

## REAVERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE SESSION SUMMARY 11/29/2009

### ATTENDANCE

*Bruce* (Ox) announces, "I'm semi-delusional! And I know it, so I'm going to act like I'm only marginally attached to reality!"

*Paul* (Serpent) muses, "Isn't it great the way this bleeds over into his roleplaying? Can anyone remember a character that he hasn't deliberately hamstrung in some way?"

*Ernest* suggests, "I don't think of this so much as a problem, it's just the way things are. I've been looking at old session summaries and every time I see some borderline insane sorcerer show up with self-destructive tendencies I just know its Bruce."

*Chris* (Sindawe) pleads, "I have enough dysfunction in my working life. Can we please talk about something else? I'd even be willing to listen to someone talk about how good their *World of Warcraft* character is!"

*Kevin* (Blacktoes) chirps up, "I've got an awesomeful blood elf paladin! He's got almost all purple gear and..."

Chris cuts him off, "Actually, I was just being polite about that. Seriously, no more *World of Warcraft* talk. Ever."

*Patrick* (Wogan) walks in to find everyone running around the coffee table with weapons. He suggests, "That coffee table isn't actually an immovable obstacle, like it would be in *Age of Dragons*. And where did the nine-foot-tall guy in armor come from?"

<i>Player</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Class / Level</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Bruce	Melako "Ox" Chaalu	Barbarian 2	Formerly-enslaved ship crew from Rahadom
Kevin	Tommy "Blacktoes" Burrowbank	Rogue 2	Riddleport halfling

<i>Player</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Class / Level</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Paul	“Serpent” Ref Jorenson	Druid 1 Ranger 1	Northerner human with a southerner snake pet
Chris	Sindawe H’Kilata Narr	Monk 2	Mwangi-Bonuwat (human) monk
Patrick	Wogan	Cleric 2	Human priest of Gozreh

## THE START OF THE SESSION

In the last session, the characters accomplished two major tasks. The first was a raid upon the *Mission of Saint Casperian*, where the characters failed to find treasure but did manage to break up the gang of that up-and-coming crimelord the *Splithog Pauper*. The second was the big *Pigsaw vs. Bearclaw* challenge fight, which drew a fair number of customers to the *Golden Goblin*. And after that, *Saul Vancaskerkin* tells the characters about an upcoming deal involving *Clegg Zincher’s* man *Braddikar Faje* (also known as Old Korvosa, for his history as a Korvosan Guard) out at the villa at *Trail’s End* along the Riddleport Road.

## PREPARING FOR TRAIL’S END

The characters set down to plan how to destroy Braddikar Faje’s transaction. They bat around several ideas, including impersonating Gendarmes, convincing one of the groups that the other means to betray them, setting the building on fire and shooting them as they come out, and so on. *Ox* suggests, “I can help! I have lots of useful skills! For example, if something needs to be broken or destroyed...”

*Serpent* suggests, “That’s the problem, *Ox* keeps on trying to help. Can we arrange to put him somewhere else?”

*Sindawe* offers, “Like France?”

*Blacktoes* ignores the others and approaches the Gendarmes *Ormmwar* and *Rynray*, who now enjoy free drinks that the *Golden Goblin*. He already knows that they are both corruptible and commercially friendly. It turns out that he is completely correct: he is able to make a deal with them in which some used Gendarme cloaks will be dropped in a trash bin in exchange for a pouch full of coins.

Separately, Saul Vancaskerkin arranges for the loan of some horses to get the characters to the scene.

### **Giving Vent to the Low Urges**

Ever the slave to his baser passions, Blacktoes takes a tide trip to the *House of Seven Veils* to meet up with *Lavender Lil*. He finds the House in an unusual state of quiet, eventually explained by the presence of *Captain Scarbelly* and his men. Lavender Lil is quite glad to see Blacktoes, and even gladder to find that he is willing to pay for her services.

While they are involved in their... transaction... he mentions to her that he's heard that the priestesses of Calistria sometimes go off into the mountains and engage in orgiastic rituals. He claims that he's going out with a pack of his friends to take a new acquaintance to "look for the priestesses". He doesn't give much credence to the rumors, so he's thinking of this as something of a snipe hunt that should be worth a lot of good fun in the end.

Lavender Lil isn't willing to say much about forbidden rituals one way or another. For all that she might be a devotee of Calistria, she really isn't in a position to be able to leave the House of Seven Veils after the recent unpleasantness with *Clegg Zincher* and his (now-deceased) cousin. And besides that, the idea of crossing a bunch of mystically-potent lust cultists doesn't seem like a great plan.

Blacktoes leaves, confident in the knowledge that his clever cover story will swiftly make the rounds of the working girls, and soon thereafter to everyone else.

### **Advice for the Road**

As the characters depart through the gate, one of several young boys warns Ox, "Are you taking the road east? I have heard that there is a vicious owl-bear out there! He likes to eat people and horses!"

Ox tells the boy, "I like to eat people and horses too. Perhaps we will get along."

One of the other boys adds, "And he commands an army of monkey-bees!" The first boy elbows the second.

Serpent exclaims, "Monkey-bees! I want to meet this creature now! This sounds much better than our other errand!"

Ox throws the boy a silver coin. The boy compliments Ox extensively for his generosity. The boy's comrades compliment him extensively for his success in drawing value from rubes.

### **Our First Night Camping**

The characters travel without incident for a day, then look for a good spot to camp. Ox makes a point of finding a campsite that doesn't look like it is clearly on a owlbear migration path.

As Sindawe is pitching the tent, Serpent suggests, "Let's go fishing for that owlbear!"

Sindawe mentions, "You realize that those things are really dangerous?"

Serpent chirps back, "But I really want to meet it!" Then he goes off to hunt for dinner, as the slops Wendt provided for traveling grub are hardly worth contemplating as food.

The next morning, the characters rise to discover that a rat swarm ate all of their food. Sindawe looks around to see if any of the others seem more rotund than usual. He is less upset than he could be, because it was only Wendt's cooking that was lost. He is actually amazed that there aren't dead rats lying around the outskirts of the camp.

### **Life on the Road is Hard and Difficult**

The terrain shifts to rough hills through the second day. Wogan complains about his breakfast of rocks and dirt. Ox claims, "I am eating nutritious roots and leaves!" The others decide that this isn't acceptable, so they send him out hunting. After all, there's not much nourishment in those. He comes back with a roe deer, more than enough to feed everyone. Serpent goes out and gathers fodder for the horses while Ox is off finding useful things.

For some reason, Serpent spends the rest of the morning acting quite put-upon.

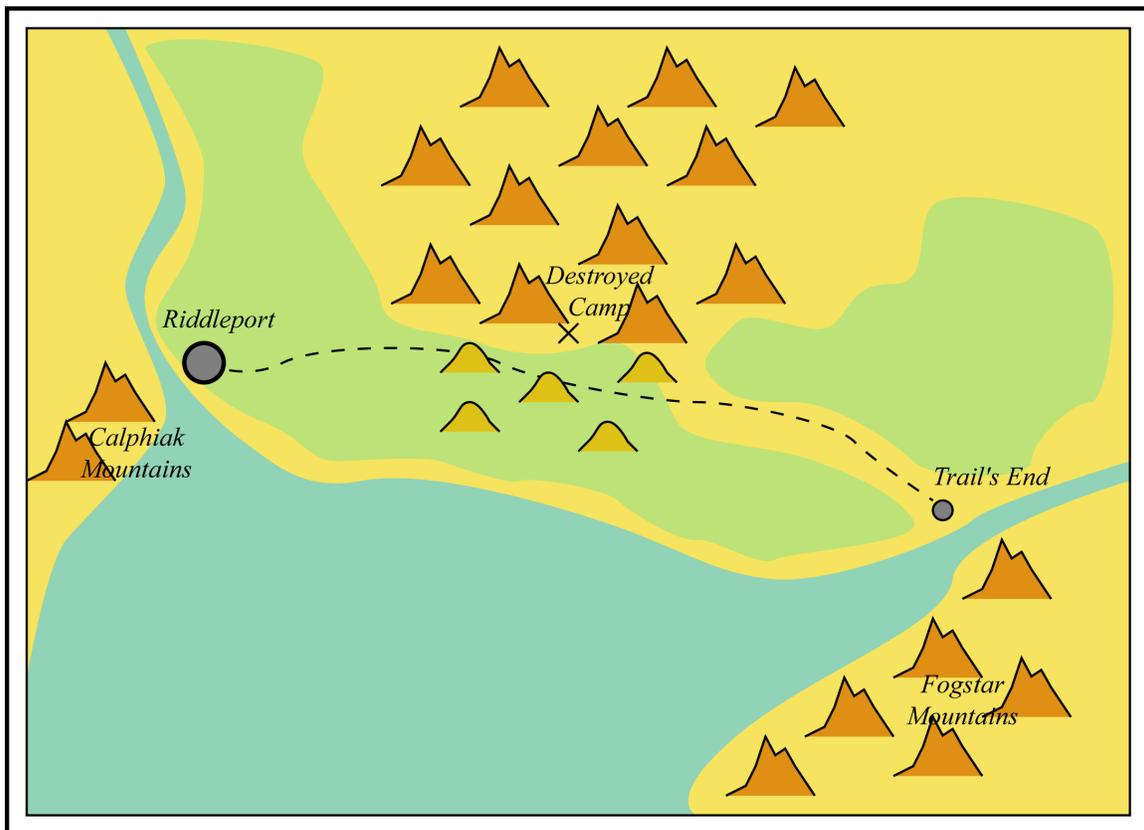
As the characters hike through the foothills they come upon a dried blood trail. They follow it for fifty yards off the trail and come upon an abandoned campsite with two dead bodies scattered around a cold fire. The two men were killed with normal weapons, and their ears have been cut off. Blacktoes happens to know that there is a coming-of-age ritual for young braves of the Wind Clan Shoanti

that involves removing the ears of their enemies. The others are very excited to hear this.

### ARRIVAL AT TRAIL'S END

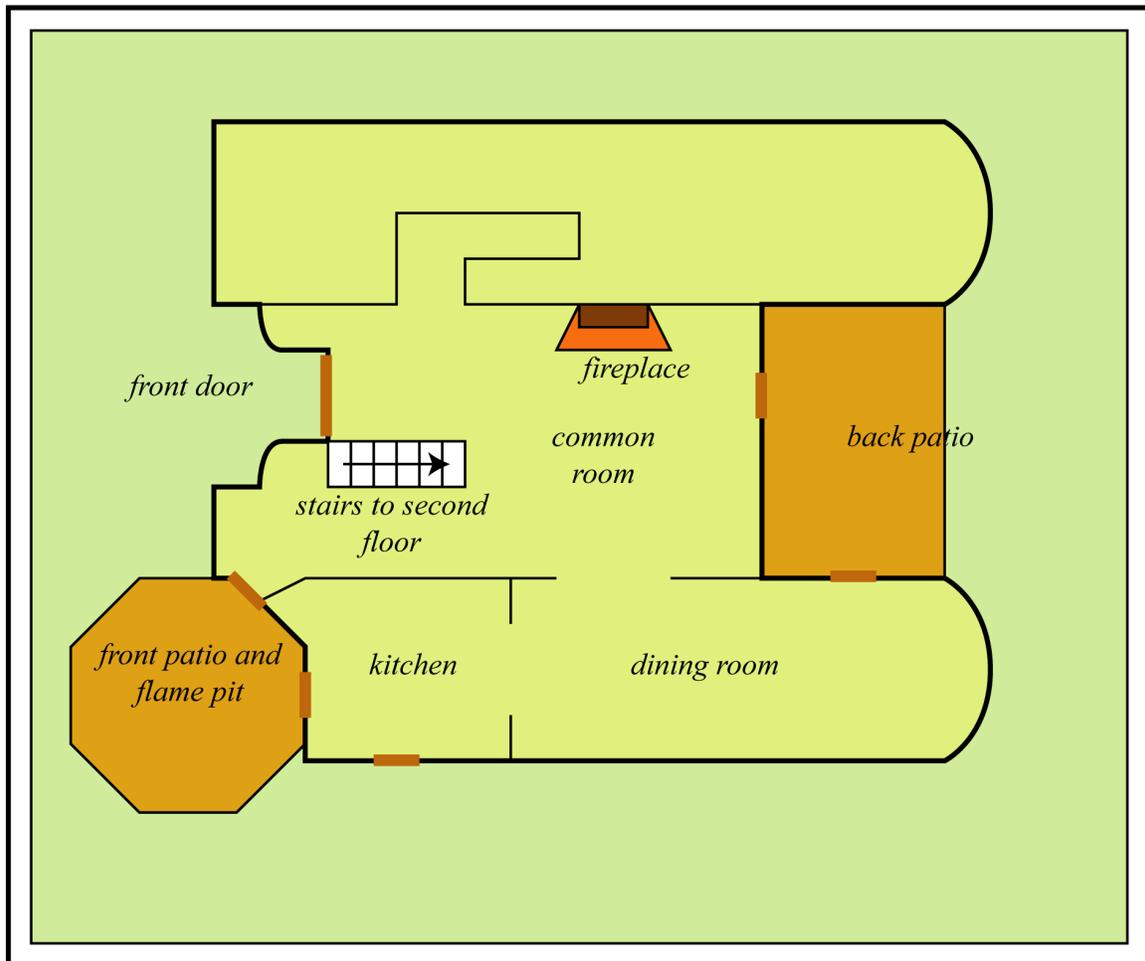
Towards the end of the second day of travel the characters see the villa of Trail's End. The house stands above a small creek. Approach to the villa is difficult on three sides, with steep slopes impassible to horses, and broadly impossible in the fourth direction. The side far from the creek is easier to approach but heavily wooded.

The Coast Road to Trail's End



Wogan watches the horses while Blacktoes and Sindawe head out to scout the territory. They find that the villa is two stories high with a respectable number of windows. Several guards are scattered around the approach path and the main building. Sindawe notes that while some of the guards look like typical Riddleport scum, others look much more professional with straight gray spears and shining armor of mail. There are definitely more than a dozen horses in the paddock behind the house.

### The Villa at Trail's End



Blacktoes moves in to get a closer look. A guard almost spots him, but he holds still and the man looks past him. And then Sindawe runs into a tree. The guard takes notice and moves in for a closer look with a torch. The halo of stars and chirping birds fluttering around Sindawe's head makes it tough for him to continue to hide. Blacktoes realizes that things are coming to a head so he moves in and slashes through the man's throat. His strike is not nearly as devastating as he might have hoped: the cut draws blood, but fails to end the fellow. He stabs a second time and this time strikes true. He drags the chopped-up body back into the bushes.

Blacktoes and Sindawe slip over the low wall surrounding the villa and start peering into windows. Blacktoes spots three fellows with the Riddleport look about them in the large first-floor Common Room. He lurks around the perimeter of the house like a creature up to no good. He sees some kind of kitchen staff slip into the kitchen and start cleaning up. He cannot imagine what kind of villainy would have the scullery workers cleaning pots.

The characters regroup, then Sindawe tries leading the less-stealthy characters up to the wall. Serpent and Ox are able to make it up the slope and over the wall without trouble. Unfortunately, as Wogan is trying to fling his plumpish form over the wall the mortar gives way and a pile of dwarf and broken masonry tumbles down upon Sindawe. The nearest guard clearly hears the noise and approaches the characters.

The guard squints at the tumbledown wall and the dead guard. “Hey! Hey! Hey buddy, you not doing any of that devil worship stuff?” He starts when he realizes that the other guard is dead. And then Serpent’s pet snake attacks, wrapping itself around his body. Blacktoes leaps in and stabs the snake.

Serpent protests, “Hey! That thing is friendly!”

The guard responds by screaming at the top of his lungs, “Snaaaake!”

The snake crushes him. He stops screaming, but he does emit a series of loud cracking sounds. The remaining four guards run at full tilt to the sound of a disturbance. Wogan casts *Obscuring Mist* to conceal himself, confusing Ox in the process.

Blacktoes and Sindawe swiftly move out of the mist and sneak into position. Sindawe encounters a spear-armed guard around the corner of the horse pen. He proclaims, “You’re messing with the Swinehound Popper!” His flying kick takes the guard out instantly.

The surviving three guards yell out, “Alarm!” The guard at the front of the house stokes the fire to improve visibility, then displaces back behind the corner.

Serpent charges out of the mist and confronts two Riddleport thugs. He cuts one thug into two pieces. The second thug yells in alarm and flees for the front of the villa.

Ox rushes to the horse pen and chops at the gate. He hopes to improve the supply of local chaos by stampeding the horses.

### **The Alarm Is Raised**

All of the commotion is having an impact upon the folks in the villa. The three ruffians in the common room move towards the back patio. Wogan moves to the corner of the villa. Blacktoes moves up behind him, trusting that he will be nearly invisible behind the priest’s ample bulk.

Sindawe looks up at the balcony above the back patio and sees an impressive robed figure with a fantastic star-tipped staff. He yells a warning, “There are dudes in the house! Some guy is putting on armor, probably that Faje guy!” Then he flings himself through the dining room window, sending glass fragments all over.

One of the three ruffians in the common room rushes into the dining room to deal with the disturbance. He looks very surprised, and the lackluster quality of his swing proves it.

Serpent decides that things are getting a bit out of control, so he helps them along by casting *Entangle* around the back quarter of the house. Part of the spell area crosses through the horse paddock, which does nothing to improve the calm of the horses.

Ox hears the robed magician on the second floor cackle out, “Ready the sacrifice!” The magician gathers his robes together and swirls back into the villa. Another figure replaces him, sauntering out with an air of disdain. *Martino Marcellano* looks down at Ox and scoffs, “Oh, you again...”

Ox responds by howling at the top of his lungs and chopping through the horse pen gate. The horses, already nervous because the ground cover is writhing and snapping at their legs, need no additional encouragement to panic.

A woman’s scream echoes from the second floor as goons of various description pile down the stairs and into the dining room.

Wogan notices a bunch of barbarian-looking guys belly-crawling up towards the villa. He sees that one of them is actually approaching the horse paddock, and that Ox does not see the man. He yells a warning. Ox looks up and sees a big Shoanti sneaking through the horse paddock. Ox reflects upon the senseless bravery of a man willing to belly-crawl through a mass of panicking horses.

Ox howls at the Shoanti, “I see the son of horse dung crawling at me on his belly!” The barbarian clearly doesn’t understand him, but is so shocked at being spotted that he stands up in surprise.

Wogan invokes his wand and summons a *Celestial Dog* onto a ruffian. The dog is bright and fluffy, and glows as if with an inner light. This doesn’t stop it from leaping up and tearing out the ruffian’s throat.

Two servants leap from the patio right into the vines, which proceed to entrap and violate them. The servants’ screams are cut off as their open mouths are stuffed

with vines. Sindawe observes the process as he leaves the dining room, "That's one heck of a spell you have there, Serpent."

The Shoanti facing Ox charges and slams the barbarian in the head with his Earthbreaker. Ox staggers. Wogan runs onto the scene to heal him. He yells at the Shoanti, "If you want to stop the big guy, you need to hit him in a critical location. The head just isn't going to do it for you." Ox recovers to deliver a vicious slash to the Shoanti.

Braddikar Faje steps onto the scene and engages the celestial dog, felling it in a single strike. The corpse vanishes instantly, only to be replaced by a second summoned dog that savages another ruffian.

A scream from upstairs suggests that a sacrificial subject has just been sacrificed. A hideous brilliant light shines from the second-floor windows. Quickly thereafter, an *cinderwolf*, its bony carcass smoking and burning with hideous flame, crashes out of a second-floor window. It grabs the hapless Blacktoes in its fangs and flings him to the ground. Sindawe rushes to help the halfling and discovers that the creature has a burning aura.

Serpent allows his snake to crush yet another ruffian as he moves to help Sindawe and Blacktoes against the cinderwolf.

From the other side of the house several crashing sounds announce the arrival of the rest of the Shoanti inside the villa.

The Shoanti facing Ox shrieks in his native tongue and hammers him with his earthbreaker. Ox stands strong, though he can feel ribs moving in inappropriate ways. Ox slashes back but misses.

Braddikar Faje and a surviving ruffian break out through the kitchen door and head to the back patio where Sindawe, Blacktoes and Serpent are all engaging the cinderwolf. Wogan joins them as well, leveling his blunderbuss at the cinderwolf. The creature explodes into a burst of cinders.

Blacktoes decides that things are not going his way, so he hobbles back into the mist cloud Wogan summoned some time ago.

A *leprous strider*, a gangly eight foot tall creature with six legs, a human torso ravaged by leprosy and the face of a human child with blank white eyes and drooling lips, starts to force itself out of the second floor window. The window frame buckles.

Sindawe moves in and knocks out the Shoanti facing Ox.

The remaining characters fade back into the mist and retreat. The sounds of Shoanti slaughtering the remaining ruffians echo through the night.

### **TRAIL'S END HAS HAD BETTER DAYS**

The characters watch from a safe distance as the Asmodean cultists on the second floor of Trail's End summon up a variety of Lower Planes horrors, including a cluster of *wicker men*. The Shoanti collect some ears and a couple of prisoners then clear out. Braddikar Faje calls his warhorse (his very well-trained warhorse) and rides off. And the leprous strider walks patrol all around the villa, apparently on patrol.

After a few hours, the lead Asmodean comes out on the balcony with a pack of cinderwolves. He orders them out. They clamber down the walls and into the forests. The characters head for the horses.

### **CINDERWOLF PURSUIT**

Unfortunately, it turns out that cinderwolves move substantially faster than some of the characters. As the faster characters reach their camp the cinderwolves are closing on Serpent, his pet, and Blacktoes. Ox wheels to help Serpent.

The cinderwolves charge the barbarian and the druid. Serpent slashes and blinds one cinderwolf. Ash flies from its ruined eyesockets. Ox stabs at the other and raises a flow of bloody magma. Serpent springs in and slashes the creature's head off, dropping it..

The blinded cinderwolf starts up a hellish moaning, a moan that is answered from the distance. Wogan shoots it with an icicle and staggers it. It shrinks from the cold, then thrashes off into the woods.

The characters leap onto their horses and thunder away down the path, then onto the road to Riddleport.

### **TOO MUCH CURIOSITY IS NOT GOOD FOR YOU**

The characters are picking their way along the Riddleport road in the dark when Sindawe spots the red glow of a campfire out in the foothills. They decide to investigate and send Blacktoes up as an advance scout. The others follow along more slowly.

A few minutes after Blacktoes' departure the others hear a strangely twisted lion's roar. Moments later, Blacktoes comes tearing out of the woods and leaps up onto his horse.

Sindawe asks, "What are you running from?"

Blacktoes screams, "I don't even know! Run!"

Everyone runs. Or, actually, rides.

The creature following the characters realizes that it won't catch them on the ground, so it launches itself into the air to pursue. Wogan and Blacktoes swiftly fall behind, so Sindawe dismounts to meet it. He places his torch in his horse's saddle and sends it fleeing.

Ox wheels around and dismounts to help Sindawe.

The manticore lashes its tail and flings four spikes at Sindawe's horse. The horse flops limply to the ground.

Ox flings his torch in the direction of Sindawe's dead horse, then tries to quiet his horse. It panics and runs. Ox lets it go. Wogan, Serpent and Blacktoes all manage to quiet their horses.

The manticore launches a volley of tail spikes at Serpent and his horse. Serpent takes an iron spike square through the chest. Another hits his horse. He buries himself in some underbrush and leaves the horse to panic and run. For good measure, he casts an *Obscuring Mist*.

The characters stay very quiet. They hear the screaming of a horse as a manticore descends to devour it. They wait until the creature is sated, then head back. Only Wogan's horse survives the ordeal.

Remembering that two dozen panicked horses were only recently released into the local environment, the characters search around for surviving horses. They manage to find four horses, most of them originally from the paddock at Trail's End. They decide to head back to Riddleport, where they "return" the horses to their owner. Blacktoes convinces him that a horse is pretty much a horse. The guy is (of course) a Riddleport native, and as such possesses more than the normal share of ethical flexibility, so he has no problems with the exchange.

## **BACK AT THE GOLD GOBLIN**

The characters return to the *Gold Goblin* to find *Felton* the dwarf working the floor. He tells them that the boss wants to talk to them. They are not surprised. They stop off at the bar to get suitably fortified, then head upstairs to talk to *Saul Vancaskerkin*.

Vancaskerkin seems really happy. “Guys! Good work!” The characters are a bit confused: they had thought that their expedition went quite badly. They tell Vancaskerkin that Braddikar Faje was dealing with some crazy Asmodeans and Martino Marcellano, and that the object they were trading was a devil-summoning mirror.

Vancaskerkin in turn explains that he is happy because Braddikar Faje and a few of his men returned to town at great haste, riding two to a horse. He’s not surprised at the nature of the object they were selling: there has been a fair amount of that stuff showing up, probably because people are selling off things that had been owned by the old demon-summoning wizard in the lighthouse. It turns out that Vancaskerkin could care less if the Chelaxians get some devil-summoning trinket just as long as Zincher doesn’t get any money for it. And to the better he lost eight men, a bunch of horses, and a lot of prestige.

### **Word from an Old Friend**

While the characters were off at Trail’s End, their old friend Vincenz left a note written in tidy but hasty script addressed to “Captain Sindawe”. Vincenz says he’s seen some strange folks poking around, and he thinks “they” might be the Splithog Pauper in disguise.

### **And What Are Your Life Priorities?**

Samaritha Beldusk asks Serpent how things went. Serpent claims, “Not so well. I got shot by a manticore.”

“That’s why I’m not an adventurer.”

## **SOME HONEST LABOR FOR A CHANGE**

The characters spend a couple of days working at the *Gold Goblin*, while they wait for their fateful appointment with a courier. The place’s profit rating goes up by one, making the place profitable and giving the characters 15 gold per week now.

Everyone collects 15 gold. Ox ends up handing eight of that over to *Aisha* because she's being uncommonly needy this week.

### **MISTER SLUG WANTS TO TALK**

On the appointed day the characters make their way back to St. Casperian's – back to meet with *Mad Rat*. The younger priest *Jonas* recognizes Ox and tries to talk to him about taking up the faith of Sarenrae.

Ox feels like he has better things to be doing, so he dismisses the priest by telling him, “Your goddess sounds nice and I enjoyed our talk, but I think your goddess Sarenrae is feeble and weak.” The priest protests, noting that Sarenrae defeated the horrible monster *Rovagug*. He also explains that the most powerful weapon in existence, the *Scimitar of Curving Dawn*, is dedicated to Sarenrae. A mighty warrior in *Osirian* was last known to wield it. It channels Sarenrae's holy power and could slay dragons in a single stroke. Ox is not impressed.

The characters leave Jonas because they have an appointment with Mad Rat. The filthy derelict is good to his word, whispering to the characters, “I got a good one for you.” *Slyeg* is into smuggling, particularly the sort of smuggling that even other crimelords won't touch. He has a courier bringing in dreamspider venom, a critical ingredient in *Riddleport Tea*. The courier is supposed to be operating with a very low profile: he has only one guard, and will be delivering to the *River Runner Inn* in the Warehouse District. Mad Rat knows the route, but not much about the courier or the guard. The characters agree to give him 30%.

Before the characters go to the warehouse, they check up on *Vincenz's* room. The door appears to have been kicked in. The place is a mess: it looks like eight guys fought five guys there about a week ago. *Sindawe* tries interviewing the neighbors and almost gets pushed from the bell tower for his trouble. He ends up pushing a “fallen angel” named *Mika the Fallen* out of the bell tower instead. He defends his actions on the notion that “he tried to jump, and made a really good roll.”

*Serpent* answers, “That's great. Hey, did you know that *Rose Estes* is the most hated *Greyhawk* author ever?” Nobody else has any idea what he's talking about. They assume that he is channeling some kind of deranged nature spirit.

### **THE ABANDONED WAREHOUSE OF DOOM**

The characters follow Mad Rat as he unlocks the abandoned warehouse. He explains that there are actually quite a few locals who also possess keys: the building is

not “secure” in any reasonable sense of the word. The interior is about 120 feet on a side, squarish, with a second floor mezzanine, a corner office, and the customary stacks of crates.

Suddenly the warehouse is bathed in light. Twenty guys with crossbows appear up on the mezzanine. The crimelord *Avery Slyeg* comes out of the office and tells the characters, “I was hoping you’d take the time to talk to me.”

Wogan howls, “It’s a traaaaap!”

The others look at him as if he’s suddenly contracted a terrible brain sickness.

Sindawe takes more useful action: he kills Mad Rat.

Avery Slyeg ignores the drama and gestures towards the office door. He invites the characters, “Step into my office.”

### **THE END OF THE SESSION**

The session ends as the characters are walking into Avery Slyeg’s office, uncertain if they are walking to their doom.