

Session 7

The five adventurers continued south towards Waterdeep on the *Sea Sprite* with Captain Deudermont and his crew. After sailing for several weeks, the party had settled into the routine of the ship. The morning started off swelteringly hot, even though it was approaching winter in the north. Everyone woke up drenched in sweat except for the Mazapen with his draconic ancestry and Ramone with his demonic heritage.

The monk Milthrar had taken to his usual spot in the crow's nest while Mazapen worked the sails and the paladin Adran steered. After only an hour or two into the day the dwarf spotted a sunken ship from his perch. As they approached the druid Adoros noticed a shark circling the sunken ship. After the ship had stopped a safe distance away the elf jumped over the rail into the water, using his druid magic to transform himself into a shark before even hitting the water. Once Adoros had entered the sea, Ramone created an illusion of a cloud of ink around the shark's head, momentarily confusing it. While the shark tried to figure out what was happening the shark Adoros attacked, taking a large chunk out of the shark's side with his powerful jaws. This pushed the shark out of the illusion, allowing it to see, but that was of no help because a cloud of spinning daggers magically appeared around the shark, summoned by the tiefling bard Ramone. The shark, bleeding from many places at this point, feebly attempted to attack the only opponent it could see, the other shark Adoros. Adoros finally finished the wounded shark off before swimming around the ship to determine if there was any more danger.

Adoros swam around the ship, finding a large hole in the side of it. The ship appeared to have recently sunk, mostly likely from whatever caused the hole. Adoros peered inside the ship but saw no enemies. Instead, he found a chest at the back, but he was unable to pick it up in his current form. He swam back to the ship to inform the rest of the party what he had found. The druid then cast a spell on the rest of the party allowing them to breathe underwater. Everyone jumped over the rails into the ocean and swam down with Adoros while Adran stayed behind to keep guard on the ship. Milthrar explored the ship a little more thoroughly, finding what appeared to be the captain's cabin. The dwarf attempted to enter but the door appeared to be lodged shut. Mazapen came over to try to move it, but even the large fighter was unable to get the door to budge. Finally, both gave the door a good shove at the same time and managed to move the door open just slightly. The gap was large enough that Milthrar could squeeze his head through and see inside. The monk then disappeared in what could be described as a cloud of darkness, reappearing on the other side of the door. The dwarf found a large dresser had slid in front of the door, blocking it from opening. He also found a bed, a desk and a skeleton, which seemed odd considering the ship seemed rather new and like it had wrecked in the recent past. The monk found a small pouch of jewels in the desk, but not much else. He pulled the dresser out of the way and opened the door, rejoining the rest of the group. The rest of the party was able to get the chest up to the ship, where they had to climb a rope to get up to the deck.

Everyone managed to make their way up, with Mazapen nearly running up the rope. Mithrar, perhaps because of his withdrawals from several days without alcohol, was unable to climb the rope. Mazapen and Adran grabbed the rope and pulled it up hard, causing the dwarf to flop onto the deck. They finally opened the chest they found and counted the gold, finding around 2,200 gold pieces.

The party resumed their positions and the ship continued south. At around noon Milthrar once again spotted something odd from the crow's nest. Off in the distance to the west something was gleaming in the sunlight, catching his eye. The ship took some time to sail to investigate. As they approached, they found a small, barren island made of dark black basalt. At the center of the island was a jewel encrusted pillar. The party once again decided to jump overboard to get a closer look. Upon approaching the pillar, the group noticed cracks in the jagged black rocks venting steam. Closer inspection of the pillar revealed that a very large ruby was what caught Milthrar's attention. The rest of the pillar had smaller rubies, fire opals and obsidian. There were also some strange markings that no one in the party could decipher. Ramone attempted to pry the ruby from the pillar, but it was firmly stuck. The large fighter Mazapen flexed his muscles, then attempted to remove the large gem himself, but was unable to get a firm grip on it. In his frustration the dragonborn blew a large blast of fire towards the gem, using his innate dragonborn abilities. The heat caused the space holding the gem to widen, allowing the large ruby to fall to the base of the pillar. However, this also triggered something within the lava. Suddenly the steam from the vents began to materialize and a large humanoid creature that seemed like fire incarnate stood before the group. The creature radiated heat, and the ground where its feet touched burst into flames. Everyone but Mazapen ran for the ship, with Ramone scooping up the ruby before fleeing. Mazapen in his stubbornness stood near the pillar and drew his weapons ready to try and fight the fire elemental while shouting at it in vain attempts to communicate. Before the elemental could get too close to the fighter the quick-thinking Adoros used his natural magic to temporarily raise the ocean level around them by 30 feet. The ship began to raise with the water, while the rising shore started to submerge the island. Eventually there was nowhere left to stand for the elemental and it too began to become submerged. Steam erupted wherever the water touched the creature, and it let out what sounded like an otherworldly howl before being consumed by the rising tide. Unfortunately, Mazapen, who had decided to keep his armor on when investigating the island, was unable to swim with the weight of it and the dragonborn also became submerged in the rising tide. Adoros, still in shark form, quickly swam towards the fighter and did the only thing he could think of: he sank his sharp teeth into Mazapen's armored leg, slightly crushing the metal and drawing more than a little blood. The shark druid dragged Mazapen back to the ship like a rag doll, where the rest of the party was able to get him up to the ship.

Adoros returned to his elven form and boarded the ship and they resumed their journey. Once on board Mazapen demanded from Ramone to know what had happened to the ruby and wanting to inspect it. The tiefling bard was reluctant to part with it, but eventually

handed it over to the dragonborn, who then refused to part with it. The ship sailed for several more hours while the two argued over the jewel as the sun began to set. As the sky grew dark the ship anchored for the night. Suddenly Mazapen felt a very strange presence, as if someone was watching him. Looking around the ship he couldn't find anyone paying particular attention to him. He told the party about his feeling, but no one else noticed anything.

The crew began to turn in for the night while Mazapen and Milthrar took first watch. As the night wore on suddenly a fog began to envelop the ship, appearing out of nowhere. While patrolling the ship Milthrar heard a soft clanging sound coming from near the stairs into the hull. He called Mazapen over and they found a grappling hook with a rope wrapped around the railing of the ship. They looked around and at didn't see anyone, but suddenly two figures dressed all in black came around the stairs at the pair. Below decks Adoros, who didn't need sleep due to his elven heritage, heard a sound from the stairs during his meditation. Opening his eyes, he spotted another figure all in black coming down the stairs. The druid quickly conjured a spray of poison from his hands, killing the assassin in a green mist. Hearing the commotion, Adran quickly awakened and jumped from his bunk to see two more assassins descend the stairs. Ramone also awakened, but more slowly and was confused at what was going on.

Up on the deck the dragonborn Mazapen quickly cut down his attacker with his sword while Milthrar swung his staff at the second attacker. While fighting with the monk, Mazapen attempted to tackle the assassin to question him. The assassin was able to evade the fighter's strong grasp at first, but the second attempt knocked the black-clad figure to the ground where Mazapen was able to grapple him until Milthrar could tie the figure up.

Below deck Adran quickly dispatched one of the assassins with his sword, cutting him down at the foot of the stairs. Adoros created a whip of thorns from his hand, striking the remaining assassin with a painful snap. Adran then walked towards the man calling on divine magic from his goddess. The paladin raised his sword high, glowing with holy energy, then brought it down into the man's chest, causing him to disintegrate to ash in a flash of white light. Ramone finally began to awaken and jumped from his bunk, but the fighting was already over. The three climbed the stairs to the deck to find out the state of their companions.

They found Milthrar and Mazapen standing over a restrained assassin. His mask had been removed, showing the face of a middle-aged human man. The face was defiant as the group approached. They tried asking the individual about him and his companions, but all they got were insults. Mazapen grew impatient and threatened to remove the man's genitals, but the assassin remained defiant. The angry dragonborn then ripped down the man's pants and bit his cock off. The assassin howled in agony as blood dripped down the fighter's face. Adoros, unable to take the man's screams, healed the man's wounds. The assassin dejectedly stared at where his dick used to be. The bloody dragonborn put his bloody face in front of the assassin's and intimidated him into answering some questions. They found out he was part of the Black Open, which was the mercenary group that had killed Milthrar's parents so long ago. He said he

was hired to kill the party, but that he didn't know by whom. He said one of the corpses below deck was the group's leader and that only he knew who hired them, or of other contacts within the guild. After answering their questions Adran finally put the man out of his misery with a stab from his sword.

Adoros went down into the hull to see what could be found on the corpses. He found a key on one of the bodies, but it was unclear what the key was to. He also found a note on one instructing the group to row out to where the *Sea Sprite* was anchored once Greeth let them know the ship's location. They were to assassinate the Saviors of Luskan, with descriptions of each of the party members. It also said to leave Deudermont alone unless he gets in the way. Upon hearing the note's contents, Deudermont remarked that Greeth was the head of the Mage's guild in Luskan. The party wasn't sure what to make of the information.

The rest of the night passed uneventfully, and the next day they woke up to a day almost as hot as the previous. The party awoke and discussed the revelations from the previous day. Someone had the thought that perhaps the strange feeling Mazapen had before the attack had been related to the ruby they had removed from the basaltic island. This led to requests to inspect the jewel and another argument over who had rightful ownership. During the discussion, Adoros crept down to the bunks and went through Mazapen's bag, finding the ruby. He then went back up the stairs and promptly tossed it into the sea, ending the argument. Mazapen and Ramone approached the rail to try and save the gem but were only able to watch it sink below the surface.

With the large ruby no longer causing strife amongst the group, they sailed on towards Waterdeep. After several hours in the hot sun, Milthrar once again spotted something in the distance to the west from the crow's nest. He could see an island with smoke rising from it. The ship sailed out towards the island. They approached the island to see large, white cliffs of chalk. Sailing around towards the western side of the island they found a small cove with a gently sloping beach. Several hundred feet up from the shore they saw the cause of the smoke, a small cottage with smoke lazily rising from the fireplace. The group once again jumped over the ship into the shallow water and made their way towards the cottage.

As they approached, they noticed the door was slightly ajar. The group cautiously approached. When reaching the door Adran gave the door a slight push, opening it wide while yelling out a greeting. They heard an old voice respond, "Yes, yes come in. You've finally arrived."

The group entered the small cabin to find a feeble looking old man sitting in a chair near the fireplace. The rest of the cottage was sparsely furnished with a bed and a lone table with a crystal ball. The man looked older than any human any of them had ever seen, and he wore strange robes that were covered in eyes of many colors. "It's about time..." he said impatiently while looking up at the party.

The party inquired as to what he could mean and who he was. "We don't have much time," the old man said. "You can call me Caius, and I've been expecting you for quite some time. My god Sylvanus gives me the power of sight. I have seen your coming, just as I have seen the trials that await you. You have made powerful enemies, and they already conspire against you. If you are to triumph against these forces, you must play to your individual strengths while helping each other. There will be enemies everywhere you look, but you will find unexpected allies as well."

The old man turned towards Adran, "You will have your judgement tested. Your faith must be unwavering if you are to survive the trials that lay ahead. Let Eldath guide you through the trouble ahead."

To Adoros the man said, "You are the most grounded and wisest of this group, whether from your heritage or your deep connection to nature I do not know. You must be the voice of reason and bring balance to remain cohesive."

"When violence and force are not the correct means to accomplish your goals, you will be the driving force behind things. Be creative in how you apply your talents," the man said looking at Ramone.

Turning towards Milthrar the old man stated, "You will perceive things that others do not because of your training, but do not let the ghosts of the past drag you down. You will come to know things that will bring a sense of closure."

Finally, the man looked at Mazapen and said, "A great fire rages within you. It gives you strength and courage when you need it most, and stubbornness and recklessness when you need it least. You will have the revenge you seek, but do not let it cloud your judgement of the present."

"Now, you must leave quickly," he said looking over the whole group. "Already you have lingered too long, and your enemies lie in wait. Do not forget the things I've said, and you will fulfill your destinies and play a larger role in this realm than you could have imagined."

The group attempted to ask the hermit several more questions about their encounters, but the old man waved them away, saying the answers to their questions will be revealed in time. He told them not to worry about the fire elemental any longer, and he provided the cranky Milthar with some much-needed alcohol. The party thanked the man for his counsel, then returned to their ship to the questioning stares of Deudermont and his crew. The party described the encounter, but the captain wasn't sure what to make of it. They sailed back towards land in the east and continued their journey south.

After returning to their course and sailing for several more hours the sun began to get high in the sky. Several hours later the *Sea Sprite* sailed past a cove with a lone ship in it. The ship wasn't moving and was flying the flag of Waterdeep. Milthrar said it appeared the man was signaling for help. The captain signaled for them to cautiously approach.

As they sailed close to the ship, they noticed the greasy looking man that had been waving them down. With him was a ragged looking crew. "Thank the gods ye stopped!" the man shouted. "We've been stuck here for hours with a hole in our sails."

The party was suspicious of the man's story, but they boarded his ship to attempt to help. While Adran and Mazapen spoke with the man, Adoros and Milthrar inspected the ship's sails. They found the hole the man spoke of, but it appeared as if the sail had been cut purposefully. Just as they were about to inform the rest of the group a shout went out that ships were approaching. Looking around the party noticed two ships approaching the cove, one from the north and one from the south, blocking them in. They demanded to know what was going on, but when they turned around the man held a scimitar in his hand, and the rest of his crew had also drawn weapons.

Adoros, once again thinking quickly, used his druidic magic to cause the water underneath the ship approaching from the north to suddenly move around the hull and fill the ship, causing it to quickly sink. However, he spotted a humanoid figure fly up into the air from the sinking ship. Adran turned to the man that had waved them down and quickly dispatched him with a slash across the chest from his sword. Milthrar quickly killed one of the crew with a swing to the skull from his staff. Mazapen bellowed in rage before crushing one of the crew's skulls in with his warhammer. Singing a quiet tune, the bard Ramone looked at the remaining crew member, casting suggestion on the man. The crewmember turned towards the edge of the boat and leaped off, trying to swim in vain towards some unknown point in the depths.

As they finished off the ragged crew, the ship approaching from the south suddenly rammed into the *Sea Sprite*. They looked to see a lone mage standing on the deck putting his hands down after creating a magical wind to fill the ship's sails. Suddenly a figure appeared from the sky, floating above the deck of the ship. The airborne tiefling began to wave his arms around, causing a fireball to shoot from his hands at Mazapen and Milthrar. The dragonborn shrugged off the heat, while the monk deftly dodged out of the way of the main blast. Adoros then attempted to kill the man with a magical poisonous spray but was unable to kill the mage. Adran dropped his sword and drew a hand axe, throwing it at the flying mage. The axe clipped the flying tiefling but was not enough to kill him. Milthrar, lacking any ranged weaponry, jumped to the second ship and moved towards the second mage. The monk struck the mage in the leg with his staff, then brought a bone-cracking punch to the man's ribs. Mazapen once again called upon his draconic ancestry, breathing a large cone of flame towards the flying man, setting his robes alight and causing him to crash into the deck of the *Sea Sprite*. Ramone drew his rapier and tried to finish the flaming mage off, but the mage moved more quickly than he thought possible and dodged his stab. The mage in front of Milthrar quickly waved his hands and disappeared in a puff swirling mist, reappearing on the other side of the deck. Adoros, seeing the first mage close to death began chanting and waving his arms in a spell. Suddenly a cylinder of pure, white light descended from the heavens, enveloping the mage in burning light. The mage screamed in pain before crumbling away into dust. Adran turned towards the

remaining mage and called on his natured inspired divine magic, calling forth his own column of light. The second mage suffered a similar fate, beginning to burn so brightly the party thought he might burst into flames before his head exploded and his flesh disintegrated underneath him.

The party took a moment to catch their breath and tend to their minor wounds. After searching the remaining ships and the corpses, the party found quite a bit of loot. On the body of the man that had waved them down from his ship with “torn” sails, they found another note. This note told the man to lie in wait for the *Sea Sprite* to pass. It told the man to delay the ship until the mages that Greeth was sending arrived. Once the mages made it, they were to destroy the *Sea Sprite* and all aboard. The note was just signed with an initial. Along with the note the group found a total of 800 copper, 8000 silver and 2600 gold pieces. They also found four fertility statues, a potion of frost giant strength, an elixir of health, a potion of invulnerability and a scroll of protection from fiends.

Once all the loot had been taken and examined, the party continued on to the south. After several more uneventful days sailing aboard the *Sea Sprite* the skyline of Waterdeep came into view just as the sun was rising one morning. Even from this distance they could see how massive the city was. Only Adran, who was returning home, had ever seen a city so large. The group sailed south with the city lining the coast to their left for close to an hour. Buildings and towers of various size lined the coast, with some taller than the mage’s guild in Luskan. Finally, the harbor on the south side of the city came into view and the *Sea Sprite* approached a dock....