

Session/Game: Krondor, D&D5e 20 **Date:** September 2nd, 2018

Episode 20: "Screamers at the End of the World"

Campaign Date: Fifth-Month, Days 14-28, 1174 of 12th Age

Characters:

Walter, Destroyer of Evil, human, sorcerer - 6, CG (Dave Nelson)

Uncomfortable Joe, human - 2 warrior (henchman)

Sparke Rainbrite, elf, eldritch knight - 5, NG (Bob LaForge)

Ragnar "Bojangles" Shinbane, halfling, barbarian - 5, CN (Jason Liebert)

The Bitch-Slappers, warriors, (henchman group)

Old Gilbert, warrior, (henchman)

DM: Andrew Smith

Prolog:

With Herculaneum in disarray, Wun Hung Lo sees to it that Sir Roderick and Mr. Righteous' entombed forms are safely and carefully hidden in the Elven Grove of the Panther. Despite their best efforts, the Sarabi Men led by Raj Raji aren't able to locate the paladin. The army of The Masters retakes Herculaneum and fortifies it against future incursions from Newport.

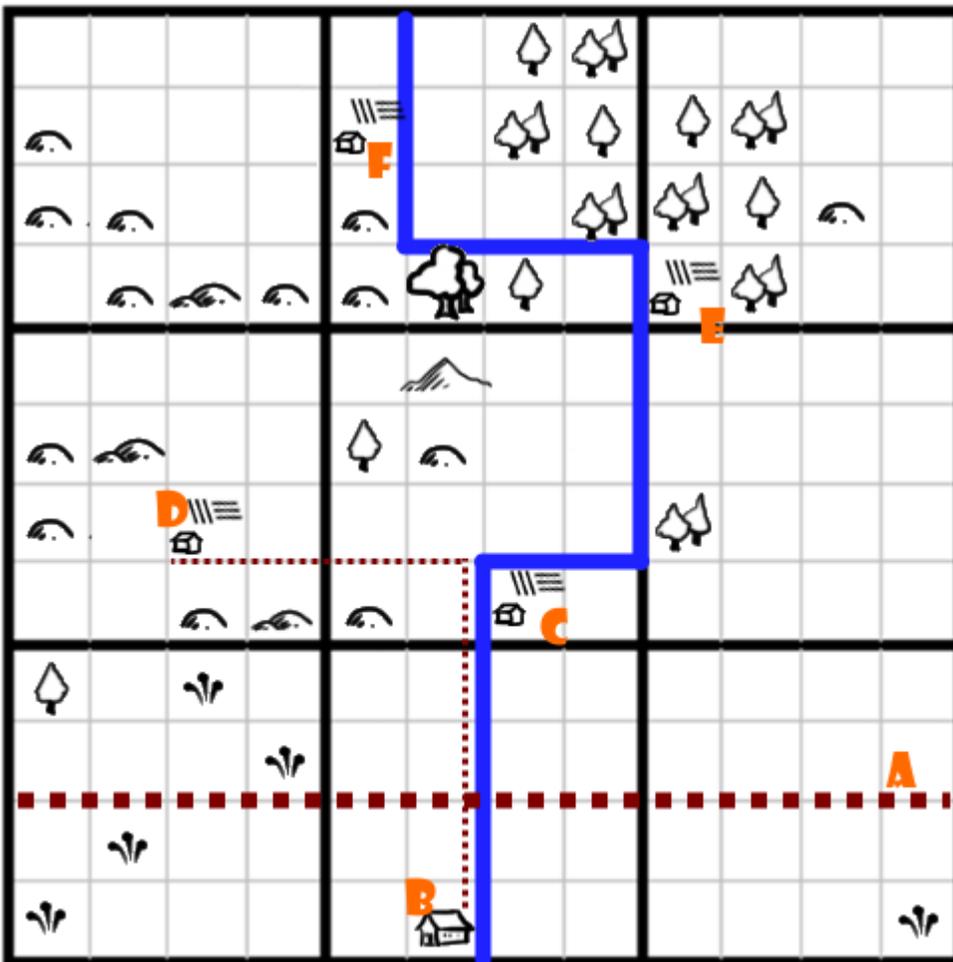
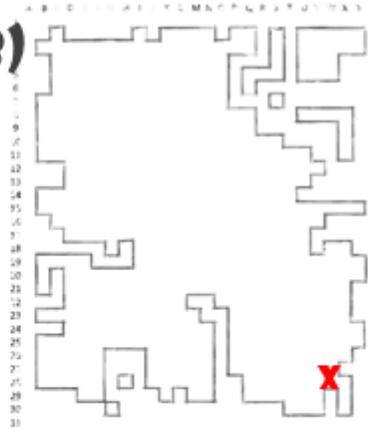
Log:



The Screamers are a popular cultish religion that dates back to the times of the Smirkenburg occupation of Krondor which involves a lot of screaming at a deity known only as the "screaming god." A higher-level member of the formidable Screamer temple in Bayhead named "Agonizer Mike" sent a servant named Fritz to quietly ask for help from the Castaways. He promised 30 gold each just for meeting with Agonizer Mike to talk about helping him "collect potion components" to prevent the "spread of evil" bent on triggering the "end of the world."

THE ORCHARDS (W28)

- A - OLD MINING ROAD
- B - BAYHEAD
- C - GINSTERBURG
- D - HAMLET OF ROWDY
- E - BERRYWOOD
- F - PONYVILLE





Day 15

In an effort to “destroy evil” at all costs, Walter joins Sparkle and Ragnar in an expedition to Bayhead to meet with Agonizer Mike. Fritz leads the group to the impressive temple of the Screamers in Bayhead. They meet Mike just outside the temple just after morning prayers.

Agonizer Mike tells the party that he is concerned that a few of his colleagues within the temple of the Screamers have been “infected” with monsters who take over their bodies. According to the scripture of the Screamers, this event is a portent of the “end of the world.” The Castaways share their experiences with the brain-crabs that they have met and fought in the province before. Agonizer Mike offers nine hundred gold to quietly collect three components of a potion to learn who the interlopers are. It requires Deathweed from the swamps, some scarlet tourmaline from the hills, and the guano of a trash-monster known as an otyugh. Agonizer Mike offers three

jars for the party to fill with the three ingredients, and gives them a copy of the potion that they might make it themselves if they wish.

That night, after gossiping that he’s off to kill “brain crabs” to the locals, Ragnar gets into trouble with two women who turn out to also be controlled by the mind flayers by the Intellect Devourers. After fighting them off and killing the brain crabs that burst from their heads, Ragnar and Sparkle are confronted by Miss Mayelle, the proprietor of the tavern they are staying at. In response to this trouble, Sparkle kills the proprietor, her one guard, and [burns down the entire establishment](#). The two adventurers then meet up with Walter at a terrible dirt-floor tavern known as the Moss Hut.



Day 16

The heroes have an idea to split the party, but decide against it. They travel to the swamps, but no one is able to positively identify Devilweed.

They encounter two men hiding and gesturing to the party to be quiet. The Castaways call out to them. Ragnar then realizes why they were trying to be quiet. From the nearby swamp underbrush, three trolls attack. Old Grundy and Uncomfortable Joe are both knocked out, and

one of the Bitch-Slappers named Tony is torn limb from limb. Sparkle Rainbrite chases down the last troll and burns it to death with several blasts of his fire bolt spell.

The party questions the two men. Brick and his brother Brick, two locals from Rowdy are collecting Devilweed. They say that there is now a market to sell Devilweed to folks in Bayhead. They aren't sure what those people do with it, though. Walter collects a jar full of the stuff from them for a few silver. The party spends the night at a friendly farmer's house in Ginsterburg.

Day 17

On a tip from a local named Durm, the Castaways head to the mountain to the north to get the scarlet tourmaline powder. Durm tells them of a cave filled with bats, and warns "not to bring fire." They enter the bat cave in the morning with the cave full of bats, with only Uncomfortable Joe bearing a torch for light. A swell of bats wakes and makes for the torchbearer. A thunderous spell from Walter scatters the bat swarm, and several chops from the others scatters them. The Castaways then take their time filling the second jar with crushed scarlet tourmaline. The party returns to Ginsterburg and once again spends the night at the friendly farmer's house.

Day 18

The Castaways travel to Rowdy where they hear rumors of a hole hidden a barn used to dispose of their waste and diseased corpses. There are onlookers there who mock the adventurers as they walk into the hamlet. Sparkle runs an onlooker down and asks "Where the shithole is," which prompts an odd response. They approach the trash barn, and find a hole in the ground lined with garbage and refuse. After burning away a lot of the trash and dung packed in the hole, they enter.



Two larger dirt and rock tunnels lead away from the main pit. One is picked clean to the rock, and another is a dry dirt passage showing signs of constant scratches and movement. The Castaways follow this second route, and turn a corner to see the otyugh's nest. A blanket of thick black organic material lays across the ground, and huge clumps of white, sticky guano covers the walls and several large rocks in this dark cavern. Ragnar spots the glint of some ancient armor lost and forgotten in the back of the tunnel.

The party moves forward to collect the guano and realize that the otyugh has buried itself in a pit and covered itself with a thin layer of dirt and organic matter. Walter and Ragnar both fall into the pit, and Sparkle is pulled in after them. The otyugh grapples them with its two powerful tentacles and tries to drag them toward its diseased razor-sharp maw. Powerful magic missiles launched by Walter slam into the monster, and Sparkle eventually cuts

the monster's eyestalk from its body, killing it but not before contracting a wasting disease from the bite of the monster.

The Castaways return to Bayhead. They send Fritz ahead to ask Agonizer Mike to meet them. Unfortunately Mike isn't able to heal the disease Sparkle has contracted. Agonizer Mike and Sparkle Rainbrite sneak into Mike's cell in the village. They begin to craft the potion, and they burn some of it to make sure that there are no brain crabs nearby. They send for Agonizer Gozer, a "trusted friend" of Agonizer Mike's who should be able to heal the elf.

Gozer enters, but as he passes through the smoke of the burnt potion he grips his skull in pain. Gozer turns out to be controlled by an Intellect Devourer. Crab-like legs poke bloody holes out of the man's head, and an eye stretches out of its socket on a tentacle-like stalk. Sparkle stabs the possessed Gozer and kills him. The others join Mike and Sparkle. Agonizer Mike sends for another clergyman of the Screamers. Agonizer Jan appears to be an unpossessed human being. He heals the disease that plagues Sparkle, and they make plans to slay any members of the Screamers who are also possessed during tomorrow's ceremony. In the ceremony, a large brazer of coals are lit to call on the Screaming god. Agonizer Mike plans on sneaking that potion into the brazer so that all those in the temple will get a dose and show if they are possessed or not.

Walter will pose as Agonizer Gozer, while the others will wear the full hood of the Screamers and act as though they are one of the several novice initiates. According the Agonizer Mike, "The Screamers have had an unusually high number of converts in the past few months."

Day 19

At the Screamer ceremony, Ragnar draws the notice of another hooded worshiper. Sparkle intimidates the cultist and he leaves. The crescendo of the ceremony arrives and the potion is lit. The smoke from the potion fills the temple, and unfortunately for the Castaways nearly all of the cultists are in fact controlled by brain crabs. Screams of agony from the cult leader Exarch Kwill are echoed throughout the temple as macabre crab appendages crack through skulls and eyestalks protrude from hollow eye sockets.

As the possessed cultists roil in pain the Castaways make their move. Walter throws a fireball incinerating five possessed cultists. Sparkle Rainbrite and Ragnar kill two cultists. Agonizer Mike and Uncomfortable Joe both try to get uninfected cultists to safety. Sparkle attacks Exarch Kwill, a powerful warlock now controlled by a monstrous brain terror that is poking out of the back of his bloody head. Sparkle receives a powerful rebuke of flame for his effort. Black squirming tentacles sprout from the warlock and attack Walter and Sparkle.

The formerly intimidated cultist joins the fray, not appearing to be affected by the potion's smoke but weighing in on the side of the brain crab infected cultists using powerful wizard spells.

Walter is stricken by a maze of undulating patterns from this wizard, keeping him from acting. A quick punch from Sparkle breaks Walter out of his stupor.

Ragnar engages a half dozen cultists at once, and finally slays the monster once known as Exarch Kwill but not before Agonizer Mike is slain by the warlock's agonizing whispers. Sparkle uses his burning hands spell to roast several cultists. Walter and the wizard trade spells, but the wizard manages to knock the weakened hermit out before fleeing. Ragnar turns his back on four cultists to pursue the wizard, leaving Sparkle to try and defend Walter's prone form. Fearing another blast of magical fire, the cultists overpower Sparkle and stab Walter's unconscious body. Ragnar tries to fend off the cowardly cultists but he is too late. Ragnar and Sparkle finish off the remaining cultists, and Walter dies honorably on the flagstones of the Screamer's temple.

Epilog:

With the Screamer's leaders all either dead or possessed, the cult falls apart. The Castaways raid the temple and loot it before escaping. Any Screamer's who were possessed flee the city leaving vacancies within the cult and the aristocracy of the village of Bayhead. Soon, the temple will be shuttered and abandoned. Any others who might want to take possession of it might buy it at a bargain from what is left of the Moulin noble family who own the temple.

Walter is given a halfling viking funeral. His corpse is wrapped in his shabby red robes, laid on a brown pillow with a hat of wizardry on his head. He is then pushed out to sea on a small rowboat and set ablaze by Ragnar. The Castaways who knew him best salute as his body flames out and disappears into the ocean.

