

BEHOLD! THE AETHERNAUTS RISE!

THE 0.5 LEVEL SALTY FUNNEL ADVENTURE

Captain Guido, First Mate Skubagai and Quartermaster Warklaw have commandeered an Aether flyer from the hold of the crashed Star Jaeger. They have hidden it in the hold of another shipwreck, The Macronectes. The flyer is barely functional but keeps the ship just skimming the surface of the water giving it an eerie, otherworldly appearance as if a ghost ship. Add in the broken planks, shattered hull, tattered sails and the tentacled-heads of its crew and it strikes terror into all who see it. They are getting ready to plunder the high seas in search of materials needed to fix the flyer and obtain full flight ability. That will give them superiority over the seas of this world, and perhaps worlds beyond.

How to use this Adventure:

At the end of Sinking the Stercorarius, as an Escape from Crater Island option. The PCs have certainly seen enough action to warrant first level. If PCs have survived Sinking the Stercorarius they may level up to level 1 Unharvested, Salty Survivor or other class at the Judge's discretion.

If the party made it through Sinking the Stercorarius but managed to find a way off the island, it might fail and drop them near the Macronectes shipwreck.

If the party wants to be raiders on the high seas that will surely attract much unwanted attention.

A way to use the two new classes from Sinking the Stercorarius immediately. Level up one survivor for each player and have them join the crew of the Macronectes.

If your PCs arrive on a strange island via some bizarre Appendix N ending of another adventure or if an adventure ended in a bright flash of light. Amazing how many of them exist just to push plotlines around.

If you have a nautical adventure going but want to shipwreck the crew on an island that shouldn't exist and have the campaign take on a decidedly Appendix N sort of twist.

INTRODUCTION

After the Sinking of the Stercorarius from beneath them on its maiden voyage (see Sinking the Stercorarius), the officers have had a rather tumultuous time. Not to mention the fact that aliens now live on their heads, they can communicate without talking and breath water for periods of time. The world is a whole new place to them now and even the sky may not be the limit. From their new squid-like headwear they found out that the Star Jaeger is stranded and being recreated in order to

set it right and leave this world. So, they did what any newly tentacled pirates would do, they snuck aboard and stole what they could find. That turned out to be the lone shuttle that was capable of flight in the atmosphere of a planet and in the Aether space between the worlds. Plus, some other supplies.

THE MACRONECTES REVEALED

After some life-altering events including surviving a shipwreck and trekking across an island that should not be, the PCs find themselves at the far northeast ridge of Crater Island. Determined to find a way off of the island they have been searching for anything that might help.

Cresting the island's edge, you see tattered sails on a battered mast. Beneath it sits the deck of a ship that by the looks of it, should be at the bottom of the sea, or at the very least resting on its side in the small rocky inlet. Yet, there it sits upright and unmoving, as if it is not quite in the water that surrounds its keel. What appears to be a newly painted name plate on the back is easily readable as Macronectes.

The Officers are currently below decks working to get the Flyer locked into place. They have crafted a quick release frame to connect it to the ship's keel. A general **DC 15 INT** check will reveal that other work has been done on the ship recently as well, but no crew appears on the ship currently. The Macronectes has certainly seen better days. PCs with a maritime background can try a **DC 12 INT** check to know that the ship should not be floating, and from the looks of it was shipwrecked just days ago. There are fresh supplies on the main deck.

PCs can make their way down to the Macronectes. When they arrive nearby, they will see a makeshift gangplank. Stepping on the gangplank, alerts Warklaw to their presence as he was working just out of sight on the main deck. The Pivot Point below gives you an idea of how to prepare this interaction with a couple different ways the PCs might respond.



Pivot Point

Deal – The officers need crew and there's no need to fight. Warklaw knows every member of the Stercorarius crew and will greet them all by name. If PCs were one of the other groups (criminals, potential slaves, Elite) he may or may not know them. Captain Guido will know the Elite, Skubagai may recognize the others. The officers will offer a standard cut of any plunder they take once they set sail and will entice the players with the superior firepower and speed of the ship which means they will be more successful than other crews.

Deceive – The officers have line-of-sight telepathy for communication not deep thought reading. Still, they will get a +2 on an attempt to detect deception. However, they don't take offense and still attempt to recruit the PCs if they uncover the deception.

Fight – Warklaw and Guido are outfitted with a stun stick and an energy pistol. Skubagai refuses to use those weapons and utilizes his trident as both ranged and melee weapon. (see Sinking the Stercorarius Pirate Edition for character sheets and the main adventure for the weapon stats reference cards). The PCs could see these three as a menace, or a splinter group of the Aether Raiders. That could compel them to eliminate the Officers.

Walk Away – This is always an option. The PCs could try to make it off the island on their own. They might even do it. The Officers will not prevent them from leaving but will make one final appeal to them. "We have searched the island and there is no other way off of it unless you want to head back to the Star Jaeger." That might not be an option depending on if your PCs managed to damage or destroy it.

A little tension and wariness on the part of the PCs would be warranted if they just fought through the crew of the Star Jaeger or had any other interactions with them. Guido and the others aren't looking to convert crew, but they could attempt to make those arrangements if the PCs are interested. There are 2d3+2 recruiters in stasis on the deck of the Macronectes.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

Former crew can take up their old positions. Non-sailors can be tasked as needed. With the Flyer in the hold a lot of things normally required on the ship are now obsolete. Sails needn't be set or struck. Most of the jobs are navigation, lookout and prepping of weapons and boarding equipment. This can simply be summarized.

There is something extremely weird about this ship. It does not rock with the waves and the Officers are making no effort to get the sails to a usable state. When asked, Captain Guido says, "We have gone beyond the realm of normal sea-going vessels, sails are no longer a necessity and only act as

a disguise." Jobs on the ship are mostly prepping equipment in order to begin taking prizes on the open seas. A watch is set with each PC taking a turn in the crow's nest or on the main deck. Steering is always done by one of the Officers.

CATCH OF THE DAY

The ship glides across the water at a speed none of the PCs have seen before. Whatever powers the ship is magical or otherwise. Within hours the ship makes it to the trade lanes and may spot a target.

Give the PCs on watch a chance to find a good target with a Luck check. If they fail, they find a target with more trouble than it's worth. If the Macronectes crew has gunners, they can fire one round of cannons (6) at the target before the boarding. Each cannon hit, DC 14 AGI, gives the gunner a Luck roll. On a success, the hit kills 1d3+1 enemies. On a failure, it kills just 1 enemy. The Macronectes has a major advantage over any targets, it is not dependent on the wind speed or direction.

Things to consider going into battle:

- Fires should be extinguished, or they could be a danger
- Weapons should be distributed if they have not been.
- Sand should be spread on the main deck both to fight fires and to absorb blood from battle to keep it from getting slick.
- Buckets of water should be prepped for firefighting.
- Reloading cannon takes 2-5 minutes. Allow just one round of cannon fire from the Macronectes, see above.
- Targets will not have cannons on them because they are focused on speed.
- Raking (shooting down the keel) the target with cannon fire will do extra damage as the shots travel the length of the ship. Give the Gunners a DC 12 INT check to see if they realize this and relay that to the Officers prior to the attack.



THE GOOD TARGET

A trader on a spice run full to the brim with things easily sold in almost any port without many questions, and a smaller detail of fighting sailors. Hand-to-hand combat of this nature is difficult and dangerous. There are no rules of engagement and nothing to prevent one person from killing an enemy engaged with someone else. These are not well-trained fighters but could still overtake the crew in ten rounds or less.

SAILOR (2, PLUS 3 FOR EVERY 2 PCs): Init +0; ATK +1 Dagger/Club; 1d4 Dmg; AC 10; HP 8; SV Ref +1 Fort +0, Will +0

GUNNER (1, PLUS 1 FOR EVERY 2 PCs): Init +1; ATK +1 crossbow; 1d6 Dmg; Range 80/160/240 AC 10; HP 9; SV Ref +2 Fort +0, Will +1

The Officers have no need of the trader ship. However, if the PCs wish to part ways at the end of the adventure it can be towed to port as part of their cut and becomes theirs. Use a Dhow or a Lugger which were merchant vessels with small crews.

Booty Per PC

- 50 gp of spices (cinnamon, ginger, saffron, and salt).
- 10 gp of fabrics (samite, wool)
- 1/15th of weapons from combatants
- 6 silver bars (5 sp each)
- 5 semi-precious gems (5cp each)

The captain gets 3x this, other officers get 2x this.

THE TROUBLESOME TARGET

A trader under contract to a kingdom shuttling troops to a warfront. There will still be some valuable cargo on the ship, but it will be far more difficult to extract. Hand to hand combat of this nature is brutal. These troops are well-versed in hand-to-hand combat and deadly efficient at their jobs. It is entirely possible that they overwhelm the crew of the Macronectes in a handful of rounds. If things look grim, Guido will cut ties with the target and retreat. The Macronectes will outpace any ship it meets, and retreat is quick. Two gunners will be in the rigging as snipers with long guns (+3 ATK; 1d10 Dmg; Range 60/120; One shot every four rounds until they are killed.)

MILITARY (3, PLUS 2 PER PC): Init +2; ATK +1 longsword; 1d8 Dmg; AC 12; HP 11; SV Ref +0 Fort +1, Will +1

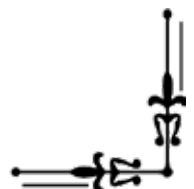
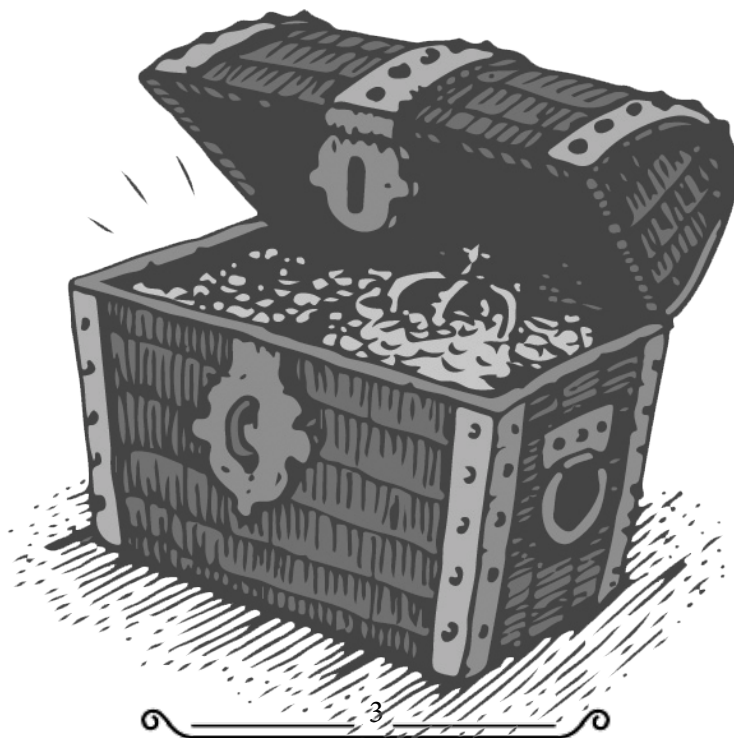
GUNNER (2, PLUS 1 PER PC): Init +1; ATK +2 Flintlock; 1d8 Dmg; Range 40/80 AC 11; HP 10; SV Ref +2 Fort +1 Will +1

Booty Per PC

- 1/15th of weapons from combatants
- 8 gold bars (10gp each)
- 7 silver bars (5gp each)
- 1 ruby (10gp)

The captain gets 3x this, other officers get 2x this.

Both targets will have various sundries such as food, fresh water, and standard shipboard supplies. Neither ship carries black powder, cannons or ammunition. Both may have maps or information about other potential targets.



SHOULD WE STAY OR SHOULD WE GO NOW?

With their first target taken the crew may now have a decision to make. Will they continue to crew with the officers, will they take their own ship and go separate ways, or will they end their nautical life and head for an inland adventure?

WRAPPING UP THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs plan to stay on the *Macronectes* it gives them the opportunity to sail the seas without having to worry about day-to-day management of the ship, at the cost of some free will and a large percentage of booty from each target. They will be responsible, under the watchful, yet secretive, eye of Quartermaster Warklaw, for selling off the booty and bringing the profits to the ship along with supplies for its next foray. Not everyone in the world is keen on working with strange squid-headed humanoids.

If the PCs plan to take their new ship and part ways, they may do that as well. However, they will need to crew up and outfit the ship for continued adventures. They can use the profits from this adventure to get moving. They will need to be skilled in daily operations, navigation and the like to be successful.

If the PCs leave the sea and head off for inland adventure, they might simply park the ship in port and use it as a base of operations if they kept it. Or they might try to sell it, or even hire it out. This is all up to the Judge.

Selling of a stolen ship is rather difficult. The PCs would have to make contact with the black market and even then they'll get just 1/10th of its actual worth. A smallish ship like a Dhow or Lugger are valued at 7,500gp. The PCs might attempt Luck or Personality while haggling to see if they can get more than 1/10th DC 15. For each point over 15 give them an additional 2%. If they fail, drop the offer to 7%.

- I. The *Macronectes* Revealed (15 minutes)
 - a. Meeting the Officers
 - b. Anchors Aweigh
- II. Catch of the Day (30-45 minutes)
 - a. Looting the Booty
- III. Should we stay or should we go now? (15 minutes)



