

REAYERS ON THE SEAS OF FATE SESSION SUMMARY 12/13/2009

ATTENDANCE

Ernest proclaims very loudly, "I like to lick it!"

Chris (Sindawe) gently tells him, "Ernest, you have Tourette's. You need to have an earnest conversation with your doctor."

Kevin (Blacktoes) chuckles, "Heh heh. I've known him since at least I walked in the door just now, and I've been telling him that all along for all the good it's been doing. Oooh, better say goodbye to me: I feel the sugar high ebbing awaaaay..."

Paul (Serpent) prods Kevin's unconscious body, "That's funny, I thought he knew Ernest from years ago. Well, he's in insulin shock now so I guess it's a bit late to get any confirmation. And while I'm on that, I had one of those milkshakes too."

Bruce (Ox) looks around the unconscious room and reflects that the game is going to be pretty slow-moving unless someone starts rousing them around. Guess it's time to get out the insulin needles...

Patrick (Wogan) enters to find Bruce aiming an elbow-sized needle at Ernest's breastbone. He points out, "You realize that he's not diabetic? And that he's screaming at you to stop? And that you shouldn't be using a needle that large anyway? Oh, what's the difference..."

Ernest breaks free from Bruce's grip to announce, "Today's session is called *Death in Riddleport!*"

Chris howls out, "I roleplay haunting the men who killed me!"

<i>Player</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Class / Level</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Bruce	Melako "Ox" Chaalu	Barbarian 2	Formerly-enslaved ship crew from Rahadoum
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

WHAT DID TOMMY SEE?

The group quizzes *Tommy Blacktoes* about what he saw out in the hills last session before he provoked a manticores attack. Was it the rumored Calistrian lesbian orgy? It turns out, it wasn’t Mommy kissing Santa Claus, no matter how much we might hope that it was. But beyond that, Blacktoes keeps his own counsel on the subject.

THE CONVERSATION – FEATURING AVERY SLYEG

Last time, we left our heroes in a warehouse under the watchful eyes of a dozen crossbowmen. *Mad Rat*, the surviving member of the Splithog Pauper’s gang, led them into a trap; turns out he was a mole for crime lord *Avery Slyeg* all along. *Sindawe* slew Mad Rat with a single blow for his temerity, luckily not provoking a fatal volley from the archers in the process.

The characters file into the warehouse office for a little chat with Mr. Slyeg. *Serpent* mentions, “Gee, I heard that Avery Slyeg was the Overlord’s bitch.”

Sindawe suggests, “You might not want to mention that in polite conversation, for example right now.” He takes out a handkerchief and cleans Mad Rat’s lifeblood off his hands.

Blacktoes appears on the scene. He gapes, “You just killed him out of hand? That’s so cool. What a way to demonstrate that you’re serious!”

Wogan mumbles, “Or seriously crazy.”

Blacktoes looks around Slyeg’s office. He asks, “Is there plastic on the floor?”

Ox offers, “No, just old blood. Look, some of it isn’t even dry.”

Slyeg tells the characters, “So, the late Mad Rat tells me that I have you to thank for running off the *Splitbog Pauper* for me. My guys have been staking out that mission to see if the Pauper springs back up, but so far he’s been staying away. You guys seem to have a grudge against him, plus you’re disposable. I’d like to see you bring me the Pauper’s head. Do that and we’ll call it even.”

The characters assent, eager to not be in debt to Avery Slyeg. Though they hadn’t realized that they were in debt to him before. He acts confident that they can find the Pauper on their own, though he does offer them two tidbits. First, a pair of toughs with little moustaches came by the mission a few days ago and dragged off some homeless guy (their friend *Vincenz*). Second, a group of orcs is hanging around the place.

He leaves the characters go with the comment, “I hope this encounter has been instructive with respect to whose operations are not to be interfered with.” The characters shamefacedly study their toes and agree that it has in fact been extremely instructive.

A Few Parting Details

On the way out, Sindawe mentions three things he noticed in Slyeg’s office. First, Slyeg has some elvish features. Second, his rapier had strange shadows crawling across its steel. And last, he was alone in his office. Apparently he’s sufficiently unconcerned about the characters that he sees no need for bodyguards.

ROUSTING THE VAGABONDS

The characters head over to *Saint Casperian’s Mission* to interrogate the locals. Sindawe manages to talk to a young orphan girl *Sylee*. She saw the two men (skinny, with moustaches) take *Vincenz* away after stuffing him into a bag. He gets a description of the men from her.

After he finishes with *Sylee*, Sindawe talks to the cripple *Ukkar* to learn about what the orcs were looking for. He’s able to say that the orcs searched the place, moving furniture and so on, then left. They only visited once. The characters surmise that they must have been following the same “hidden treasure in the homeless shelter” rumor that brought them here in the first place as well. At that point *Ukkar* starts to reminisce about how his miserable liquor-sodden past had its own share of

glory, including the decapitations of many orcs. Ox notices that he smells of stale whiskey. The legless man sings an Ulfen war-chant, which pleases Serpent.

WHO WERE THOSE MYSTERIOUS MUSTACHIOED MEN?

Sindawe and Ox follow Serpent out to check over some of the Splithog Pauper's former contacts. Sindawe also talks to the *Golden Goblin* dealer *Marzielle Ajuela* about the two mustache-wearing men. They learn a couple of tidbits:

- Some of those Cyphermage fancyboys have been making themselves real welcome in the lighthouse since old man Krix bought it. Maybe they're planning on branching out into Chelaxian style devil-lovin'. Might mean more tieflings for the temple trade!
- I hear that old washout Saul Vancaskerkin's trying to get back into the business. He's got some dogbiter and a bunch'a foreigners who don't know any better working for him. I wouldn't be surprised if they all got earth baths for their trouble.

Unfortunately, they don't really learn anything immediately relevant to their problems.

Samaritba Beldusk turns over her translation of the Splithog Pauper's notes. It contains a list of people that the Pauper owed money to, or who owed the Pauper money. Sindawe takes them and talks to several people from the list. All he learns is that they're mostly grateful to know that the Pauper is on the run. Some of the chatty ones also note that:

- Some guys have been murdering homeless people down at St. Casperian's and the place is like empty now. All's well that ends well, I say. Hey, how about a date? Come on, man, my pimp says he's gonna hurt me if I don't start earning more.
- A buncha sailors came into the Publican House all freaked out and about drank the place outa rotgut; they had been to the Fish Bowl and something bad happened; they said the water turned blood red and then things got really weird; they were a little unclear on details 'cause they were all soggy, but they were all planning on jumping ship over it.

WHORES SAY THE MOST AMAZING THINGS

Blacktoes and Wogan head out to talk to *Selene* at the *House of Seven Veils*. Blacktoes learns that *Splitface Knockmar* is the local crimelord involved in organizing the beggars. He also hears some rumors of his own, to wit:

- Captain Scarbelly and his crew of orc pirates have been in port an awful long time. I hear Boss Croat is planning to use them for some kind of job ripping off the Gas Forges. Those dwarves got all kinds'a mithril and stuff up there.
- Anton Mesher's cut back gendarme patrols except in the Free-Coin and Windward districts, those bastards. While Croamarcky's protecting his own, the street's getting more and more dangerous for an honest citizen to make a living. Hey, want to buy some indigo dreams? It's good for what ails ya!
- Old Korvosa rode out of town the other day with nine of Zincher's guys and came back in a hurry with only one, riding bitch on the same horse! Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha. Some kids told me they overheard that it was an owlbear and an army of monkey-bees that got 'em.

Selene did see a couple of folks with small moustaches and new money in the House a couple of days ago. They weren't regulars, and didn't seem much for small talk. Blacktoes talks to the girl who worked with them and learns that their names were *Filge* and *Knickknack*. They smelled like they were from the Wharf district. Selene also asks after Ox; Blacktoes assures her that he's adapting just fine to non-slave life.

SHOWDOWN AT THE RUSTY PIKE

Blacktoes and Wogan head down to the docks to ask around. They meet up with the others, busy tracking down a guy who owed the Pauper money. They had heard that the Pauper showed up to demand payment after the characters ran him out of Saint Casperian's. Together, they trace Filge and Knickknack to the *Rusty Pike* tavern.

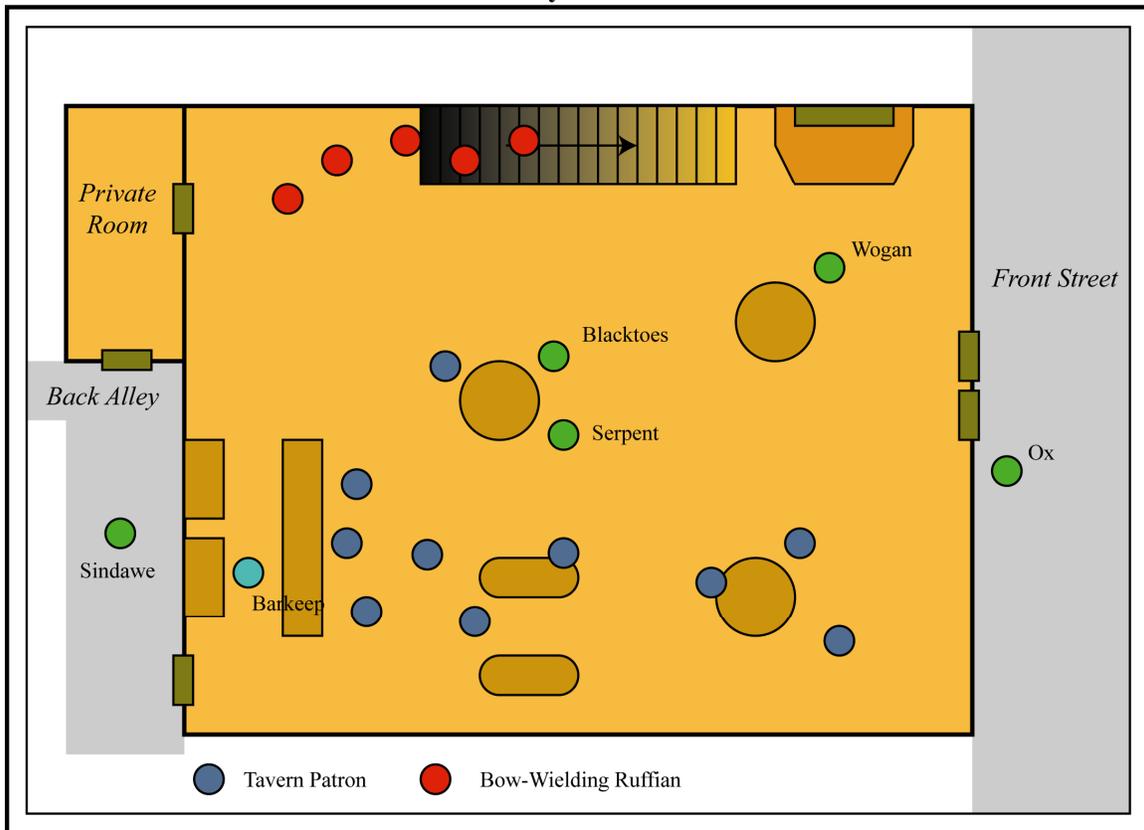
Sindawe and Ox cover the back and front of the building as the others head in to look for Filge and Knickknack. Serpent looks around at the tavern patrons, then lights his eye upon the door at the back. He almost provokes the barkeep into violence by trying it – apparently it leads to a private room. Blacktoes and an

inebriated ship captain with a peg leg manage to defuse the situation by launching into a rousing rendition of “What Shall We Do With A Drunken Sailor.”

Then five ruffians armed with short bows come running down the stairs and open fire on the crowd. Blacktoes takes a shot through the lips and head and falls like a stone. Wogan muses, “He’d have a 20% spell failure change, if he knew any spells. And if he were actually conscious.”

The ruffians follow up by shooting down a couple of apparently suspicious-looking tavern patrons (a man in chainmail, and a hooker sitting in a surprised man’s lap) and filling Serpent full of arrows. The patrons scream and alternately flee, freeze, and/or take cover.

The Rusty Pike Tavern



Serpent is ready to throw in the towel when Blacktoes comes back to life, explaining that the arrow hit him in his mithril chain shirt. (Having traded in one of his Infamy Points, that is.) He flings a bag of caltrops at the floor in front of the door to the private room.

Ox hears the upset and comes running in, howling at the top of his lungs. Serpent follows him and slashes at one of the ruffians, staggering the man. His snake

slithers up and grabs hold of another one. The grabbed ruffian hacks at the snake, injuring it.

Wogan sees how things are going and upends a table for cover. He picks out the ruffian at the top of the stairs and shoots him with a wheellock pistol.

Sindawe hears the gunshot and understands immediately, "Wogan must be in trouble!" He clambers up the wall and forces his way into a second-story window.

Blacktoes annoys a ruffian with a sling stone as the others draw shortswords and make terrible grimacing expressions. Serpent moves in and cuts the man down. His snake crushes another. Ox takes advantage and runs a third ruffian through with his boarding pike. The ruffian is badly wounded but still manages to stab Ox.

At this point Sindawe moves in from upstairs to menace the last ruffian in line. The ruffian lands an arrow into Ox's side, then evades Sindawe's attack of opportunity. Ox groans, "Why are these guys all so fascinated with turning me into a pincushion? What have I ever done to them, aside of course from gutting their friend?"

The peg-legged ship captain flees towards the front door, but then suddenly turns and stabs Wogan from behind. A bit late, Blacktoes yells out, "Wogan! Be careful of the ship captain! He's got a real leg under there!" The warning isn't that timely, but it is enough to allow Wogan to evade to the side and avoid harm. Surprise, surprise – the one-legged man is actually the Splithog Pauper in disguise!

A wounded ruffian runs into the caltrops, falls, and expires. Nobody cries for him. Blacktoes runs to intercept the Splithog Pauper. He lands a sling bullet into the Pauper's shoulder.

Serpent's snake finally crushes a ruffian. Sindawe yells, "His eyes came out!" then knocks out the ruffian at the top of the stairs. The last ruffian, still leaking blood from Ox's pike hit, surrenders instantly.

Meanwhile, the Splithog Pauper is still on his feet and heading for the door. Serpent runs to block the Splithog Pauper's escape route as Wogan shoots at him with a blunderbuss. There is a tremendous explosion and a vast cloud of smoke. Under cover of the smoke the Pauper flings a thunderstone and heads for the door. Blacktoes, Ox, Serpent and Wogan all follow him.

Sindawe finds himself mostly alone in the tavern. He restrains the wounded archer, who had been eyeing the back door fondly, then starts picking over the fallen

for valuables. He manages to determine that two of the guys (including the live prisoner) have little moustaches. “No one who has a little moustache could be evil,” he muses. Their purses prove to contain:

- 46 gold pieces
- Five shortbows
- Five shortwords
- A variety of other sundries

He looks around and sees no one else living, except for Serpent’s pet snake, who is trying to eat the leg of a fallen thug. He considers trying to bring it with for about a tenth of a second and then just leaves.

Into the Streets! Into the Streets!

The Pauper runs for it. Ox is on his heels in an instant, stabbing (and missing) with his pike. The Pauper responds by leaping through an ornamental fountain. Ox barks his shins against the pool edge and loses ground. Wogan splashes through right behind them. He shoots the Pauper with an icicle, catching Ox in the burst.

Desperate to avoid Ox and Wogan, the Pauper leaps through the front of a fruit stand while running full tilt. Ox follows him, demonstrating great agility. Ox manages to gig the Pauper in the ribs with his pike, but that doesn’t slow the man one whit. Blacktoes tries to follow them through the fruit stand, but catches a foot and lands straight in a pile of melons. Shattered melons fly everywhere. Serpent keeps pace – he’s a Northman, and melons do not scare him. Papayas do, but fortunately the papaya district is one block to the right.

Ox stays right on the Pauper, but his pike jab goes wide. Ox starts to seriously wonder if his pike-shaft has become warped. The out-of-shape Wogan starts to slow, quickly falling behind. Ox takes another shot and gets the Pauper in the side. The Pauper is starting to look quite badly injured.

Suddenly Wogan shows up in front of the lead runners, having taken a shortcut through a side alley. The Pauper tries to leap onto a rooftop, but Wogan and Ox are too fast and stab him through. The Pauper falls.

Serpent and Blacktoes come running up a moment later. Serpent slings the Pauper over his shoulder. Everyone heads back to the *Rusty Pike* and Sindawe. Wogan launches a few *healing bursts* to bring Ox back to health. This has the not

entirely surprising effect of also healing the Pauper. Fortunately, Serpent has a good grip on the fellow and refuses to let go. They meet Sindawe as he drags his own captive away from the inn. The trill of Gendarme whistles is audible from behind.

After a thirty-second interrogation the characters determine that the hireling knows almost nothing except where the Pauper's room is. This is enough to send Sindawe and Blacktoes back to loot the place, hoping to reach it before the Gendarmes do. Their hopes are dashed: by the time they arrive there are Gendarmes all over the place. They manage to slip past them and climb to the second floor, but find that the Gendarmes are already searching the place.

Sindawe and Blacktoes clamber up to the roof and belly-crawl their way over to the proper window, then wait while the Gendarmes make a desultory search of the place. Sindawe quickly learns that the level of investigative professionalism prevalent in the Riddleport Gendarmerie is none too high. He waits on the roof until after sundown, then searches the room thoroughly. Sadly, he finds nothing.

Negotiating for the Pauper's Life

The Pauper makes one attempt to escape his captors by setting off a thunderstone and trying to run. He is swiftly clubbed into submission. The characters drag him and the other prisoner back to the *Gold Goblin* and lock them in one of the animal cages. In the interest of security and greed, the characters strip the Splithog Pauper down to the loincloth. They uncover:

- 30 gold pieces
- 100 copper pieces
- a belt pouch
- a *Dagger +1*
- a potion of *Spider Climb*
- leather armor
- masterwork thief's tools
- an artificial leg
- a key

The Pauper glares at the characters. "What do you people want?"

Serpent explains, "We want to hand you over to Avery Slyeg and cancel our debt to him."

"Well, how much is your debt? I could trade you the location of my cache for it?"

Wogan is interested, "That might be doable... wink wink. What's in your cache?"

"I've got money and valuables."

"How much?"

"Plenty."

The Gold Goblin's animal wrangler, *Bojask*, interrupts the interrogation session before it can become too obvious that the characters have no idea how to interrogate prisoners. *Bojask* is halfway through a bottle of whiskey and enthralled by the idea of man-on-beast combats. Eventually he gets tired of taunting the characters and wanders off, much to their relief.

Knickknack (for it is he that the characters have prisoner) gets interrogated next. Sindawe interrogates him on the question of what happened to Vincenz. He learns that the job was ordered by the Splithog Pauper, who had a commission from a thin-faced man with a ponytail named *Enzo*. Knickknack thinks that Enzo is some kind of Cyphermage. They took him to the wharfs for the exchange. The handover happened a couple of days ago. Sindawe gets directions to the wharf exchange location. Then the characters let him go out the back door of the Goblin.

Ox and Sindawe notice Ox's obsessive girlfriend Iesha following them downstairs as they return from ejecting Knickknack. Sindawe insists that she's working for someone as a spy. She tries to tell Ox that he shouldn't let Sindawe talk like that to her, but he delivers her a good beating for her trouble. She runs off. Sindawe tells Ox to lock her in the pantry, as she's definitely a spy. Ox checks up on her. She's off in the kitchen, he tells her to stay out of his business but doesn't lock her up. He's convinced that she just innocently wanted to see what he had going on. He's also convinced that she's moving swiftly into dangerously crazy territory.

The next day Serpent scares everyone at the *Rusty Pike* when he stops by to pick up his snake. It had crawled behind the fireplace to digest its meal and remained hidden; its emergence as well as the presence of one of the previous day's combatants leaves the place in quite a tizzy.

Sindawe makes one last try at talking the Pauper's treasure out of him. The plan is that the Pauper should supply a head that looks like his for the characters to provide to Slyeg, and then get out of town. The Pauper quickly agrees, and says he'll provide them the location of his loot once he's outside in a reasonably non-violent location. Ox and Serpent stay with the (disguised) Pauper as they go outside to a cafe. He hands Blacktoes a note with the location and he runs back to Sindawe and Wogan at the Goblin. It turns out the money was hidden in the Pauper's peg leg and that they had it in their possession all along. It amounts to:

- 132 gold pieces
- 56 silver pieces
- 40 copper pieces
- quartz shortsword pommel (30 gold)
- silver anklet chain (22 gold)
- cygnet ring of Korvosa's Ornellos Family (5 gold)
- bronze knocker in the shape of a dolphin (10 gold)
- folding marlinspike (2 gold)
- a set of sailing charts in a leather tube
- a magical feather in the shape of an anchor

Sindawe and Wogan signal that the loot's been found, and Ox and Serpent let the Pauper go. Sindawe takes the feather anchor token. Blacktoes gets the masterwork thieves' tools from before. The share for everyone is 303 gold and 5 silver, including proceeds from the sale of the *Dagger +1*.

A FEW AFTERTHOUGHTS

Saul Vancaskerkin says nothing when Serpent hangs the peg-leg above the bar. Sindawe asks him if Ox's girl has been acting suspiciously recently. Saul thinks that she's crazy, but otherwise not too odd. "Gives good blow jobs, though! Har har!" Sindawe looks around nervously to make sure Ox didn't hear that.

Now that they have some money, the characters do some shopping. Serpent buys a masterwork staff and hide armor. Ox picks out a nice-looking masterwork

boarding pike. Wogan has eyes only for a very expensive masterwork wheellock pistol.

WHAT HAPPENED TO VINCENZ?

Everyone meets down at the wharf location pointed out as the exchange site for Vincenz by Knickknack.

Serpent and Samaritha Beldusk go to the Cypherlodge to ask after Enzo and Vincenz. She asks what the characters have been up to. He tries to offer a sanitized version, but ends up making things sound much, much worse. She is also concerned that Ox beats his girlfriend. Serpent is less concerned about this turn of events, which leads Samaritha to lecture him for the rest of the ferry ride.

They arrive at the Cypherlodge and talk to *Milos* the doorman. He tells Samaritha, “Your application is still being... processed.”

Serpent tries to intrigue with Milos, “My friends can do things for you...”

He fails. Utterly. The sour-faced doorman tells him, “I don’t know what kind of organization you think this is, but we don’t need the assistance of people like your friends.”

Samaritha manages to calm Milos down a little bit, and gets out that a Cyphermage named Enzo wanted to talk to her. Milos scoffs, “Cyphermage, ha! He’s just a worthless wannabe like so many others! He proved himself enough of a pest around here that I don’t let him in any more. But he still hangs around like some kind of groupie. You might be able to find him at *Mystery of the Gate*.”

THE CYPHERMAGE WATERING HOLE

Mystery of the Gate turns out to be a nice place, so the characters end up spending three hours and eight gold each buying presentable clothing before they show their faces at the door. Samaritha has a wonderful time helping them all clothes shop. They also leave most of their heavy-grade weaponry at home, so they show up feeling rather underarmed and dressed like tools. The place is very impressive, the premier inn for those magicians and scholars interested in studying the Cyphergate.

When the characters arrive the pale and bespectacled (but strangely hot) Cyphermage Associate Dean *Fenella Bromathan* is giving a talk on the etymology of the

second-order iconographic symbological pattern clusters carved on the alter half of the Cyphergate. Serpent sits and watches her intently. Everyone else snoozes as they drink watered-down, overpriced wine. There is some grumbling about tourist traps.

Wogan eventually spots a couple of guys who match the thin-faced description the characters have for Enzo. He checks with the waiter and confirms the man's identity. The characters wait until Enzo leaves, then follow him. As they leave they see Samaritha pleading with Dean Bromathan to reconsider her case for entrance into the Cypherages. It doesn't look like the conversation is going very well. But that doesn't stop her from kissing Serpent on the cheek as he leaves; she thanks him for being good (which he translates as "nonviolent").

When Enzo leaves, he takes along a bundle of food. Serpent tracks him at a discreet distance. Serpent tracks Enzo to the Leeward district on the east side of town. The area is built-up, not the slums but also not particularly grand. Around this time, Enzo notices Serpent's presence and starts scuttling along a bit more quickly. Enzo gains distance quickly until he heads down an alley and gets hung up on a wall. Serpent finally runs him down and grapples him.

Sindawe doesn't take long to break Enzo. The food is a delivery for the master. Enzo is not yet worthy to be a member of the Brotherhood, but he seeks to become worthy. He explains, "I got instructions from the Master to pay those men to kidnap the guy with the long beard. He was pleased by my success! He said I could be initiated soon into the true mysteries! I took him to the House!"

Sindawe demands, "Who else is there?"

"True initiates of the Brotherhood! That I can only aspire to be like."

"Now, we're going to tie you up here and go kill everyone in the house. This will be a win for you, because it'll mean fewer Brotherhood members for you to advance over. How many in the house?"

"You are doomed! The powers of the Brotherhood will destroy you!"

"How many are at the house? How many have you seen there?"

"Nobody..."

"Yes?"

"I have seen nobody there!"

Serpent picks through the food parcel and notes that Enzo was carrying dinner for perhaps four people. Six if they were picky eaters. Eight if they were Russian conscripts in Stalingrad. Or one American college student.

Enzo's personality steadily decays through the interrogation process. He shows the characters the house – an abandoned, bricked-up tenement at the end of an alley in the Leeward district – and then becomes completely unresponsive. Sindawe gets the key to the house from him. Ox ties Enzo up as Sindawe investigates the house. Sindawe and Serpent go to fetch the characters' gear while everyone else watches Enzo.

THE END OF THE SESSION

The session ends with the characters readying themselves to assault the House of the Master, whoever that might be. They hope to find their friend Vincenz still alive and undamaged inside. They also lament the loss of resale value caused by bricking up the windows of a wood-construction house. “The horror! They must be truly without sanity or morals!” muses Ox.