Sindawe, missing. Our crew drop some of theirs, they drop several of ours. Damn their great axes! Serpent joins the fight against the Ulfen captain, hitting for 16 points of damage. The Ulfen lieutenants, clearly brothers, cross over and attack Serpent (16pts) and Wogan (14pts) with spears. The Ulfen captain is hurt but remains standing despite taking an additional 35 points of damage from Sindawe's Flurry of Blows.

Wogan casts *Hold Person* on an Ulfen lieutenant freezing him in place. Our crew kills some more Ulfen. Saluthra squeezes the other Ulfen lieutenant for 17pts and loops her coils tightly around him. Serpent RAGES and pounds the Ulfen captain for 15pts to which the Ulfen captain laughs, "Well done!" Then he hits again for 12pts of damage; the captain drops boneless to the deck. The Ulfen lieutenants go mad upon seeing this; berserker rage seizes them! The one in Saluthra's coils bites the snake repeatedly. Big Mike and Orgon One-Ear are dropped. Sindawe screams, "Swivel guns fire!" He runs and hits an Ulfen lieutenant with a flying kick for 14pts.

Wogan blasts an Ulfen with his blunderbuss. Swivel guns fire gutting multiple Ulfen with grapeshot along with some pirates. Several Ulfen rush to their captain

and start hauling him back to their ship. Serpent beats them both back with his staff; one drops a potion bottle which rolls away and off the pitching deck. The berzerking Ulfen in Saluthra's grip continues biting, this time ripping out impressive chunks of snake flesh (11pts). Sindawe's opponent stabs with spear and bites but hits only air. Sindawe beats the Ulfen for 37pts of damage! Ulfen attackers drop Samaritha and Goat. Serpent goes mad!

Wogan shoots another Ulfen for 18pts with his double barrel masterwork pistol; the second barrel delivers a nauseating blast that also sicken that Ulfen and the knot of men around him. More Ulfen crew go down under the pirate blades, leaving 12! Saluthra squeezes the lieutenant to death (32pts) squirting an eyeball out of his head. Serpent beats another Ulfen to death with his staff. The remaining Ulfen lieutenant sees his brother's death and attacks Saluthra, dealing 23pts with a frenzy of blows. Sindawe ends that Ulfen's life with the Vaulting Mantis Spine-Snap; the Ulfen folds like a book.

Wogan shoots another pistol and hits. Our crew whittles away a few more Ulfen. The remaining Ulfen leap to attack Serpent and Sindawe while screaming, "For our CAPTAIN!" Sindawe is cut by a great axe for 20pts! He ends that Ulfen's life with the Fist of the Rabid Fang (his second critical of the day), an imitation of Hatshepsut's Serpent Fang strike. Serpent beats yet another Ulfen to death.

The *Teeth of Araska* pirates and officers press in on the remaining Ulfen boarders (7). Several more go down. Wogan begins healing fallen crew with a wand of Cure Light Wounds.

Serpent drops out of his rage, panting heavily. He yells tiredly in Ulfen, "Surrender!"

The remaining Ulfen are also fatigued having expended their own rage a bit earlier. One drops his weapons. The others do likewise.

Wogan finally dares to use a healing burst, saving all of our fallen crew from the Great Deep. And five of the Ulfen, who are also quickly taken prisoner. The prisoners are taken down to the brig.

A short time later, the prisoner detail returns. Pirro excitedly reports, "One of the Ulfen got past us during the fighting and went below! We found him just outside the brig. Bojask strangled him!"

Wogan asks Pirro, "Did you search Bojask for weapons?"

Pirro replies, "No. Why?" He is not the sharpest tool in the shed.

The ship's officers take a detail to the brig. Bojask is searched; several Ulfen weapons are found. Wogan rewards him for the strangling with a shot of rum. Bojask drinks greedily. For good measure the Ulfen are searched again.

The elven vessel is lost thanks to the fires set by Ulfen. The pirates loot the Ulfen, who have a depressingly small amount of loot and absolutely nothing of note from the elf vessel.

The Take

+1 Battle Axe, 2 suits of +1 Studded Leather, 53gp, 350gp in jewelry, 2 masterwork spears, a Feather Token Anchor, 40 chain shirts, and 40 great axes. Also found on the Ulfen and their ship are a huge number of throwing axes, eating axes, chopping axes, battle axes, child axes, and axes the likes of which have never been seen outside the Cold North.

The Feather Token and the axe collection, minus the great axes, is added to the ship's arsenal. They fill barrels at several egress points to the *Teeth of Araskas's* deck. The masterwork spears are awarded to Tanned Hank and xxx for their bravery in the earlier battle; they are to be carried in service of the ship.

The Ulfen longship, whose name translates to *Froth Drinker*, is searched by the loot hungry pirates. But nothing notable is found. Their hold contains enough provisions to last forty men four months.

Goat pries open a barrel only to be staggered by a strong wave of pickling fumes. He whines, "Pickled herring ain't fit food for pirates!"

Serpent strolls over, pulls out a fistful of herring, and begins eating them head first with great relish. Pirates watch with equal measures of disgust and awe. In between mouthfuls he declares, "Tastes fine to me! Load it up." Crew are assigned to move the Ulfen provisions over.

Much later, the three officers go back to the brig for interrogation. For a long while the Ulfen are sullen and stoic. Then they pretend to be deaf, dumb, and stoic. Even when questioned by Serpent in their own tongue. Eventually, one Ulfen, Olgvik, decides to speak for the lot of them.

Olgvik refuses to divulge any information about their vessel, their mission, where they came from, where they were going, etc... Only two, pathetic bits of information are gleaned:

"Who are you?"

"Olgvik Njernkilson of Broken Bay."

"Why were the elves chasing you?"

"The elves believe the sea belongs to them!"

The officers give up on the questioning and begin discussing amongst themselves what to do with *Froth Drinker*:

Sail it to a port and sell it? Absolutely... if we were near Riddleport. Anywhere else is too dangerous.

Take it with us? Then we would have two undermanned vessels, one of which is not fit for the journey we are on.

Burn it? Yes, that is probably the best solution. And kill the prisoners.

The Ulfen prisoners become agitated by this conversation; they are not going to get of out of this alive?

Sindawe, impressed by the Ulfen fighters, tells Olgvik, "I will let your friends go. They can have *Froth Drinker*, some provisions, their personal arms, and the bodies of your captain and his lieutenants. In return, you will join my crew. You'll sign the ship's articles, follow orders, and get a share of the loot gained from here on out." He is tempted to sign all of them up, but that sounds like a recipe for disaster.

Olgvik hesitates briefly then says, "I agree."

The prisoners are released and given everything promised. Olgvik watches his ship grow further and further away, until it is gone.

FUNERAL SHIP

Day 2 at sea - The weather is non-threatening but cold. Around midday a 15' longship is spotted. Sailing closer reveals it to be a partially burned Ulfen funeral ship.

The ship's officers decide to investigate. They board with Olgvik. It is largely burned but stopped well above the water line. Serpent enters the hold to find

a clay jar of wine. He recognizes the seal as belonging to one of the Linnorm Kings, Ingimundr the Unruly of Broken Bay. Given the size of the ship and sparse possessions, Serpent guesses the burned body is a valued retainer of that king. Or maybe a relative. Yup, that symbol means relative, and that one means cousin.

Wogan takes possession of the wine jar. Serpent begins pushing the dead man's remains around with his toe. "These guys get a full set of jewelry when they're buried at sea. Gold might be clinging to these bones. And for all we know the bones of a Linnorm King's cousin might be worth something to a collector."

Sindawe climbs back on board their ship. He says, "Sure, grab the bones" while wondering why several crewmen who had been watching curiously over the side suddenly find other things to be doing. "Why are they acting squirrely?" he thinks.

Olgvik announces, "We do not bother the honored dead, traitor!" He swings his great axe into Serpent. The damage is impressive, even considering it is enhanced by a backstab.

Then Serpent spins and beats the living shit of Olgvik with a mighty staff blow to the head. Olgvik staggers back, stunned. Then Sindawe drops down using Slow Fall and hits Olgvik again, employing Stunning Fist and non-lethal damage. Olgvik's eyes cross even further.

Wogan cradles the wine protectively under one arm and shoots a pistol blindly into the melee while screaming, "Save the wine!"

Serpent drops Olgvik with several more staff hits. Wogan stabilizes him.

Olgvik is hauled up onto the *Araska*. Sindawe starts asking the squirrely crewmen, "What's going on? Why are you acting so suspicious?" Eventually another

crewman takes pity on them and explains that they were taking bets on whether or not undead would eat the ship's officers.

Back on board the *Teeth of Araska* Wogan dashes back to his cabin cackling, "Wine!" He opens the jar and tries a small sip. It is an amazing quality. He begins a heavy round of drinking.

On deck, Sindawe asks Serpent, "What was that about? Why did Olgvik attack you?"

Serpent shrugs, "I'm from Hag's Elbow. Those Broken Bay boys are just crazy."

Several crewmen drag Olgvik down to the brig.

Serpent continues, "You know it is always possible that the bones are haunted. Or the wine. Or both."

Sindawe looks at Serpent. Serpent looks back. They say in unison, "Sounds like a job for the priest." A short time later Wogan hears a knock at his cabin door. He opens the door and has the bag of bones pushed roughly upon him by a crewman who explains, "They might be haunted. Sindawe said to keep an eye on them." Wogan throws the bag into a corner, sits down in the far corner from that, and continues drinking. He watches the bag suspiciously.

FISH STORY

Day 3 - The weather is cold, fair wind, and foggy. The crew is on high alert to avoid sea hazards.

Day 4 - The ship finally clears the Varisian peninsula. Rains begin, but nothing alarming.

Day 5 - A sperm whale is spotted. It gives chase, which initially seems playful. Then it charges in an attempt to capsize the ship. Sindawe and the crew maneuver the ship agilely such that sperm whale manages only a glancing blow. It then disappears from view.

Wogan orders a cannon loaded, hoping the sound if not the shot will scare the whale away. Serpent attempts to talk to it but it is too deep. Sindawe has more sail put on, but the speed climbs to only 3 knots.

The sperm whale resurfaces some distance away and charges again. Serpent summons a squid to confuse it. The whale ignores the squid in favor of another capsizing attempt. It succeeds with a 34 (+29 to CMB checks, -10 for the size difference). Seawater washes over the deck and is guzzled in great quantities by the ship's lower decks. Officers and crew must make a DC 12 Str check or be washed overboard. Only Gareb goes over. He quickly disappears into the distance as the sperm whale pushes the ship along.

The crew struggles desperately against the capsizing, managing a Sailing check of 41! The ship does not roll!

The sperm whale disappears below the waves and is not seen again that day. A hysterically screaming Gareb is delivered to the ship by Serpent's summoned squid. A damage control crew goes below to look for hull damage. Pumps are used to remove the vast volume of seawater from below decks. Crew are put to work putting cargo right.

Prisoner Check

The prisoners are neck deep in sea water, shivering, and less happy than usual. Bojask has been in ship's brig for almost two weeks; Olgvik for several days. They are removed from the brig and escorted to the deck still in their manacles.

Sindawe pulls out the ship's articles and waves them about, "Bojask, are you ready to be a pirate?"

Bojask, "Yeah."

"Read and sign these articles."

Bojask does so then notes, "These don't say anything about you watching your back."

Sindawe smiles, "True."

Bojask's usual grimace is replaced with a predatory grin, "Good." His manacles are removed. Tommy cracks his whip and screams, "You're on pump duty. Move it!" Bojask hurries off.

Wogan looks at Sindawe, "If you die in a mysterious manner, I know who to kill."

Sindawe is touched; avenging a friend's death is serious and revered business in his homeland (the Mwangi Expanse). "Thank you, Wogan."

The ship's officers turn to the other prisoner, Olgvik. Sindawe demands, "Why did you attack Serpent?"

Olgvik states morosely, "He was dishonoring the Cousin's funeral remains. All of you were taking his Hell Wine." He continues in this vein for awhile.

Wogan asks more questions, which Olgvik answers guardedly. Wogan says to Sindawe in Aklo, “He’s lying. There was something on that boat he doesn’t want us to know or investigate.”

Sindawe suspects something worse and turns back to Olgvik. “Who are you?”
“Olgvik Njernkilson.”

Sindawe, “Where did we find you?”

“Uh... On the Ulfen ship, *Froth Drinker*?”

Sindawe asks more questions, which the Ulfen answers. Finally, Sindawe is happy that the Ulfen isn’t possessed or otherwise ‘replaced’ by something from the funeral ship.

Sindawe, “Who was your previous captain?” The Ulfen starts to reply but is cutoff, “That’s right. He is dead. I am your captain now. You gave me your word and in return I gave your companions their freedom, the *Froth Drinker*, and their weapons. Is your word worth nothing? I don’t care about your secrets. I don’t care about an Ulfen raiding base. I don’t care who is in charge there. That was your old life. Serve on board my ship, follow the articles, and cause no trouble. You can keep your secrets.”

The Ulfen seems a bit shamed and mumbles, “I did not promise ‘no troubles’...”

Serpent joins in with a grim smile, “Oath breakers go to the Ulfen Oath Breaker hell! Nothing but ice and endless wandering. No sun, warmth, drink, or other comforts. The stinging winds mock you with your own lies. You will go there... unless you renew your oath to us, stick with it, and DIE by it.”

Olgvik does not look up from the deck, but he replies in a strong, clear voice, “Olgvik Njernkilson vows he will follow orders and cause no more trouble.”

Wogan tells Olgvik, “Dismissed. Go join the pump gang.”

Olgvik heads off to his assignment.

The officers watch him walk away. Wogan says to Serpent, “Ulfen oath breaker hell sounds a bit like the Tien Hell of Upside Down Sinners.”

Serpent shrugs, “The Oath Breaker Hell is colder.” And then adds, with more than a hint of Ulfen pride, “And more hellish!”

From nearby Sevgi says, ““The Shoanti have a Dust Hell. It is cold there too. And you have to walk everywhere because horses aren’t allowed.”

“And it’s dusty?” someone asks.

“Exactly. I’m not sure if it’s important, but it certainly sounds bad.” The rest of the crew picks up the conversation about the many hells. It lasts long into the night and makes for a reasonable distraction from pumping and repair work.

Conqueror’s Bay

Day 6 – We sail into Conqueror’s Bay, and into bad weather! Truly, horribly, bad weather! The GM calls for eight control rolls at DC 20. But the crew and ship are up to the task. Plus the damage control work from yesterday and last night has put the ship back into fighting shape.

Day 7 - Still Crossing Conqueror's Bay. More miserable weather but not bad enough to require control rolls. A whale is spotted in the distance. There is no water spout! The crew begins to relax, until Captain Sindawe calls out, "Battlestations! That bitch is back!"

He continues in a lower voice to the command crew, "I think it is dead! Undead!"

Wogan runs below and retrieves the bones from the Linnorm King's funeral ship. He runs back out onto the deck and throws them into the water between the ship and the whale in an attempt to placate whatever spirits are causing such a bizarre occurrence.

And then the whale attacks anyway. It strikes the ship, shaking it violently. Wogan counters with a positive energy burst. The whale dives deep and does not return.

Everyone is convinced that the ship is cursed. "Damn the Linnorm Kings!"

A Curious Pollster

Day 8 - Still more Conqueror's Bay. Cold weather! Bad enough to require cold weather gear. Wogan begins work on removing the curse by casting *Remove Curse* on individual crewmen. Unsurprisingly, they line up eagerly for the treatment.

Later in the day, Sindawe is piloting the ship. He spots a strange bird in the rigging. The strange bird waves to him and scabbles sneakily down the mast. It darts closer to Sindawe and finally perches on the wheel. It is a curious specimen made out of green clay, which have been molded to give it a body complete with facial features, hands, and feet. A pair of rotting seagulls wings jut from its back.

It begins asking Sindawe questions in a rapid fire style about their voyage and their encounter with the whale. He answers them surprisingly good-naturedly. When the creature discovers the *Araska* encountered the creature both while it was alive and while it was undead it gets very excited about gathering their data.

“So... Have you seen a whale lately?”

“Do you have any priests on board?”

“What was the most frightening part of the whale’s attack?”

“What weapon in your arsenal seemed most effective against it?”

“What differences did you notice in its attack routines?”

“On a scale of one to five, how terrifying was the whale both before and after it was dead?”

Some of Sindawe’s responses prompt more questions. Others cause the creature to pause as if listening to a distant voice. Then it asks more questions. Meanwhile, Serpent and Wogan have taken notice and begin edging closer.

Serpent interrupts another barrage of questions with, “Are you a homunculus?”

The creature regards him quietly, then replies, “Yeah! I work for a guy! He’s a big magic type out that way.” The creature points casually toward the mainland to the east. “I’m following up on an experiment for him.”

Sindawe offers, “You know your boss sounds like a busy man. He probably needs competent guys to get him stuff for his experiments. Guys like us.”

Initially the creature is unimpressed, but persistence pays off. The creature grudgingly pulls a small number of coins from a pocket inside its body and hands them over. “That’s for the damage.”

The officers are disappointed to find there are only 20 gold pieces. But the coins themselves are a novelty to the pirates. Each bears the Nidalese coat of arms, a silver skull with manacle chains running thru its eye sockets.

"How do we get in touch?" asks Wogan.

The homunculus carves a symbol into the ship's wood. It then replies to Wogan, "If you are ever in Albatross, show this symbol around. My boss will send a guy. He is always looking for flunkies." It then flies quickly away.

Serpent says, "I think Albatross is a major city in Nidal."

Wogan replies, "I'm pretty sure it's a bird."

A GOOD CATCH

Day 9 - The weather is a quiet in the bay. The crew is grateful for the peace. Several follow Wogan about as he attempts to lift the curse. He finally decides, "It is time to do the ship!"

Wogan clammers out onto the prow and grabs the figurehead by the breasts. He casts *Remove Curse*. And then he just hangs out for awhile.

Day 10 - Later, a small merchantman vessel is spotted. It is far out in the bay, further out than most vessels would be, and therefore attempting a quick crossing to save time. The *Teeth of Araska* gives chase. The merchantman flees. The chase continues. The merchantman raises the Magnimarian flag. The ship's officers are curious. "What were they hoping to achieve with that?"

The chase continues. The small vessel can manage eight knots which is the *Teeth of Araska's* maximum speed. But it isn't enough and the *Teeth of Araska* finally closes with the merchantman. It is a 15 ton vessel with maybe ten crew.

Sindawe yells over, "Drop anchor and prepare to be boarded. We'll treat you well. No rape or murder." The ship's captain, a balding man, complies.

Serpent, Wogan, Sindawe, Slasher Jim, Bojask, and Del board the merchantman. The captain's name is Hodge. He's a merchant transporting a spice shipment from down south back to Magnimar. The man's wife, clearly worried, questions his every response to the pirates.

Slasher Jim asks Sindawe, "Do you want me to cut her throat?"

Sindawe replies, "No... why? Does she remind you of someone?"

Slasher Jim, "Hey, I didn't ask for head shrinker." He walks away.

Sindawe talks to Captain Hodge, trying to get a feel for how much the shipment is worth. Eventually he decides to take half of the cargo (800 gp spice purchase in the south, worth perhaps 1600 gp in Magnimar) and his payroll (200 gp). It takes awhile to retrieve the payroll because Hodge had kept it hidden from his crew. This is a popular trick of merchant captains; crews are less eager to rebel if they think their next payday won't happen until they get to port.

Meanwhile, Wogan searches the captain's quarters. He finds a few small valuables and a book titled *Fiend Folio*. It turns out to be a collection of erotic drawings of tiefling women by a passably famous Cheliox artist. Of course, the book was hidden beneath the captain's bed, so he probably isn't an appreciator of art.

Back on board the *Teeth of Araska* Wogan attempts to hand the folio over for the ship's loot. Sindawe suggests he hold onto it for bribing and/or rewarding members of the crew.

Breakfast, The Most Important Meal Of The Day

Day 11 - Ori, the ship's cook, is cleared to use the newly acquired spices for the crew's food. Most are familiar to Ori, who decides to experiment with the new ones. The next morning the ship's crew is treated to "cinnamon eggs."

Goat, nicknamed such because of his tiefling "goat" horns, earns his nickname a second time by wolfing down the eggs without blinking or comment. The rest of the crew is more discerning and loudly voices their disappointment.

Ori resolves the matter by adding Shoanti hot peppers. The cinnamon, hot pepper eggs are hit with some of the pirates. The rest opt for gruel.

The voyage continues.