

Episode 23 The Sundown Sea Cavern

Saturday, April 22nd: breeze, partly cloudy

1. The party, including Oliver, Melodious, Groa, Corvyn, Veylann, Doil, Slippa, Belfor and Brother Sheth got to Sundown after a tiring all-day hike at a pushed pace from Guardraw. There were no encounters, but everyone was tired. Still talking to people there in the tavern revealed that some important things had happened since the party passed through ten days ago on their way to Guardraw with the Bookbinder Guildmaster's son and two other free captives from the orc tower. On that occasion, just a day earlier a force of about forty led by Lady Aliathah had visited Sundown to seize the ceramic tablets that had been found (by Oliver's party) beneath the Mayor's Mansion. The tablets were placed in the Temple of the Sun (Pyramid). A party seized them and also the High Priestess Vega, and had hauled both the tablets and the Priestess back to Guardraw, where Lady Kaykenyon planned to examine them.
2. What had happened since is that the High Priestess had been returned to Sundown, and the promise was made that the tablets would be returned soon, when Lady Kaykenyon had finished examining them. There was still some bad feelings about all of this. It was Lord Grantt, after all, who had found the survivors of the Nomad attack, The Mayor, Captain, three guardsmen, and three priests, and Ladlissa and her family. Lord Grantt had helped rebuild the town and encouraged further settlers to go there and add their efforts to the rebuilding. It was said that High priestess Vega was still very angry about it all, but most of the rest of the town had settled down and considered the issue mostly past.

Sunday, April 23rd: weather good

3. Sunday morning, the party wanted to go down to the sea caves. Oliver paid a visit to Captain Trudue at the Mayor's Mansion. He was told that the party would NOT be allowed access to the caverns under Sundown via the shaft down to the sea cave in the basement. Permission to explore further would perhaps be granted after the Sundown Tablets were returned.
4. Oliver decided to talk to people in the tavern and others in town that he knew. Brother Sheth decided to pay a call on Father Benaiah at the Church, hoping to learn more about the situation in the town, especially as concerns this Sun Worship cult there. Elsapheth went with him (though he wasn't particularly enthusiastic about that.) They both wanted to attend the service, but Sheth's plan was to stay afterwards to ask questions. Slippa intended to visit some of her friends there in Sundown, particularly Sensa. Groa paid a call on Dahnya at the herbalism/potions works.



- Melodious and the other party members decided to go down to the waterfront and take a look at where the big double doors of the sea cave had been opened to let The Lurker escape. So Melodious, Groa, Corvyn, Veylann, Doil, and Belfor made a rip down the path toward the fishmarket. Sure enough, there just upstream a bit was a big cave entrance where some of the cliff had collapsed when those big bronze doors were opened. So, yes! Here was a way into the sea cave! But, was it a practical way



in? There was water between the two big inward opening doors, and a bit of a berm sticking up out of the water where debris had fallen when the doors opened. It wasn't just dirt and natural rock. Mixed in were cut stones, ashlar, broken lintels, fragments of columns, and other stone pieces that must have been thrown down the cliff when the town above was razed. Between the cave and Sundown Creek was a marshy area that must have once been part of the waterway to where the big bronze doors were, but was now silted up and clogged with debris and mud and the kinds of things that grow in such places.

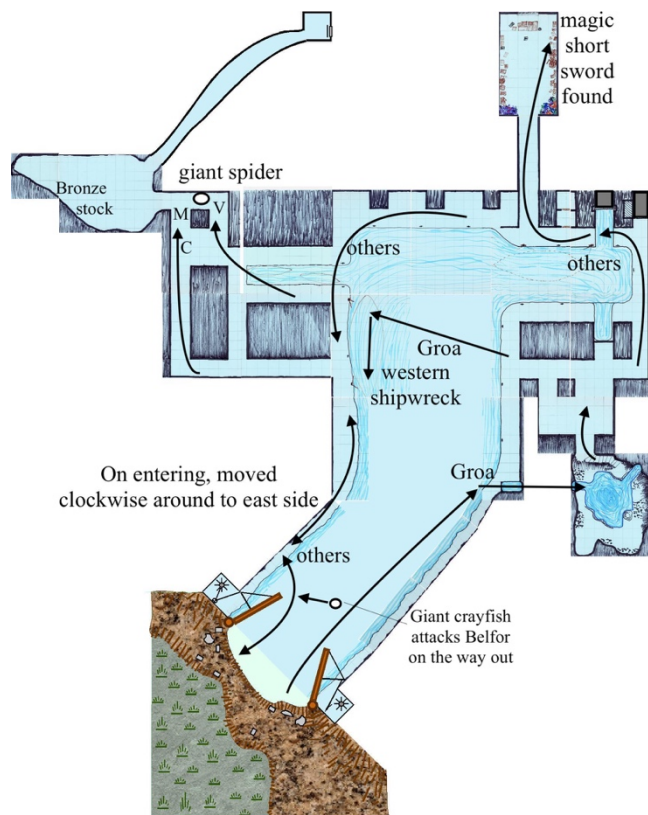
- The question remained, was this a way for the party to get in? That was the principle question. For Groa, yes! She cast a spell that transformed her into an aquatic-friendly form, able to breathe in the water and swim efficiently. She went right into the cavern between the two doors, finding that the water was shallow there where the doors had stood, but rapidly getting deep by the spot between the narrowest spot between the doors. The water in the cavern was somewhat deeper than before, with now only about two feet from the water up to the piers on various sides of this underground harbor. Swimming further along the eastern side, she explored an underground water passage to the cavern pool, then took a look around the rooms just to the north on the eastern side.
- Meanwhile the others sought to find a way through the water over to one side or the other of the entrance. Doil was a proficient swimmer, but the others were not. It was Melodious who thought of using his "Mage hand" spell to help people swim. It could pull upward with a force of ten pounds, enough to help people get from the shallows around the end of the western door to the pathway through very calm water. So, one at a time everybody got in and up onto the pier/walkway on the western side.
- Groa investigated the few remaining storage creates and chests on the east side and found nothing of great value, There were things like pins and bolts and rotting rope and rotting timber planks. Someone had obviously come through and taken things away. The group

on the western side moved up and around to where Groa was, finding conditions pretty nearly the same. Groa then went back into the water to explore the second large shipwreck on the western side of the big pool cavern. Some of the others explored some of the side passages to the north then to the west.

9. While Groa was exploring the second ship, Corvyn and some others took a look in the cavern where ghouls had been encountered when the party first explored this cavern. The room there was much as it had been with ruined chests, piles of rotting fabric and such. Corvyn decided that this would be a good place to cast “Detect magic” spell. Sure enough, he did detect magic, from the northeast corner of the room. Upon investigation, he found a loose stone in the corner there and beyond that the remains of a shortsword. The blade was still shiny and bright, but the handle, apparently of ordinary materials, was falling apart. He managed to extract the sword. Treasure! He continued to explore in the room, and took a look at the iron double doors leading north nearby. They were hot, and steam was emerging from underneath. An iron bar that held the doors shut seemed under stress from the doors trying to press open. Corvyn decided not to try and open them.

10. Groa found that the western ship, somewhat larger than the eastern one, was in better condition. There was a sterncastle with the captain’s cabin within. That was where Groa started exploring. The ship’s mast was horizontal, and seemed to be arranged so that it could easily be raised or lowered. It seemed too long to allow passage in and out of the bronze doors. The various lines, sails, and other rigging materials were all rotting and disintegrating, but the ship’s hull was in remarkably good condition. Inside the Captain’s cabin Groa found a chest of about 30 pounds that proved later to contain Old Sunnite coins. After placing this on the stone pier, Groa continued searching, finding another chest containing bronze navigators’ tools, though hardly recognizable as such due to the accumulated gunk that covered most of the ship’s contents.

A companionway led down into the hold, which was pretty much empty, except for ballast stones in the bottom. In the forecabin there had been accommodations for eight seamen. No human remains were seen anywhere, and there didn’t seem to be any remains from chests or sea bags that would indicate someone had been living aboard. Even the Captain’s Cabin seemed to be empty of things like buckles or jewelry or shoes that would indicate habitation.



The one additional intact chest from the seamen's quarters was empty except for what must have been utility clothing. There was some spaces not explored at the very bow and stern at hold level. It was very dark down below. (Groa could not cast Dancing Lights because that spell requires concentration, and she needed concentration just to maintain herself in water-friendly form.) Doors were stuck and didn't want to yield. Groa didn't have enough light at the ends of the hold to see. The one forward door had rotted away. From topside Groa could see through a rotten hatch that the forward space likely contained the anchor chain and rotting ropes and other nautical goods that were no doubt ruined by now.)

11. Melodius and Corvyn happened onto a giant spider. Melodius, in the lead, was bitten twice despite his best efforts to evade the spider's attack. Corvyn used two volleys of Magic Missiles, all of the spells he had left. Veylan dashed to get to the scene and threw a dagger that penetrated and stuck into the spider. Melodius immediately used a "Heat Metal" to add to the effect. The spider toppled over, legs thrashing about in the air, rapidly, then slowly, and died. Where the spider had been hiding the empty shell of a corpse remained, apparently someone who had been caught and killed by the spider recently.
12. The party didn't explore much deeper. Doil noted a pile of bronze bars and stock in the westernmost cavern. But those pieces were long and would be difficult to remove. Typically about 1 by 2 or 3 inches and 10 or more feet in length, over 100 pounds each. He supposed these were materials used for building the big bronze doors. So, what the party carried out was the two chests Groa had found on the ship, and the shortsword Corvyn had found. They also brought back the remains of the man killed by the spider.
13. On the way out, Groa swam to the double bronze doors and emerged before the others. Melodius used his Mage Hand spell to help again and the others swam as best they could toward the shallow water between the doors. Doil was helping too. But, on the way out, a giant crayfish, that obviously had been hiding in the deeper water, attacked Belfor. Belfor transformed into a giant octopus resembling The Lurker, but smaller, to fight back. The crayfish scored some hits, but finally Belfor managed to kill it and then ate a fair portion of the crayfish. (Later, Belfor reported that it tasted good. He'd eaten cooked crayfish while in human form. As an octopus, this meal seemed more satisfying.)
14. The party then received help drying out from Melodius using his Presdigation cantrip to dry the clothes of each of the party members, before they started back up the path to the top of the cliffs and into the town of Sundown.

This was the end of the adventure as played out during the session. A few follow-ups:

15. While the party was down below, Oliver was talking to Captain of the Guard Trudue trying to convince him to let the party explore down below. He explained that the party was looking for a portal through which that evil priested of Seth had come, and to check and see what if anything had changed since Lord Grant had fought monsters down in those "hot caves" that were north of the big sea cave.

Trudue told Oliver that efforts were being made to salvage all of those chests and

crates in the big sea cave and surrounding areas. Yes, it was difficult to get larger items back up to the surface, but much of the stuff that had any value at all had been salvaged. Nobody has had time to do a thorough search for what might be hidden, though. Whether yet found or not, Trudue, and more importantly the Mayor, regarded all of those things as property of Sundown, and not to be looted. Yes, the party had found some treasure earlier, but had also removed the menace of undead and The Lurker, and that was appreciated. So that it was now safe to salvage stuff. Though not entirely – there are still some deadly monsters about. Giant spiders, for example.

Trudue explained that the Mayor of Sundown had very little leverage to force the return of those ceramic tablets still being held in Guardraw still. Captain Trudue had promised the High Priestess that he would not let anyone explore or take anything else from the sea cave below the Mayor’s Mansion, and he must keep that promise. Once the tablets are returned to where they should remain, at the Temple of the Sun, then permission to enter there would be restored.

Ultimately Grantt received permission to go into the big sea cave if he could find some other way. But, with a promise not to take any more artifacts of Sundown, and to report to Captain Trudue what was found, if anything.

16. During the day about noon a mounted messenger rider with a spare horse galloped into town. She was looking for a Brother Sheth. Elsapheth was at the tavern and suggested that Brother Sheth was likely still at the Church. The messenger found him at the Church with father Benaiah. Sheth was being summoned to Guardraw and was to depart immediately. He did leave word for the rest of the party with Elsapheth before he and the messenger galloped off to the south toward Guardraw.

17. Still TBD: Groa conversation with Dahnya. Anything else? (We can do that as Ep. 23½.)

Experience:	Oliver	Melodious	Groa	Corvyn	Veylann	Doil	Slippa	Belfor	Elsapheth	Sheth
g spider(MC(V((GDB)))	-	62	15	62	31	15	-	15	-	-
g crayfish(B(MD))(CVG))	-	27	7	7	7	13	-	53	-	-
Influence Trudue(O) 30	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mission:findway.body 200	17	35	35	35	17	17	9	17	9	9
Total this Episode	47	124	57	104	55	45	9	85	9	9
Previous total	8820	8203	7720	2417	4539	4303	4257	4392	1705	765
Current total	8867	8327	7777	2521	4594	4348	4266	4477	1714	774

Training: Oliver, Slippa, Elsapheth got credit for a day of “training.”

- Oliver +4 days toward 6th level (needs 30)
- Melodious +3 days toward 6th level (needs 30)
- Groa: +2 days toward 6th level (needs 30)
- Doil, Belfor, Veylann: All now +3 days toward 5th level (need 24)
- Slippa +4 days toward 5th level (need 24)
- Elsapheth: +14 days (needing 18 to 4th)
- Corvyn: +3 days towards 3rd level (needs 12)
- Sheth: +3 days (needing 12) toward 3rd (NOT getting help from Elsapheth)

Treasure, this Episode 23:

- Magic shortsword (needs minor repair) (~1150 gp)
- Coins from chest (all KoS): 250 cp, 140 sp, 50 gp
- Navigator’s kit (needs refurbishing) (6 gp)