

GM EDDY'S TABLE CHRONICLE

Stories, Consequences, and Open Threads

SESSION BRIEF

The Grainy Air, the Retreat, and the Man Called Vhal. After more than a month away, the party resumed beneath Otari amid the remains of the ooze fights. They chose to explore one more passage, found a swollen door and stairs descending into what appeared to be dusty, grainy air, and stepped into a living cloud of ordinary fleas. The swarms fed fast, resisted ordinary weapons, and left Valaerys, Braun, and Reiko drained. Reiko's wind finally tore the insects off her companions and opened a path to retreat. After escaping, the party rested, bathed, shopped, and equipped themselves with bludgeoning weapons and alchemist's fire. Their next stop was Odd Stories, where Morbilint had forgotten the party's commission entirely. He had traded Chafkhem's parchments to a persuasive scholar calling himself Magister Septimus Vhal in exchange for a blank black journal he believed to be a lost masterpiece. Vhal and associates appeared human but smelled strongly of sandalwood, lavender, and vanilla. The final revelation was worse: Vhal claimed to be purchasing the old abandoned house on the hill in Otari.

Party in the Record



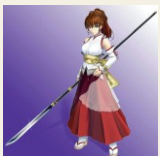
Valaerys



Deputy Murk



Braun Wills



Reiko Junna

The swarm

A hidden nest turned foul air into millions of biting mouths.

The escape

Wind and teamwork won a retreat, not a victory.

The scam

Chafkhem reclaimed his parchments without drawing a weapon.

SESSION EVENTS

Scene 1 - Back Beneath Otari

The session reopened in the old sewer beneath Otari, where the party had ended the previous game after fighting gelatinous cubes, oozes, and the Globster. Chafkhem's return-circle, Siorra Fallowglade, Maret's failing condition, Viola's necklace, and the unfinished Black Hand investigation all remained unresolved, but the immediate choice was simpler: climb out or press farther into the sewer. The party chose one more passage.

Result: *The campaign's larger threats returned to the table, but the party's next danger was waiting only a few steps below.*

Scene 2 - The Grainy Air

Murk tore a swollen, partially dissolved door from its frame and exposed stairs leading into another chamber. A desiccated rat lay near the bottom. Old nests crowded the walls beyond the routes scoured clean by gelatinous cubes, and the air itself seemed filled from floor to ceiling with erratic particles. Murk descended on a rope while Valaerys stepped forward with his bow, intending to test the passage for another transparent ooze.

The haze was not dust. It was an immense concentration of ordinary fleas, moving together so densely that the swarm looked like the air itself had become granular and alive.



The party discovers that the “grainy air” is a living mass of ordinary fleas.

Scene 3 - A Million Biting Mouths

Two flea swarms engulfed the corridor. Swords and arrows passed through them while killing only scattered insects. Their bites were less dangerous than the blood loss that followed: Valaerys reached Drained 3, Braun reached Drained 2, and Reiko was also drained. Murk’s exceptional Reflex defenses repeatedly spared him from the worst effects. The party discovered that bludgeoning attacks could crush meaningful numbers, but they lacked the reliable area damage needed to clear the threat.

Result: *The party could hurt the swarms, but not quickly enough to remain in the corridor and survive the feeding.*

THE TURNING POINT AND THE RETREAT

Scene 4 - Reiko Clears the Corridor



Reiko opened her kinetic gate and drove a concentrated gust through the passage. The wind stripped the fleas away from Valaerys, Murk, and Braun, hurling the swarm back and creating the party's only safe opening. Murk helped the heavily drained Valaerys retreat while Braun followed behind his shield.

Scene 5 - Shut the Door and Run



Valaerys, Murk, and Braun ran for the ladder while Reiko remained last in the corridor. She closed the heavy door, but fleas immediately began pouring through the gap beneath it. Reiko turned and ran after the others.

Result: *The party escaped to the surface, replaced the sewer grate to protect townsfolk from the open shaft, and left the flea nest alive below Otari.*

WHAT THE FIGHT REVEALED

- Ordinary slashing and piercing attacks killed too few fleas to matter.
- Bludgeoning attacks could crush meaningful portions of the swarm.

- The Drained condition was the encounter's real danger.
- Wind could scatter the swarms long enough to create an escape route.

Scene 6 - Baths, Bed Rest, and Better Equipment

It was still only about nine in the morning when the party emerged. Reiko wanted a long hot bath, and the party needed full nights of rest to recover from Drained. Their escape therefore became a short period of downtime rather than an immediate return underground.



Separate recovery and shopping moments across Otari: gear, alchemist's fire, food, and performance.

DOWNTIME LEDGER

Equipment and coin

- A party-owned item sold for 172 gp, producing a 43 gp share for each character.
- Braun acquired a shield boss and doubling rings.
- Reiko, Braun, and Valaerys purchased lesser alchemist's fire.
- Murk bought a maul, sling ammunition, and an armor potency rune discounted by Carman Rajani after promising his political support.

Work and recovery

- The party rested multiple nights until the Drained conditions cleared.
- Valaerys earned money performing in Otari.
- Reiko improvised a dancing accompaniment and earned a small amount of coin.

Result: *The retreat changed the party's equipment choices. They planned to return with fire, bludgeoning weapons, and a better answer to swarms.*

Scene 7 - Something Is Wrong at Odd Stories

After the first night of recovery, the party remembered that Morbilint had been entrusted with Chafkhem's recovered parchments. Odd Stories should have been open, but the sign had not been turned and Morbilint did not answer. When Reiko knocked, the unsecured door swung inward. The shop had not been ransacked, yet everything was wrong: books and papers had been repeatedly removed, examined, and returned to the wrong places. Morbilint's bed remained perfectly made, and no one answered from the living quarters.

On the upper floor, the party finally heard frantic mumbling. They found Morbilint surrounded by empty inkpots, ruined quills, copied references, and mountains of arcane calculations. His hair had become a bird's nest, his clothing was wrinkled and stained, and he looked dehydrated, underfed, and sleepless. He was so completely absorbed that he did not notice the armed party approach until Reiko touched his shoulder.



Morbilint has spent days trying to reveal writing that does not exist.

Scene 8 - The Black Journal of Archmage Vardalion

Morbilint announced the discovery of his career: the supposedly lost Journal of Archmage Vardalion. The large black volume was entirely blank. Every page remained empty despite days of chemical tests, magical theories, comparative scripts, and increasingly desperate attempts to expose hidden text.

Result: *Morbilint had forgotten the party's commission because he believed, with his whole being, that the blank journal was a priceless lost work.*

Scene 9 - Magister Septimus Vhal's Perfect Scam

The party slowly helped Morbilint understand that the parchments he had traded away were Chafkhem's spell fragments, entrusted to him for transcription. Morbilint described an extraordinarily convincing visiting scholar who discussed pre-Earthfall magical traditions, recognized obscure references, and persuaded him that the parchments were what he'd been searching for years and offered a once-in-a-life time trade. In exchange for the ancient parchments, the visitor offered the only surviving copy of Vardalion's journal and insisted that Morbilint alone was qualified to decipher it.



Magister Septimus Vhal, his learned associate, and an imposing bodyguard trade the blank journal for Chafkhem's parchments.

This scholar, a Magister Septimus Vhal, arrived with an associate and a bodyguard. All three appeared human, though lean and subtly unhealthy in complexion and structure. Morbilint remembered one unmistakable detail: their clothing smelled heavily of sandalwood, lavender, and vanilla.

The party recognized the black book as one of the unused transcription volumes from Gauntlight's scriptorium. Chafkhem had entered Otari in disguise, played Morbilint perfectly, reclaimed his writings without violence, and left the scholar obsessed with worthless blank pages.

Result: *The scam was not a random theft. Chafkhem knew exactly where the parchments had gone and used Morbilint's scholarly vanity to recover them.*

Scene 10 - The Old Abandoned House on the Hill

As Morbilint's memory returned, he recalled one final piece of casual conversation. Magister Septimus Vhal said he was purchasing property in Otari: the old abandoned house on the hill. Morbilint thought the purchase absurd. The building was a ruined shell with exposed framing and a partially collapsed roof. Vhal merely said that he intended to do wonders with it.



The abandoned house appears empty, dark, and nearly uninhabitable - exactly as Morbilint described it.

CARRY-FORWARD THREADS

- The flea swarms remain alive beneath Otari, and the sewer is still not fully explored.
- The party purchased alchemist's fire and bludgeoning options for a possible return.
- Chafkhem has recovered his magical parchments.
- Magister Septimus Vhal is probably Chafkhem's established human identity.
- Vhal traveled with an unnamed learned associate and an unnamed bodyguard.
- Their strong scent of sandalwood, lavender, and vanilla is peculiar.
- Vhal claims to have purchased the old abandoned house on the hill.
- The Siorra investigation remains open; the sewer detour produced no proof that she currently uses these passages.
- The party advanced to 8th level.

NEXT TIME...



MAGISTER SEPTIMUS VHAL Otari's Newest Resident?