



An Adventure for Dragon Lords of Melniboné 

Slaves of Fate

A STRUGGLE AGAINST PIRATES
FROM PAN TANG



JASON DURALL
APPEL, HINDS, KHENDUP
MITCHELL, & KRANK

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Michael Moorcock





Slaves of fate

A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL IN THE WORLD OF *DRAGON LORDS*

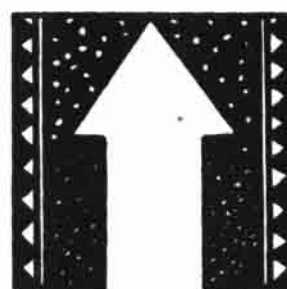


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Slaves of fate

*Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy, or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?*

—From "Holy Sonnets," John Donne.

Introduction

Slaves of Fate is an introductory-level adventure for Chaosium, Inc.'s *Dragon Lords of Melniboné* sourcebook for the d20 System. In addition to the *Dragon Lords* sourcebook, this adventure requires the *Dungeons and Dragons Third Edition Player's Handbook* by Wizards of the Coast. *The Dungeons and Dragons Third Edition Dungeon Master's Guide* and *Monster Manual* are also useful. *Slaves of Fate* is most suitable for a group of 1st–3rd level characters. Suggestions are given throughout this book on how to adjust the level of danger to be more appropriate for your player-character (PC) group.

It is not necessary that the PCs be together as a group at the beginning of this adventure. Pan Tangian or Melnibonéan PCs are not recommended here, though some suggestions on how to handle them are provided.

The only requirement is that the PCs begin in the vicinity of Vilmir, at the conclusion of any events in their background or adventures prior to this one.

This adventure is set a few years before Elric is deposed and leads the navies of the Young Kingdoms

against Melniboné, breaking the Dragon Isle's power forever.

Using this Adventure

Slaves of Fate is an adventure for the *Dragon Lords of Melniboné* sourcebook for the d20 System. It requires the use of Wizards of the Coast's *Dungeons & Dragons Third Edition Player's Handbook*; copies of Wizards of the Coast's *Dungeon Master's Guide* and *Monster Manual* are also useful. This adventure can also be used for Chaosium's *Elric!* and *Stormbringer Fifth Edition*, and non-player-character (NPC) attributes suitable for that game are available at www.chaosium.com in the *Stormbringer* role-playing game section.

Sections of this adventure in outlined boxes with a gray background and an "Open Game Content" header are Open Game Content for the d20 System. Character and creature statistics are Open Game Content, and are designated as such with gray backgrounds and the letters "OGC." This material is copyright Wizards of the Coast and the d20 System, and a licensing agreement explaining these terms is printed on page 85 of this adventure book.

Important notes alerting the DM are in outlined boxes with a gray background but no header.

Using this Adventure with *Elric!* or *Stormbringer Fifth Edition*

Though this adventure is written for the new *Dragon Lords of Melniboné* sourcebook for the d20 System, it is an easy matter to use it with the original *Elric!* or





Stormbringer Fifth Edition rules. Write-ups for all significant NPCs and demons can be found in either of these core rules books. Additionally, *Sailing on the Seas of Fate*, a supplement for *Elric!*, contains invaluable information on sea-faring adventures and combat for DMs and players wanting more depth to this aspect of their adventures.

Dungeon Master Summary

Slaves of Fate opens with the PCs awakening to find themselves captive in the hold of the *Virago*, a Vilmirian pirate vessel whose crewpeople are trying their hand at slavery. The ship is en route to meet with some Pan Tangians who are seeking slaves, particularly those of a special bloodline. The adventure opens in the middle of this action, both to provide a means of bringing the characters together in one place, and to give them a common goal. The PCs will likely ask the other prisoners about themselves, where they all are, and what is going to happen next.

Their captors on the *Virago* meet with *Chardros's Lament*, a Pan Tang slave galley, on the edge of the Dragon Sea. The slavers come onboard to inspect the PCs and other slaves. One of them, a Pan Tangian wizard-priest, brings his "pet" creature onboard. The creature, named Omerginroul, is a blue-skinned being from another plane, sacred to the Chaos goddess Eequor. It has the special ability to travel the planes in a limited fashion, but needs a small amount of blood to activate this power. Recently captured by the Pan Tangians, it is seeking its freedom. The creature has misled its master into believing that the blood must be of a special type, and it is hoping to find some aid from other captives. Omerginroul assesses the PCs along with the other captives, and announces that one or more of them is of the appropriate bloodline and suitable for purchase.

Before the transaction is finished, a Melnibonéan battle-barge appears on the horizon, seemingly in pursuit of the Pan Tangians, whom they often prey upon in this area. When it becomes clear that the Pan Tangians are ready to sacrifice the Vilmirians for the chance to escape, the pirates free their prisoners and a melee erupts between the Vilmirian and Pan Tangian ships. In the confusion, the creature manages to draw blood from one of the "special" bloodline characters, and a large, tumultuous gateway between the planes opens. The Pan Tangian and Vilmirian vessels are

drawn into this dimensional gate, unable to steer clear of it, while the Melnibonéans draw back and avoid it.

On the other side of the plane gate, a violent storm forces the Vilmirian ship onto the rocks just offshore of a mid-sized, rocky island. The PCs, along with some other captives, pirates, and a few marooned Pan Tangians, awake on or near this island, with the wrecked freebooter ship a distance out in the water, partially submerged.

It seems as if the only avenue to return home is for the PCs to find the blue creature and attempt to bargain with it to return them home. Meanwhile, on the other side of the island, the Pan Tang slave galley has landed safely. The Pan Tangians begin seeking Omerginroul, who has gone into hiding.

Unbeknownst to the PCs and the Pan Tangians, this island is on a plane sacred to Eequor, sanctuary to her female worshippers who fled Pan Tang's persecution of Eequor's worshippers. This mysterious island was once a strange and beautiful city made to reflect Eequor's glory, but is now just ruins and a decrepit temple, with mysterious catacombs beneath all, connecting to some sea-caves. The temple is still home to Eequor's loyal priestesses and their supernatural guardians, who do not take kindly to the intruders upon their island home. Meanwhile, the Melnibonéans have opened a gate of their own, seeking something. . . .

In a race against time, the PCs must choose what to do. Will they form an alliance with their enemies, make desperate bargains with those they do not trust, or will they meet all their foes with weapons in hand, hoping that force of arms will prevail and find a solution . . . a way home?

Part 1: Captives

In which our heroes awaken on a pirate ship, discovering that slave collars from the sinister nation of Pan Tang await them. They meet fellow captives, their captors, their fearsome new masters, and a strange creature, who, like them, shares their doom. An even greater enemy, however, lurks at the horizon, and escape is but a circle of fire away. . . .





"Where Am I?"

The following can be read (or paraphrased) to the PCs:

You wake to a mixture of sounds—creaking timbers, flapping sails, clanking chains—the dull roar of the ocean.

Footsteps and voices sound above you, and you realize that you are not where you were when you went to sleep. Your mouth and nose are burning, full of the smoke of something acid and unpleasant, but this smell is clearing away to be replaced by an herbal sweetness.

Something is odd—you feel as if you've been drugged and are just waking up from a long sleep on a hard surface. Your body is sore, confirming this.

It is dark, and you are lying on the floor. Slits of light shine through the boards above your head, and a bright column of light pours forth from a half-open door set in the ceiling near the center of the room. A tilted ladder-stair leads up to it.

You realize that not only are you are lying on the floor in the hold of some ship, but that you are chained by your wrists and neck. Around you are others, also in chains, whispering to each other and themselves in a variety of accents and languages as they wake. Some are sobbing. Others are cursing and pulling at their chains.

You are now a slave, or on your way to becoming one.

All of the PCs wake at roughly the same time. They are in the hold of a Vilmirian pirate ship called the *Virago* (though they do not know this yet). The cramped hold is full of thick smoke, quickly dispersing. This smoke was from a powerful narcotic herb, which was burned to keep the prisoners unconscious and dreaming while in transit. Now that their captors want to sell them, the slaves must be awake and alert for their buyers. The captors have thus opened up the hatches and burned some other sweet-smelling herbs in a small brazier in the ship's hold.

A character making an Alchemy roll with a DC (Difficulty Class) 20, a Knowledge/Nature roll at DC 20, or a Scent/Taste roll at DC 25 will recognize the first herbal smoke as *feldas* leaves, and the second, pleasant-smelling leaves as *aserakkon* grass. A druid character will instantly identify both herbs and know their qualities. Both herbs are described in the adjacent sidebar.

Open Game Content

New Poison and Antidote

Following is the description of the herbal narcotic used to drug the characters to remain sleeping, and another type of herbal remedy used as an antidote.

Feldas Leaves

Type: Inhaled DC 15

Initial Damage: 0

Secondary Damage: Unconsciousness

Price: 100 bronzes

Typically used by slavers or those who would keep captives in a drug-induced sleep, these herbs are dried and burned near the desired victim, who will have a drugged, hallucination-filled sleep. The smoke of *feldas* leaves is easily countered by *aserakkon* grass (described below). Victims usually wake up quickly when this smoke clears. *Feldas* trees are found in the Forest of Troos, but grow on the outskirts, making the leaves easy and safe to gather. The leaves can be soaked in wines or other alcohol, dried, and burned, to add an intoxicating sensation to their sleep-inducing properties. This herb has an acrid smell and leaves a bitter residue in the throat and a lingering ache in the sinuses. It is not traditionally used for recreational purposes.

Aserakkon Grass

Type: Inhaled DC 12

Initial Damage: 0

Secondary Damage: Wakefulness

Price: 50 bronzes

Another cheap and easy-to-obtain herb, *aserakkon* grass grows in the low steppes of the Sighing Desert, near the border of Ilmiora, and is notable for its ability to counter the effects of *feldas* leaves, and to bring the subjects of a non-magical sleep to full wakefulness quickly. Characters who are sleeping must save vs. Fortitude at a DC of 12 or be wakened quickly. *Aserakkon* grass smoke has a clear, sweet, flowery smell.





The small brazier is full of a bundle of smoldering aserakkon grass, which is not burning hot enough to ignite much more than paper.

Any and all arms, armor, gear, magic items (including binding items), and equipment—in short, everything owned by the PCs—has been taken from them. They are still clothed, though any especially fine items (including rings, jewelry, etc.) have been stolen. Cloaks, jackets, gloves, belts, and the like are also missing. All of the PCs are down to their last level of clothing, though none of them are naked.

If a PC keeps items concealed or secreted about his or her body or garments, check the character's Conceal Object skill (described in *Dragon Lords of Melniboné*) for each object. Determine the DC according to the object and its intended hiding place.

The PCs are not alone in this hold. Six other people are also chained up in there. The captives' hands and feet are manacled and chained together, and each person wears a slave collar with two long chains attached—one leading forward to the next captive, and the other leading behind, linking all of them in a row. These chains are forged of finely tempered steel, and are fairly new.

The DM should decide who is chained in what order.

"How Did I Get Here?"

At this point, the PCs are probably demanding to know how they came to be in such dire surroundings. These pirates have used a number of methods to find their captives, and the PCs have been unfortunate enough to be among their victims. Here are a few explanations as to how the PCs ended up chained in the hold of a slave galley, which can be read aloud to them.

- * *While drinking in an inn in one of the coastal cities in Vilmir (Belan, Jurdis, Vilmiro, or Dolgar; for some examples), you drank too much, or perhaps the wine was drugged. The last thing you remember is falling asleep with the sounds of merriment around you.*
- * *You were traveling, and thought to stay the night at a small inn alongside the road near Vilmiro, in Vilmir. During the middle of the night, you woke up to the smell of something burning . . . and you swiftly fell back into a deep, drug-induced sleep full of strange dreams. Now you wake, and the same burning smell is around you. Is this another dream?*

- * *You last remember sleeping on the common room floor of an inn in the Foreigner's Quarter in Dolgar. Though you had warnings that it was a lawless place, you had little choice, as the price was right. You heard footsteps, and then turned to see something swing towards you in the darkness. Whack! As you wake more fully, you feel the sore lump of a bruise upon your temple.*
- * *"Who would have imagined that the coachmen were in league with the highwaymen?" you thought, as the brigands divested you of your wealth and weapons, throwing them into a sack. You were chained, blindfolded, and gagged. You remember being in the back of a wagon (ironically, the one you had paid passage on), and a few hours later, you were taken onboard a ship in chains, where a thick smoke quickly overpowered your senses and ushered you into a dark and hellish dream-world. Welcome to the world of wakefulness. It's going to get worse, you suspect.*

These quick backgrounds can be repeated and modified as required to suit each PC or situation. More than one PC would probably have the same situation, as it would be more convenient for the slavers to gather a few captives the same way, at the same time.

A method that inspires creative roleplaying from the players is to let them each briefly describe the misfortune that put their characters in the hands of the pirates.

Unusual PCs and Demons

Though this adventure doesn't allow much time for the PCs to get to know their captors, circumstances might differ, and sometimes the unexpected will happen. It's possible that one or more of the PCs are spell-casters, Melnibonéans, half-Melnibonéans, Pan Tangians, Myyrrhn, have bound demons, or are from some land or plane unknown in the Young Kingdoms. Here is how those characters might be treated differently by the pirates.

Spell-casters: If it is apparent that they are magic-users, sorcerers and wizard PCs will wake up with their mouths gagged, and their hands chained behind their backs.

Melnibonéans: Melnibonéan PCs will also be gagged, though they will likely be treated with a bit more caution and courtesy, as they are going to be more valuable to the Pan Tangians. A DM wishing to add some backstory might have a Melnibonéan character pursued by





the captain of the battle-barge for some past actions. Half-Melnibonéans will be treated equally, though with a bit more contempt for being half-breeds.

Pan Tangians: The pirates will treat any Pan Tangian PCs with some caution and a bit more courtesy. They will refrain from beating or otherwise harming the Pan Tangian, figuring that if the PC is a noble or citizen of Pan Tang, they will apologize and be rewarded. If the PC is an outlaw, then they want to get a maximum profit.

Myrrrh: A winged Myrrrh character will wake up with his or her hands and feet chained, and will definitely be chained between two other captives, to minimize his or her chances of flying away.

Demons: If a PC has one or more bound demons of human appearance, they will likely be chained alongside the other prisoners. If the bound demon is inhuman in appearance or size, then the DM should decide what happened to the demon when the character was captured. If a bound demon was also captured, then it will likely be penned or bound somewhere on the vessel. Perhaps it is hiding somewhere, waiting to help free its binder. (Then again, perhaps it's plotting to get the binder killed in order to free itself.) The range of demon abilities, appearances, and sizes makes this a matter best left to the DM. However, it is not recommended that the PC begin the scenario with his or her bound demon(s) able to act significantly. Perhaps the demon(s) is dead, or the Vilmirians have taken possession of the binding item(s). (If the DM kills off PCs' demons at the beginning of the adventure, he or she might wish to provide replacements over the course of the adventure to make up for the loss.)

Others: The pirates will likely treat them well, but cautiously, hoping that they will earn some extra coin for such a rare specimen. If the characters have any outwardly obvious traits that are dangerous (pointed teeth, claws, horns, etc.), these will be prepared against in some manner. (The characters may be gagged with stout leather, their hands may be manacled against their bodies, etc.)

The Other Captives

Looking around the hold of the ship, the PCs can see there are six other captives who are chained with them.

These men and women look equally concerned, and they seem to be, like the PCs, from a number of countries about the Young Kingdoms. All of them are reasonably fit and in good shape, as the slavers were careful about whom they chose.

The other captives are listed below, with pronunciation suggestions for their names in parentheses. As with the *Dragon Lords of Melniboné* rule book, modifiers for ability scores and feats are already figured into skills listed for all characters and creatures in this book.

LINAULT BRIN (lin-olt brin), peasant from Vilmir

Male, 37 years old. Average looking, with brown hair and blue eyes. He wears a thick beard, and is clad in a plain outfit of a blue jerkin and gray breeches. His accent is thick and rustic, and his hands bear the calluses and scars from a lifetime working as a blacksmith in a small village. He appears quite strong, with thick shoulders and wrists. Calm, and mostly quiet, he will bide his time and make a decision based on what is right for survival, with a second priority of doing the right thing. However, Linault is trustworthy and won't betray people once he's given his word. He has a wife (Melorra) and a son (Toen), both of whom are waiting for him back at home. He was heading home to Jurdis, from Belan, when he was waylaid in a small country inn. Linault's never been in anything more serious than a barroom brawl, though he is quite handy with a hammer and his fists.

What He Knows: He's been listening to the captors since he woke up, and knows that the ship is on the way to meet with a Pan Tang slaver vessel. Beyond this, Linault is up for any escape plans, but would be more apt to follow an escape plan when they're on dry land rather than surrounded by water. He knows that their possessions are somewhere on the ship, locked in the captain's cabin.

Level 3 Expert (Blacksmith)



Chaos 10, Balance 17, Law 9

Abilities:	Str 17	Dex 11	Con 13
	Int 10	Wis 12	Cha 13

Hit Points: 16	Initiative: +0
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Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 10 (no armor)





Attacks: Dagger, hammer or unarmed strike +5; thrown dagger +2 ranged; thrown hammer +2 ranged

Damage: Dagger or hammer 1d4+3; unarmed strike 1d3+3

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +4

Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +3, Conceal Object +2, Concentration +4, Craft (Armorer) +2, Craft (General Smithcraft) +8, Craft (Weaponsmith) +2, Disable Device +2, Knowledge (Metallurgy) +7, Profession (Blacksmith) +6, Search +2, Use Rope +2

Feats: Martial Weapon Proficiency (Hammer), Skill Focus (Craft [General Smithcraft]), Skill Focus (Knowledge [Metallurgy])

* COMPANIONS IN CAPTIVITY *

(BELOW) From left to right, the PCs' fellow slaves: Geirmund the Hare, Osa Dileel, Linault Brin, Whyss, Dierre of the Black Shores, and Korune.

Special Qualities: Armor Proficiency (Light)

Possessions: (confiscated) Blacksmith's tools, dagger (+1 masterwork), belt pouch (contains candle, flint & steel, small mirror, soap, whetstone). Linault had a horse, cart, 387 bronzes, and a load of iron bars for metalworking use. The wagon and iron were abandoned, the horse stolen and sold, and the bronzes taken by his captors.

OSA DILEEL (oh-sah di-leel), trader from Filkhar
Female, 43 years old. She is in good shape for her age, and seems a decade younger. Her hair is brown, extremely long, and worn in four braids which she has clasped with bronze rings. Her garments are gray and green, and would look much nicer had not someone cut off the ornamentation they originally displayed. She was on a trade ship, heading from Raschil to Dolgar, and was waiting for new cargo to be loaded, when she ended up captive onboard the *Virago*. She has met with rough times before in her experience as a trader, and has fought asca and on land before, though mostly in skirmishes to defend her wares or trading caravans.





What She Knows: She was captured while asea, and saw many of the other prisoners being brought aboard. She thusly knows the name of the ship, the captain's name, and some of the pirate crew's names. She also knows that they're capturing people to be sold as slaves. Osa's surprised that she, Dierre, and any other female prisoners weren't mistreated—an uncommon occurrence among pirates and cutthroats like their captors. She has heard that the Pan Tangians are looking for healthy slaves in good condition, that there's something special they're looking for, and that they will pay extra if they get it. She also knows where the PCs' gear is, along with her own.

Level 4 Expert (Merchant)

OGC

Chaos 9, Balance 5, Law 20

Abilities: Str 10 Dex 10 Con 10
Int 14 Wis 13 Cha 14

Hit Points: 23 **Initiative:** +0

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 10 (no armor)

Attacks: Club or unarmed strike +3; dagger (masterwork) +5; thrown dagger +5 ranged

Damage: Club 1d6, dagger 1d4, unarmed strike 1d3

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +5

Skills: Appraise +9, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +10, Handle Animal +7, Intuit Direction +6, Listen +7, Profession (Trader) +10, Ride +7, Sense Motive +7, Speak Language (Lesh), Speak Language (Melnibonéan), Speak Language (Mong)

Feats: Skill Focus (Gather Information), Skill Focus (Profession [Trader]), Weapon Focus (Dagger)

Special Qualities: Armor Proficiency (Light)

Possessions: (confiscated) Dagger (+1 masterwork). Osa Dileel had over 10,000 bronzes in currency and gems for purchasing trade goods, but the pirates have taken her money.

GEIRMUND THE HARE (gare-mund), escaped slave and thief from Nadsokor

Male, 19 years old. Nervous and thin, he was born in Bakshaan, and became a thief. He was eventually captured by the Pan Tangians and enslaved in their country for a year. He escaped from one of their galleys on a raiding mission, and swam ashore back in Ilmar, heading for Nadsokor. That was four years ago, and he travels throughout Ilmiora and Vilmir to ply his trade. His

nickname comes from his speed—he is an extremely fast and agile runner. Geirmund has several tattoos on his arms and neck marking him as a Pan Tang slave. He still has nightmares of his time in Pan Tang, and will do anything to avoid going back there. He was captured asea after he stole a small sailing boat near Belan. A child of the streets, and the rough living in Nadsokor, he is quick with a knife and will not hesitate to use it, though he is not by nature a killer.

What He Knows: Geirmund is only too familiar with the way the sorcerers of Pan Tang keep their slaves, and will break down shivering in the middle of recounting the horrors they have inflicted upon him, and will likely perform upon the others. He reveals that their treatment of escaped slaves is far worse, and he'll vow to do anything to prevent being taken alive. He will support any plan, harebrained or suicidal, if it involves not being enslaved, but will also make a break for his own freedom the first chance he sees. He is the best source for information about Pan Tang, if it can be gotten from him without too much distress.

Level 2 Rogue

OGC

Chaos 14, Balance 9, Law 1

Abilities: Str 12 Dex 18 Con 16
Int 11 Wis 8 Cha 14

Hit Points: 16 **Initiative:** +4

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 14 (+4 Dex, no armor)

Attacks: Dagger +2, unarmed strike +2; thrown dagger +5 ranged

Damage: Dagger 1d4+1, unarmed strike 1d3+1

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +7, Will -1

Skills: Appraise +4, Balance +6, Bluff +5, Climb +4, Conceal Object +5, Hide +7, Jump +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +6, Pick Pocket +8, Search +3, Sense Motive +2, Speak Language (Mabden), Spot +2, Swim +3, Tumble +6

Feats: Dodge, Run

Special Qualities: Armor Proficiency (Light), Evasion, Sneak Attack (+1d6), Traps

Possessions: (confiscated) Daggers (3), belt pouch (small trinkets, fishing line and hook, sewing needle and thread, junk jewelry, empty ink vial, whetstone, magnifying glass), thieves' tools.





WHYSS (wees), sailor from Vilmir

Male, 31 years old. Bare-chested, with a number of tattoos and markings from many different ports, he is tan, lean, and his short hair is bleached nearly white-blond. His eyes are bright green, and his nose has been broken, several times. Whyss is wearing sailor-style breeches and high sandals, and has a long knife carved of bone concealed in the straps of his left sandal. He is fairly amoral, and tough as they come, and will gladly sell out any group he is in for a better chance of survival. Despite this, he is charming and sociable, and gives every impression of being a fair, decent man with a rough-and-tumble nature. This belies the fact that he can, and will, kill without remorse or hesitation, either face-to-face or against an unaware victim. Whyss was drugged and captured while sleeping on an inn's common room floor one night in Vilmiro.

What He Knows: Whyss has the most accurate appraisal of their situation—that it's some pirates trying out slavery for the first time. He'll recognize their approximate place in the ocean when he sees the outside, and will be able to give any advice about what to expect from the pirate crew. Being fairly well traveled, Whyss knows a few of the pirates personally, and given the chance, he'll be taunting or cursing them when the characters are on deck. He'll also be the voice of reason if the PCs plan an escape—as to be trapped below the decks is certain death. Whyss thinks his best chance is to try something when the captives are on solid land and have more options. He is the best source of information about the Dragon Sea, and will be able to identify where the *Virago* is, based on the color of the water and other subtle signs. If anyone has any questions about ships or pirates in general, Whyss is the man to talk to.

Level 4 Expert (Sailor), Level 1 Rogue

Chaos 17, Balance 10, Law 5

OGC

Abilities:	Str 12	Dex 17	Con 12
	Int 12	Wis 10	Cha 11

Hit Points: 24 **Initiative:** +3

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 13 (+3 Dex, no armor)

Attacks: Dagger (masterwork) +6; unarmed strike +4; thrown dagger +8 ranged; javelin +6 ranged

Damage: Dagger 1d4+1; javelin 1d6+1; unarmed strike 1d3+1

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +4

Skills: Appraise +3, Balance +9, Bluff +2, Climb +6, Conceal Object +6, Gather Information +3, Intuit Direction +2, Jump +6, Knowledge (Nature) +2, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Sailing +7, Search +5, Sense Motive +4, Speak Language (Melnibonéan), Speak Language (Mabden), Spot +9, Swim +7, Tumble +7, Use Rope +4

Feats: Alertness, Ambidexterity, Armor Proficiency (Light), Weapon Focus (Dagger)

Special Qualities: Sneak Attack (+1d6), Traps

Possessions: (on person) Concealed dagger, (confiscated) dagger (masterwork +1), belt pouch (fishing line and hook, small very sharp whittling knife, small chunks of bone and horn in various stages of being whittled, long needle, cloth map of Young Kingdoms seas, signet ring, small mirror, and a small jade figurine of Straasha).

KORUNE (kor-oon), amnesiac slave from Vilmir?

This mysterious fellow is roughly 30 years old. Tall and attractive, he is blond haired and has brown eyes, but hasn't been bathing or taking care of himself for days. He is dressed in tattered finery of Melniboné. He is vacant-eyed and mutters to himself often, speaking of himself in the second person. He is feeble-minded and seems to be friendly with everyone. Sometimes he babbles in High Speech or Low Melnibonéan, and his manners are those of a well-treated slave. Korune is in excellent health, despite his amnesia, caused by some shock or horrific sight or ordeal, which broke his sanity. He bows, scrapes, and grovels often, and calls all those around him "lord" or "lady," despite their social rank, and even whether they be friend or enemy.

In his former life, Korune was a slave, scribe, and eventual lover to a Melnibonéan lady named Jessamyn. Her husband discovered their affair, and struck Korune with a magical insanity and then plotted a torture session set to last for several days. Finding the slave, Jessamyn put the feeble-minded Korune on a Vilmirian transport off Imrryr, rather than letting him be killed. There, the pirates of the *Virago* found him sleeping on the docks of Vilmiro. They took him prisoner by offering him a warm meal onboard and then chaining him in the hold as their first prisoner. Since then, Jessamyn has done away with her husband in a suitably unpleasant and cruel manner, and is ready to





seek out her discarded lover, whom she has a nostalgic fondness for.

Korune does not know it, but Jessamyn's sister Aniona is the captain of a Melnibonéan battle-barge, and is surreptitiously seeking him, as a favor to her sister.

What He Knows: He's next to useless in this regard, being unable to remember how he came onto the boat, much less what he thinks his fate will be. Korune will agree to any plan, and promptly forget it or get the directions wrong. He might also let slip some bit of information regarding his past, such as offering to lay out proper garments for a Melnibonéan festival, or he might try to scribe a document detailing any escape plan. Fortunately, he's quiet, and will keep silent if told to be. Information about Melniboné could be brought out of him, if done carefully. He also knows the names of the captain, first mate, and another couple of pirates.

Korune's amnesia and current mental state is not a feature of the adventure, nor is the goal of restoring him to his full faculties an easy task or one in the scope of this adventure. He is presented as a NPC whose use is not immediately apparent, but if he is encouraged and helped, his potential for magic use and other knowledge can be of some assistance. He can also be of use in the event that the characters meet the Melnibonéans.

Note: Asterisked numbers indicate that the number before the "/" is his current modifier or attribute, while numbers after the "/" are his regular modifier or attribute.

Level 3 Aristocrat, Level 1 Sorcerer

OGC

Chaos 19, Balance 18, Law 9

Abilities: Str 11 Dex 12 Con 11
Int 4/16* Wis 4/12* Cha 4/15*

Hit Points: 16 **Initiative:** +1

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 11 (+1 Dex, no armor)

Attacks: Dagger +2; thrown dagger +3 ranged

Damage: Dagger 1d4

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +2/+6*

Skills: Alchemy +0/+6*, Appraise -2/+4*, Bluff +0/+5*, Concentration +3, Craft (Calligraphy) +3/+9*,

Diplomacy +2/+7*, Gather Information +2/+7*, Handle Animal +0/+5*, Innuendo -1/+3*, Knowledge (Arcana) +0/+6*, Listen +0/+4*, Profession (Scribe) +3/+7*, Ride +3, Scent/Taste +2, Scry +1/+7*, Sense Motive -1/+3*, Speak Language (Mabden), Speak Language (Melnibonéan), Speak Language (High Speech), Spellcraft +0/+6*, Spot -1/+3*

Feats: Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Craft [Calligraphy]), Skill Focus (Profession [Scribe])

Special Qualities: Armor Proficiency (All), Martial Weapon Proficiency (All), Shield Proficiency

Spells: (currently unable to use magic) Arcane Mark, Change Self, Comprehend Languages, Daze, Mage Hand, Read Magic, Resistance, Unseen Servant

Possessions: none.

DIERRE (dee-air-uh) OF THE BLACK SHORES, troubadour from the Purple Towns

Female, 20 years old. Originally of noble birth, she chose to become an entertainer during her schooling, and has since embarked on an exploration of the lands of the Young Kingdoms. Dierre is smaller and more slender than most of the folk of the Purple Towns, and is fine-featured and attractive in a friendly, kid-sister sort of way. She has black hair and brown eyes, and is full of vigor. Her garb is finely made but functional, made up of a dark brown leather jerkin with a blue shirt beneath it, and snug leather pants, with bulky knee-high boots. Though she has been trained in self-defense with a longsword or dagger, she is not violent, and has never killed anyone. Should she be forced to do so, it will undoubtedly be upsetting and cause her considerable distress.

What She Knows: She's heard stories about the Pan Tangians and their sacrifices, and is among the more levelheaded. She would support whatever means of escape is the safest, and perhaps could lead to a negotiation or bargained release. She is the most informed of the NPCs about the lands of the Young Kingdoms and Melniboné.

Level 1 Bard

OGC

Chaos 5, Balance 9, Law 20

Abilities: Str 10 Dex 15 Con 10
Int 14 Wis 11 Cha 17

Hit Points: 6 **Initiative:** +2

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 12 (+2 for Dex, no armor)





Background on the Young Kingdoms

This information is a summary of that provided in *Dragon Lords of Melniboné*.

Vilmir

Vilmir is mostly known for its navies and its rigid devotion to the precepts of the Church of Law. There are inequities of wealth, with a near-starving peasant class kept poor by hereditary nobility, but for the most part the nation is not known for violence or unrest, caught up as it is in the grip of a fanatical worship of Law. Vilmir is the most technologically advanced of the Young Kingdoms, though this is somewhat stifled by the rigid adherence to the tenets of Law in all aspects of daily life. The southeast coast, however, is somewhat more rugged than the rest of the country. This area is home to Vilmir's navy and the bulk of its naval power. Here, rotted hulks of old ships used as prisons for convicts are moored next to privateer and merchant vessels alike. As much of Vilmir's navy is made up of privateers—licensed pirates in service to the king—things are a little less formal and law-abiding in ports such as Ketch, a wild and dangerous center for piracy.

Pan Tang

The denizens of the island of Pan Tang are second only to Melnibonéans in evil, and the lords and ladies of the Dragon Isle have long since stopped caring what happens in the Young Kingdoms. Outsiders are banned from visiting Pan Tang, and the only news of that place is whispered in secret dread, smuggled out by the few survivors. Pan Tangians, in their crude attempts to mimic Melnibonéans, have become famous for their madness and their twisted evil. They worship the Lords of Chaos, sacrificing countless slaves to their dark gods. The iron-clad streets of Hwamgaarl, their capital city, are covered in the dried blood of captive slaves, while the perpetually screaming, magically-frozen remains of their victims howl throughout the night, accompanying the fresh screams of slaves who meet their deaths daily at the hands of the sorcerers and priests of Pan Tang, or in

their horrifying gladiatorial matches. Few slaves live more than a few years in Pan Tang. As a result, their galleys prey the coastlines of the rest of the Young Kingdoms, catching any unfortunates to keep as slaves back on their hellish island.

Melniboné

The inhuman lords and ladies of Melniboné once ruled all that would later be known as the Young Kingdoms. After almost being defeated by the Dharzi and then losing control of Lormyr, they grew bored with rule, and retreated to their Dragon Isle, their drugs, and their sorceries. Since then, their involvement with the other nations of the Young Kingdoms has dwindled each year, with the Melnibonéans holding only a passing interest in what is happening outside the walls of Imrryr, the Dreaming City. While once their golden-hulled battle-barges were the dread of all who sailed the Oldest Ocean and the Dragon Sea, now they are infrequently seen, and the sailors of the Young Kingdoms regularly dare to trespass on the waters once used exclusively by Melniboné. Humans are not allowed to roam the city of Imrryr without escort, and few return alive from such visits. Escaped slaves tell that their lives in Imrryr rivaled those of nobles in poorer countries of the Young Kingdoms, though the mind-controlling drugs, casual cruelties and tortures, and everyday encounters with sorcerous horrors made it a trial to remain sane.

The Dragon Sea

This body of water is located between Melniboné and Pan Tang, bordered by Vilmir and the Serpent's Teeth. Normally a dangerous enough area due to the deep, wild waters and powerful weather, this sea is also home to many strange beasts and leviathans. Finally, the Melnibonéans claim the Dragon Sea as theirs, and their battle-barges often patrol it, though less so now than in past ages. As a result, more and more ships are daring to skirt its waters, though few will cross it with impunity.





Attacks: Dagger +0; longsword +0; unarmed strike +0; thrown dagger +2 ranged

Damage: Dagger 1d4; longsword 1d8; unarmed strike 1d3

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +2

Skills: Bluff +6, Climb +2, Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +5, Knowledge (Geography) +5, Listen +4, Perform (Oratory) +5, Perform (Harp) +7, Sense Motive +2, Speak Language (Melnibonéan), Speak Language (Mabden), Speak Language (Mong), Speak Language ('pande), Spot +2, Swim +3

Feats: Alertness, Endurance

Special Qualities: Armor Proficiency (Light, Medium), Bardic Knowledge, Bardic Music, Martial Weapon Proficiency (Longsword), Shield Proficiency

Spells: Ghost Sound, Prestidigitation

Possessions: (confiscated) Bedroll, shoulder satchel (bell, small lamp and oil, flint and steel, ink pen, vials of colored ink, nearly blank journal, several loose sheets of paper, dog-eared copy of *Sojourner's Guide to the Northern Continent*, sealing wax stick, change of clothing (entertainer's outfit), belt pouch (soap, makeup, small mirror, needle and thread), minor costume jewelry, non-valuable holy symbols of Theril and Goldar, harp in watertight carrying bag, longsword. Dierre had around 245 bronzes in her coin pouch, but these have been taken.

Sharing Information

The reactions of the other captives to the PCs and to their shared predicament varies depending on their personalities and what the PCs do. All of them are in the same situation, after all, and their actions and dialogue should reflect that.

Information they might be able to provide about Vilmir, Pan Tang, Melniboné, and the Dragon Sea is in "Background on the Young Kingdoms" (page 14). Any further information about the Young Kingdoms can be gotten from *Dragon Lords of Melniboné*.

None of these NPCs is essential to this adventure, though Korune will be useful if the PCs interact with the Melnibonéans. If the DM feels that six NPCs in addition to all their PCs is too many people to account for, then deleting any or all of them can be done easily, by simply not including them. It is more effective to "red-shirt" them, having them killed or lost in the

initial fray, to provide some drama and intensity to the threat of doom throughout this adventure.

Alternately, a DM wishing to include more prisoners could use the sample characters from the "Beginning Adventurers" section or could adapt NPCs provided in the "Young Kingdoms Digest" in the *Dragon Lords of Melniboné* rulebook.

The Virago

This vessel, based out of the Vilmirian port of Kletch, is a large cog, a single-masted sailing ship, around 90 feet in length and 25 feet wide. She is manned by 27 rogues and pirates who alternate as sailors and raiders, and has ample room for cargo. The ship is somewhat the worse for wear, having served as a merchant vessel in calmer times, and now is owned by a cautious freebooter named Vartan Vensk.

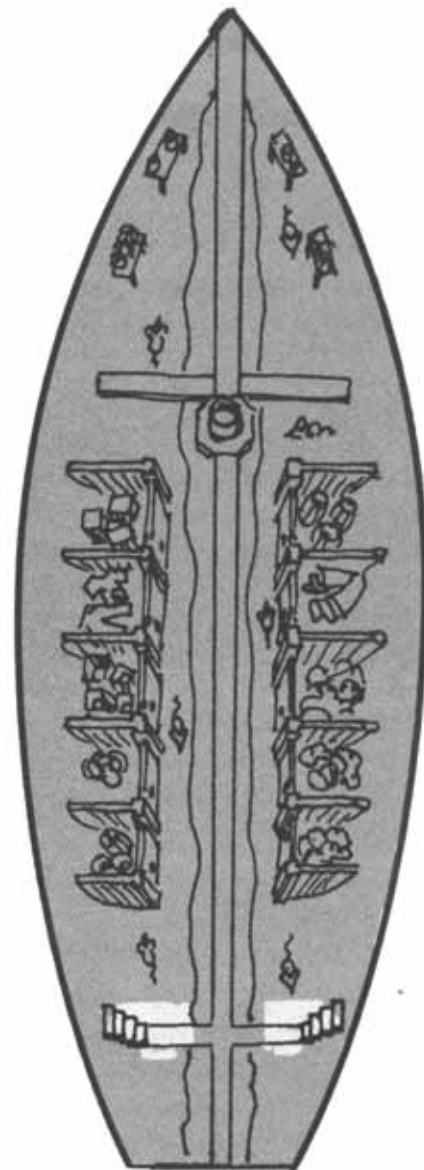
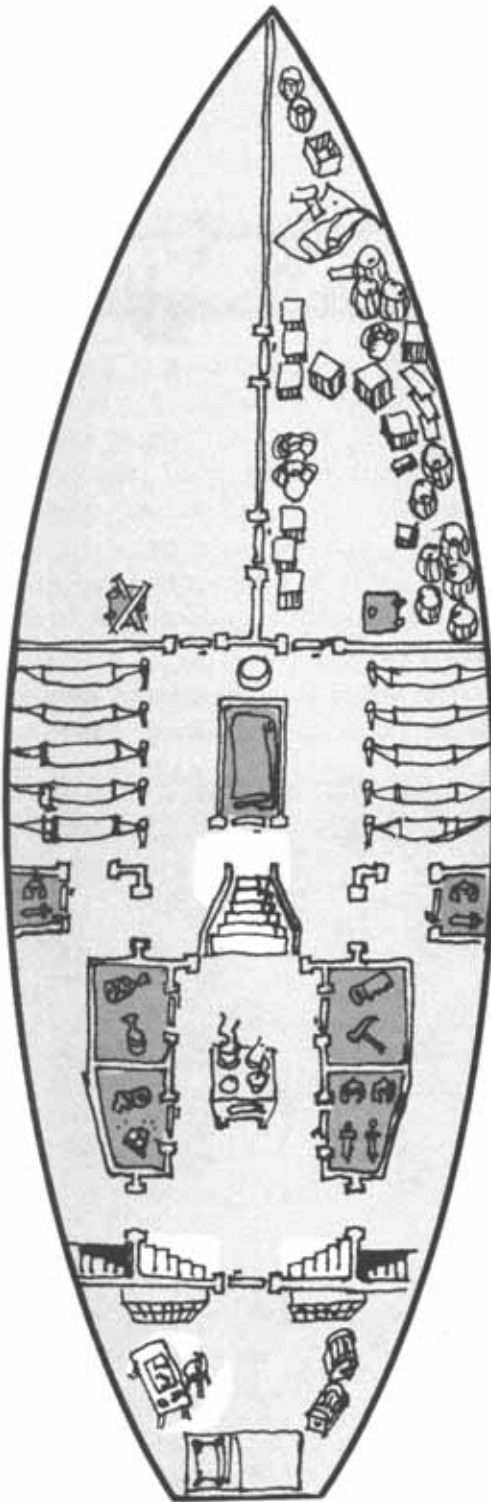
The *Virago* is of the class of ships known to the Melnibonéans as *bakrasim*, or "sharp-toothed." The





* VIRAGO DECK PLANS *

The middle level (left) and the lowest level (right).





proW of the *Virago* bears a woman figurehead, armed with two curved blades, both pointing downward and traveling the length of the stem-post. These blades are actually set with sharpened steel edges, the better to cut through nets, anchor cables, or ropes.

On her sails, the *Virago* displays her sign, the upper half of a woman's body wielding two curved swords, one held above her head horizontally, and the other sword below horizontally across her waist.

The storerooms are mostly empty (destined to be filled with booty from slave-trading), and there are two large holds beneath the deck, one of which has been turned into an impromptu slave-holding pen. The other is mostly unused, filled with empty barrels, half-smashed crates, old junk, furniture, and other items the pirate crew has abandoned. (The pirates, being lazy and disorganized, are simply letting their ship fill with garbage; when it becomes uninhabitable, they will seize another vessel from some unfortunate crew.) There are a number of smaller storage areas, some of which are full of dried food stores, wine, and other supplies. Others are full of spare sails, rope, tools, and other nautical equipment, while another small storeroom is for weapons and armor used by the crew or taken from their prisoners.

There is a crew's quarter between the two storerooms, with bunks for twenty. The captain's chamber is at the aft end of the vessel, a somewhat decent accommodation with storage beneath his bed and some cabinets containing the wealth taken from victims and captives. A small kitchen is near the main stairs up to the deck, and food is generally eaten on deck or in the crew's quarter.

The lowest level is mostly rough storage, and has merely a small walkway along the length of the ship, with shelves and small half-chambers for storage of various types of cargo. It is fairly rat-infested.

For reference, page 151 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* has an illustration of a sailing ship very much like the *Virago*.

PC Possessions

All of the captives' personal gear is stored in several bins in the captain's chambers. The weapons, armor, and shields are piled in the ship's makeshift armory (a low bin in the aft hold), and items of value and currency are

in a locked drawer beneath the captain's bed (DC 25 to open lock, or DC 15 to force open). Any magical scrolls or books are placed in a watertight bladder-sack amongst the other valuables. Linault Brin and Osa Dileel both know that most of the captives' gear is stored somewhere in the captain's quarters. While neither of them knows exactly where it is, the characters' possessions should be fairly easy to find when they get a chance to return to the ship.

The *Virago's* Crew

Captain and owner of the *Virago* is a Vilmirian pirate named Vartan Vensk. The second-in-command is Zhedanor, another Vilmirian, a more impetuous man than Vartan but equally formidable. Of the rest of the pirates, the most dangerous is a Pikaraydan named Scorrush. A few other pirates are described as well, for use as DM characters.

VARTAN VENSK, pirate captain from Vilmir

Vartan is 32 years old and fairly charismatic. He is taller than normal, with handsome features, and wears well-made sea leather armor. Blond hair and a neatly trimmed and pointed beard complete his appearance, giving him the air of a slumming noble. More than a little fastidious, he is often stroking his beard and finger-combing his hair, or straightening his garments to present the most attractive picture. Though he is not the best sailor onboard, he is the most charismatic and is thus the leader. There is an air of formal authority to him, marking him as having some military background. His personality is commanding though he is a calculating and reserved leader, more cautious than others in his position might be. Despite this, he has always been right about his decisions and has kept his pirate crew fairly well paid, well fed, and safe from real danger. Vartan has an instinct for sniffing out ambushes, which has served him well as a pirate captain. Rumors are that he was once a Vilmirian naval officer, and at times, the *Virago* has been a privateer vessel, licensed by the government to protect its waters in return for amnesty for the crimes of the crew and captain. Vartan uses a short spear and shield as a favored weapon, going two-handed with a short sword and handaxe as backup.





Level 4 Fighter

OGC

Chaos 31, Balance 15, Law 7

Abilities: Str 14 Dex 16 Con 11
Int 12 Wis 13 Cha 13

Hit Points: 28 **Initiative:** +3

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 18 (+3 Dex, +3 sea leather, +2 large wooden shield)

Attacks: Dagger or half-spear +6; handaxe (left hand) +4; shortsword (right hand) +4; thrown dagger or half-spear or handaxe +7 ranged

Damage: Dagger 1d4+2; handaxe 1d6+2; half-spear 1d6+2; shortsword 1d6+2

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4

Skills:* Balance +4 (+2), Climb +3 (+1), Diplomacy +2, Intuit Direction +2, Knowledge (Geography) +2, Knowledge (Nature) +4, Listen +2, Sailing +6, Sense Motive +2, Spot +2, Swim +3 (-1)

*Skill ratings in parentheses include penalties for armor and shield.

Feats: Alertness, Ambidexterity, Dodge, Iron Will, Mobility, Two-Weapon Fighting

Special Qualities: Armor Proficiency (All), Martial Weapon Proficiency (All), Shield Proficiency

Possessions: (on person) belt pouch (gold and silver coins worth 910 bronzes). Keys around neck unlock door to captain's cabin and strongbox full of pirate treasure. See pages 47-48 for more details about the contents of the captain's cabin.

ZHEDANOR, second-in-command of the Virago

A male in his late 30s, Zhedanor is a solid complement to the captain. He is rash and emotional, usually much angrier and more ready to break heads and throw punches. If there were a ranking system onboard, he would be first mate. He keeps the pirates in line through sheer force of will and fear of harm. Once a Vilmirian marine, Zhedanor was ousted from the ranks for excessive brutality during battle. He is fiercely loyal to Vartan, as he recognizes that the captain is his better in strategy, planning, and tactics. He's bald, with a fringe of hair along the sides, and his beard is thick. A big man, he wears studded leather armor (mostly a harness), and his chest, arms, and back are covered with scars from the whipping he received upon his court-martial and discharge from the Vilmirian navy. He's since had those scars tattooed

vividly to remind those around him of the suffering he has survived, and is willing to share. Zhedanor favors using a sea axe in combat.

Level 3 Fighter

OGC

Chaos 20, Balance 6, Law 4

Abilities: Str 17 Dex 11 Con 15
Int 10 Wis 9 Cha 8

Hit Points: 31 **Initiative:** +0

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 15 (+3 studded leather, +2 large wooden shield)

Attacks: Dagger +6; sea axe +7; thrown dagger +3 ranged

Damage: Sea Axe 1d8+6 or 1d6+4 (two-handed)/1d8+5 or 1d6+3 (one-handed); Dagger 1d4+3

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +2

Skills: Balance +1 (-2), Climb +4 (+1), Intimidate +1, Intuit Direction +1, Sailing +2, Spot +1, Swim +4 (-2)

*Skill ratings in parentheses include penalties for armor and shield.

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Sea Axe), Weapon Focus (Sea Axe), Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Toughness

Special Qualities: Armor Proficiency (All), Martial Weapon Proficiency (All), Shield Proficiency

Possessions: Belt pouch contains small trinkets worth 150 bronzes, bronze and silver coins worth 536 bronzes, fragments of gems worth perhaps 240 bronzes. Ivory necklace worth 800 bronzes. Garnet-set ring worth 500 bronzes.

SCORRUSH, assassin from Pikarayd

He is only 24, but seems to be much older due to his maturity and the distance he keeps from the others onboard. Scorrush is clearly the most ruthless, brutal and cold-blooded man on the entire vessel. Unlike many of his people, he doesn't wear any tattoos, but is in a rough kilt, sandals, and rough half-armor covering half of his chest, and both arms. Scorrush has wild blond hair, woven into many braids, and his beard is forked. His eyes, cold and pale blue, are usually squinted in appraisal of his enemies. In battle, he wears a half-helmet fashioned like a tusked boar, and his leather armor has many bits of bone and tufts of fur woven into or hanging from it. His weapon of choice is a Pikaraydan war axe, though he is also quick to use a knife when attacking by surprise. Scorrush has been a





hired killer for most of his adulthood, and the only reason his presence is tolerated onboard the *Virago* is that he is one of the best warriors around.

Level 4 Rogue

OGC

Chaos 31, Balance 6, Law 2

Abilities: Str 14 Dex 17 Con 12
Int 10 Wis 11 Cha 9

Hit Points: 22 Initiative: +7

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 16 (+3 Dex, +3 studded leather)

Attacks: Dagger +5; greataxe +5; thrown dagger +6 ranged

Damage: Dagger 1d4+2; greataxe 1d12+3

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +1

Skills: * Bluff +6, Climb +5 (+4), Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +4, Jump +6 (+5), Listen +3, Move Silently +8 (+7), Ride +6, Search +4, Spot +3, Swim +6 (+2), Tumble +7 (+6), Use Rope +8, Wilderness Lore +3

*Skill ratings in parentheses include penalties for armor.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Martial Weapon Proficiency (Greataxe), Track

Special Qualities: Armor Proficiency (Light), Evasion, Sneak Attack +2d6, Traps, Uncanny Dodge

Possessions: Small bag around neck contains hoard of gems worth 3,700 bronzes. Small cloth-wrapped bundle tucked into tunic contains pieces of ivory and horn worth roughly 450 bronzes. Slung around wrist is a bracelet made of pearls shaped like human teeth, worth roughly 3,500 bronzes.

Other members of the crew of the *Virago* are:

* THE CREW OF THE VIRAGO *

(BELOW) From left to right, front row: Ischune, Captain Vartan Vensk, Zhedanor, Scorrush, Hotas Ba'att Hanaa, Fisk Woe-Bringer.





ISCHUNE (ee-shoon), battle-maiden of the Pale Sea

A rarity among the pirates, a woman cunning and brutal enough to hold her own amongst such a rough crowd. She is imposing—more than six feet in height—broad-shouldered, and muscular. Dark-skinned, with her hair cropped and spiked with waxy oil, she is from one of the villages near Nihrain, a long-distant descendant of the Nihrainians without any of their special knowledge or heritage. Her nose is broken, and she has ritual scarring upon her face. Ischune wears scale-mail made of black and brass patterned scales, and uses a desert recurved bow and a long, horn-handled dagger.

Level 2 Barbarian

OGC

Chaos 15, Balance 7, Law 3

Abilities: Str 14 Dex 17 Con 15
Int 10 Wis 13 Cha 12

Hit Points: 23 **Initiative:** +3

Speed: 30 ft. (scale mail); base speed 40 ft.

AC: 17 (+3 Dex, +4 scale mail)

Attacks: Dagger +4; desert recurved bow +6 ranged; thrown dagger +5 ranged

Damage: Dagger 1d4+2; desert recurved bow 1d6

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1

Skills:* Climb +5 (+1), Heal +2, Hide +5 (+1), Jump +4 (+0), Listen +3, Move Silently +5 (+1), Ride +5, Swim +4 (-2), Use Rope +4, Wilderness Lore +3

*Skill ratings in parentheses include penalties for armor.

Feats: Weapon Focus (Desert Recurved Bow), Track

Special Qualities: Armor Proficiency (Light, Medium), Fast Movement, Martial Weapon Proficiency (All), Rage (1/day), Shield Proficiency, Uncanny Dodge

Possessions: Belt pouch (silver and bronze coins worth 204 bronzes, small gold religious symbol worth 250 bronzes, small carven ivory game-pieces worth 550 bronzes).

FISK WOE-BRINGER, pirate of the Isle of the Purple Towns

An unfortunate man forced into the life of a brigand when the Vilmirian pirates took his ship, he has had a lifetime of poor luck and has resigned himself to his fate as a pirate. Now in his mid-40s, Fisk has been onboard the *Virago* for a couple of months now, and might be an ally to PCs if they deal fairly with him and he thinks he can profit from it. He has short black hair,

a thick beard, and wears leather armor. Fisk uses a long-handled axe and a shield in combat.

Level 1 Fighter, Level 2 Expert (Sailor)

OGC

Chaos 19, Balance 21, Law 18

Abilities: Str 15 Dex 13 Con 14
Int 10 Wis 12 Cha 10

Hit Points: 21 **Initiative:** +1

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 16 (+1 Dex, +3 sea leather, +2 large wooden shield)

Attacks: Sea axe +4

Damage: Sea axe 1d8+4 or 1d6+2

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +4

Skills:* Balance +4 (+2), Climb +6 (+4), Craft (Carpentry) +4, Intuit Direction +4, Jump +5 (+3), Knowledge (Nature) +4, Sailing +6, Spot +5, Swim +5 (+1), Use Rope +5

*Skill ratings in parentheses include penalties for armor and shield.

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Sea Axe), Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack

Special Qualities: Armor Proficiency (All), Martial Weapon Proficiency (All), Shield Proficiency

Possessions: Necklace pouch (contains small gems worth 850 bronzes), belt pouch (silver, gold, bronze coins worth 439 bronzes), silver rings in beard worth 200 bronzes, watertight pouch tucked into tunic holding maps of Young Kingdoms worth 1400 bronzes to a scholar or collector.

HOTAS BA'ATT HANAA, nomad of the Sighing Desert

A dark-skinned native of one of the nomad tribes of the Sighing Desert, Hanaa doesn't speak much Common Tongue, though he understands more than he lets on. Occasionally, he sings in his native tongue of Lesh. He seems somewhat cheerful, though he is a hardened killer. Hanaa wears a half-suit of the wooden armor of his people, and uses a scimitar in close quarter fighting, and a desert-style recurved bow in ranged combat.

Level 2 Barbarian

OGC

Chaos 17, Balance 7, Law 4

Abilities: Str 14 Dex 14 Con 16
Int 12 Wis 11 Cha 12

Hit Points: 25 **Initiative:** +2

Speed: 40 ft.





AC: 15 (+2 Dex, +3 partial barbarian leather and wood)

Attacks: Dagger or scimitar +4; thrown dagger +4 ranged; desert recurved bow +4 ranged

Damage: Dagger 1d4+2; desert recurved bow 1d6; scimitar 1d6+2

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +0

Skills: * Climb +4 (+2), Handle Animal +5, Intuit Direction +4, Jump +4 (+2), Move Silently +4 (+2), Ride +6, Speak Language (Mong), Tumble +3 (+1), Use Rope +4, Wilderness Lore +4

*Skill ratings in parentheses include penalties for armor.

Feats: Mounted Combat, Ride-by Attack

Special Qualities: Armor Proficiency (Light, Medium), Fast Movement, Martial Weapon Proficiency (All), Rage (1/day), Shield Proficiency, Uncanny Dodge

Possessions: Small wrapped bundle tucked beneath breastplate contains gold coins worth 600 bronzes. Longish wooden box tucked into belt contains eating utensils carved from ivory and horn, set with pearls and jet, worth 400 bronzes to a collector of curios.

Other Pirates

For additional character-level pirates, use the attributes and descriptions of Sailor/Pirate or Marine in the "Young Kingdoms Digest" section in *Dragon Lords of Melniboné*, modified as desired. The other 21 pirates are assumed to be generic Vilmirian pirates (as described below) unless the DM decides to detail them otherwise.

Generic Vilmirian Pirate

Level 1 Expert (Sailor)

CR: 1 each

Medium-Size Human

Abilities:	Str 12	Dex 13	Con 13
	Int 10	Wis 9	Cha 10

Hit Points: 7 **Initiative:** +1

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 13 (+1 Dex, +2 leather armor)

Attacks: Club, cutlass, dagger, quarterstaff, or sea axe +1; hunting bow or net +1 ranged

Damage: Club or cutlass 1d6+1; dagger 1d4+1; hunting bow 1d6; net entangle; quarterstaff 1d6+1; sea axe 1d8+3

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.



Special Qualities: none

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1

Skills: * Balance +4, Climb +4, Intuit Direction +2, Jump +3, Knowledge (Nature) +2, Listen +1, Sailing +3, Spot +2, Swear +4, Swim +2 (-1), Tell Dirty Jokes +4, Tumble +3, Use Rope +3

*Skill ratings in parentheses include penalties for armor.

Feats: ** Armor Proficiency (Light), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Net, Sea Axe), Martial Weapon Proficiency (Cutlass, Longsword), Simple Weapon Proficiency.

**Not all generic pirates have the same weapon proficiencies—it is assumed that they will be using weapons they are proficient in.

Allegiance: Usually Chaos

Possessions: Each generic pirate has d100 x10 bronzes worth of treasure, usually in coins, gems, jewelry, or small items and curios of value. Each one has a 20% chance of having a masterwork-quality weapon, usually a dagger, sword, or other edged weapon. Each one has a 10% chance of having armor of masterwork quality.

Sample Names: Deadly Zheath, Jeretilan, Hab Deane, Kiehl, Voctur, Afesh Ninefinger.

Pirate Captives: PC Actions

What will the PCs do next? Will they try for an escape while they're below-decks, or will they wait and see what happens above-decks with the Pan Tangians present?

They won't have much time, however, and the DM shouldn't allow the players a lot of time to deliberate or plot out some perfect plan. If they get too involved in planning, have the pirates interrupt them to drag them up on deck.

A DM who would like the PCs to have a little time to talk, but not so much time for plotting their escape, might have one of the pirates (like Scorrush, detailed below) enter the hold and watch over them. Scorrush will let them talk, but obviously any discussion about escape plans will be difficult to have.

The hold is roughly eight feet in height, around twenty-five feet in width, and triangular, as it takes up the front half of the vessel, with the ceiling narrowing slightly as one gets towards the front. There is another door at the back of the hold, but it was nailed shut long ago, from both sides, and prying the dozens of nails and boards out of the way would take at least an hour, with





two characters working with tools, on either side of the door. Forcing it is tough, with a DC 26.

The chains, manacles, and their locks are sturdy and fairly new. Picking one of the locks requires an Open Lock skill roll (DC 30); trying to wriggle free from the chains demands an Escape Artist roll (also DC 30). Forcing them open is a DC 26 Strength roll.

The door to the hold is also sturdy, made of wood bound with iron bands, and requires a DC 25 Strength roll to force, due to the fact that it is set into the hold's ceiling at an awkward angle. To try to force it would require someone to stand on the stair-ladder, which is below the door and is not strong enough to withstand door-breaking force. The stair-ladder is not wide enough to comfortably accommodate more than one person at a time for this task either, and this also increases the chance the steps will break.

Improvised weapons available to the PCs at this time include clubs (made from a ladder rung or a piece of wood pried from the wall), chains (still attached to the character or not—used as a garrote or flail), or spikes (nails pried out of the walls). Highly imaginative characters might be able to come up with something else, but remember that they have little time, and the pirates will hear them prying or making noise in the hold.

If the characters stay below-decks, the pirates will do one (or more) of the following:

- * They will smoke the characters out, with the same narcotic herbs used before, putting them in small bowls and placing larger bowls over them—this will force the smoke inside the hold. If this means is used, the PCs will need to make Fortitude saves versus the effects of feldas leaves (described on page 7), or be drugged and fall into a dreamy state.
- * As the hatch opens upward, and they have a firm handle on their side and no shortage of manpower, the Vilmirians will pry it open. PCs trying to prevent this from happening must roll their Str in an opposed check versus a large number of pirates, who will combine efforts. Once the door is open, the pirates will attack their captives with blunted weapons such as leather-wrapped clubs, staffs, and nets. The pirates' ultimate goal is not to kill any of the PCs, so they will likely club them into unconsciousness with subdual damage. However, the DM might use this opportunity to kill one of the NPCs

to emphasize to the PCs the likely outcome of this escape attempt.

- * The pirates will wait until they've met with the Pan Tangians, and will explain the situation to them, embarrassedly. Hasper Dal, the Pan Tangian wizard-priest (described on pages 25–26), will come aboard the *Virago*, and will attempt to use spells such as Sleep, Cause Fear, Obscuring Mist, or Hypnotic Pattern, in an attempt to bring the PCs and NPCs out alive and unharmed. Alternately, he will bring out his bound creature, which will use its Fog power to nauseate the PCs in the confined area of the hold.

If the PCs and NPCs manage to make their way onto the deck before the meeting with the Pan Tangians, they are now facing 27 pirates, armed with a large number of clubs, staffs, nets, blunted arrows, ropes, and other lethal weapons if needed. The fight should be quick, against such odds.

Once recaptured, the characters will be chained again and any especially loud protesters or spell-casters gagged, hands manacled behind their backs. Characters who did not pose an obvious threat during any escape attempts will be left with the single collar chain and front wrist manacles.

The Chardros's Lament

One of the smaller, faster vessels of the Pan Tang slaver fleet, *Chardros's Lament* is wrought in the style of most Pan Tang ships—an imitation of Melnibonéan style, yet falling short of the delicate balance of those ships, and substituting sharp edges and grimness for beauty. A bireme, with two banks of oars stacked atop each other, and unmistakably a vessel of Pan Tang, *Chardros's Lament* is impressive and frightening from any distance.

Chardros's Lament is half again the size of the *Virago*, almost 150 feet from stem to stern (front to back), and 20 feet across the beam (wide). Double banks of rowers line either side, and the crew is made up of around 180 slave rowers, with another 55 Pan Tangian officers, sailors, marines, and slave tenders. Made up of wood stained and painted black and red, *Chardros's Lament* has brightly polished brass fittings.





The sail is black, and bears a red eight-arrowed emblem of Chaos, overlaid by a snarling tiger head.

The below-decks area contains several long bunkrooms for the crew, warriors, and officers, with four well-appointed cabins for the captain, guests of honor, distinguished passengers, or any ranking naval officers. There are two storerooms (one for foodstuffs and the other for weapons, armor, supplies, tools, and gear), and a small kitchen.

Captive slaves are kept in a long, narrow cage made up of wood and iron, which runs half the length of the deck and is exposed to the elements. This cage has a low ceiling, not enough to stand comfortably in, and is exposed on all sides to the wind, cold, and rain. A long chain runs from one end of the cage to the other, with slave collars locked onto it, connected in a loop. Slaves are jammed in at one end, chained together at the neck, and are removed at the other end, with their relative position in the cage indicating when they were captured and how long they've been in there. Ideally, food and water are passed through the bars, though in practice, this means that leftovers are thrown into the cage where the Pan Tangians delight in watching their captives fight over scraps. Sanitation consists of a bucket passed through twice daily and emptied over the side. Discipline is easy to maintain, as poles and club-ends are poked through the gaps in the cage, or spears thrust through to kill any especially troublesome slaves. In such cases, the other slaves are lucky if the voyage is near its end, as Pan Tang slavers usually leave the corpses in the cage as a reminder to the others. This is one of several methods the Pan Tangians utilize to keep their slaves quiet while on a voyage.

Chardros's Lament has just set forth from Pan Tang only three days ago, and is on the beginning of its voyage. Hence, the larder is fresh, the rowing benches are full, the crew is fairly well rested, and morale is high. Currently, there are no slaves in the cage.

For visual reference, the cover of this adventure depicts *Chardros's Lament*, and page 151 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* has an illustration of a galley similar to it. See also page 33.

The Crew

All Pan Tangians, these slavers are like most of their fellow countrymen, arrogant and capable of unimaginable cruelty towards anyone not of Pan Tang. All of the crew

and officers are male, as women are not traditionally allowed in the Pan Tang military or navy. Gariv Klos has led this vessel and much of her crew for several years, and the sailors, slavers, and warriors are all loyal to him. They are savage to their slaves, both those who pull the oars on the vessel, and those they have captured to return to meet their fates in the dark streets of Hwamgaarl, capital city of Pan Tang.

Captain Gariv Klos, first mate En'trim Sho'oon, the wizard-priest Hasper Dal, and his captive creature Omerginroul are described below.

GARIV KLOS (gare-eev KLOSS), Pan Tangian sea captain

A career naval officer, he has been serving on *Chardros's Lament* for four years now. He is 34 years old, and plans on working his way up the ranks, either by blackmailing or discrediting others above him, and eventually commanding a galley. Klos is big and sinister-looking, and does little to soften his appearance. His beard and hair are braided into many tendrils, and at the end of each of these is a little metal claw-like ornament. His eyes are wild, and he wears a half-helmet looking like a demonic octopoid, with his hair hanging below and forming the tentacles. (This is the captain's personal tribute to the Chaos lord Pyaray.) Klos wears bluish-black half-plate armor wrought with a crimson motif that makes it appear cracked and bleeding, the enameled blood crafted onto the metal. This patterning serves to make it difficult for his enemies to guess how injured he might be, and is a little intimidating. Klos fights with a hooked, long-handled dragontooth-style heavy pick (as seen on page 62 of *Dragon Lords of Melniboné*).

He despises Hasper Dal, the wizard-priest who has been sent to accompany him on this particular slave run, and the two of them have frequently argued during the first few days of the voyage. Klos suspects that Dal is attempting to betray him somehow, or will conspire against him when they return to Pan Tang. Hence, he is already plotting to get rid of Dal and somehow keep the blue creature.

Level 4 Fighter, Level 2 Expert (Sailor)

OGC

Chaos 81, Balance 57, Law 14

Abilities:	Str 15	Dex 13	Con 13
	Int 10	Wis 12	Cha 13

Hit Points: 46 **Initiative:** +5

Speed: 20 ft. (half-plate); base speed 30 ft.





AC: 20 (+1 Dex, +7 half-plate [masterwork], +2 large wooden shield)

Attacks: Dagger (masterwork) +8; dragontooth heavy pick (masterwork) +9; thrown dagger +7 ranged

Damage: Dagger 1d4+2; dragontooth heavy pick 1d6+2

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +5

Skills: * Balance +4 (-4), Climb +5 (-3), Diplomacy +2, Intimidate +3, Intuit Direction +3, Jump +5 (-3), Knowledge (Nature) +2, Move Silently +3 (-5), Ride +3, Sailing +8, Speak Language (Mabden), Spot +5, Swim +6 (-6), Tumble +5 (-3), Use Rope +3

* Skill ratings in parentheses include penalties for armor and shield.

Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Mobility, Skill Focus (Sailing), Weapon Focus (Dragontooth Heavy Pick), Weapon Specialization (Dragontooth Heavy Pick)

Special Qualities: Armor Proficiency (All), Martial Weapon Proficiency (All), Shield Proficiency

Possessions: Belt pouch (Pan Tangian gold coins worth 750 bronzes), jade amulet of Pyaray worth 600 bronzes, silver beard ornaments worth 500 bronzes. Worn beneath his tunic and under armor are the keys to his quarters, the slave chains and slave pen, and the strongbox. The strongbox holds 60,000 bronzes worth of gold and silver coins in Pan Tangian, Melnibonéan, and other Young Kingdom currencies. This money is to be used for purchasing slaves when necessary, but generally the slavers just kidnap their slaves.

EN'TRIM SHO'OON (en-TREEM sho-OON), first mate of *Chardros's Lament*

As first mate, En'trim Sho'oon is Gariv Klos's right-hand man and responsible for most of the day-to-day interaction with the crew. On most vessels, he would be the most trustworthy officer beneath the captain. However, in Pan Tang, things are not so reliable or straightforward. Sho'oon is conspiring against his captain,

* THE CREW OF CHARDROS'S LAMENT *

(BELOW) From left to right: Captain Gariv Klos, En'trim Sho'oon, and their merry men.





waiting for the chance to seize control over *Chardros's Lament*. His ambitions are only held in check by his fear of Klos and his own cowardice, which manifests itself as cruelty to the slaves in his custody. His hair is cut short, and stands up in unruly spikes, and his beard is thick and forked. In his mid-30s, he is short and stocky, and has a thorny tattooed pattern woven around his eyes. Darkly handsome, he is an efficient negotiator and especially charismatic where Klos is not. Sho'oon's armor is of black leather set with yellowed plates of bone, and he uses a scimitar in combat.

He remains onboard *Chardros's Lament* during the initial scene, and is not present for that melee.

Level 6 Expert (Slaver)

OGC

Chaos 36, Balance 4, Law 6

Abilities:	Str 12	Dex 15	Con 13
	Int 13	Wis 13	Cha 15

Hit Points: 33 **Initiative:** +2

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 15 (+2 Dex, +3 studded leather)

Attacks: Dagger, scimitar, or whip +5; thrown dagger +6 ranged

Damage: Dagger 1d4+1; scimitar 1d8+1; whip 1d2+1 subdual

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +6

Skills:* Appraise +6, Bluff +7, Climb +3 (+2), Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +8, Intuit Direction +2, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Open Lock +6, Profession (Slaver) +6, Sailing +4, Sense Motive +7, Speak Language (Mabden), Spot +6, Swim +3 (-1), Trap +7, Use Rope +8

*Skill ratings in parentheses include penalties for armor.

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiencies (Net, Whip), Leadership, Track

Special Qualities: Armor Proficiency (Light)

Possessions: Keys to slave chains and slave pen, belt pouch (gold and silver coins worth 900 bronzes, phial of cologne, silver playing pieces for game worth 450 bronzes, obscene talisman carved of jet worth 800 bronzes to a select dealer).

HASPER DAL, Pan Tangian wizard-priest of Arioch

Male, 24 years old. He has the air of an aristocrat, with a smirk of cruelty. Sophisticated and well spoken, he is

Open Game Content

The Slaver Class

Common to the Young Kingdoms, especially in Chaos-aligned nations like Pan Tang and Dharijor, the slaver is a sub-class to the NPC expert class. Slavers are usually found onboard ships, in trade caravans, or in the marketplaces of cities across the Young Kingdoms, enslaving the weak and defenseless, and profiting from the imprisonment of their prey. Typically, slavers fight to subdue and restrain their opponents rather than to kill them.

All features are identical to those from the expert class. The following professional skills are class skills for the slaver: Appraise, Bluff, Intimidate, Open Lock, Profession (Slaver), Sense Motive, Speak Language (any), Spot, Trap, Use Rope. Common feats are Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Net, Whip), Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Run, and Track.

arrogant and aloof, concerned far more with mystical pursuits, religious fervor, and his own esoteric power than he is with making allies. Dal is slight in build and is in his mid-20s. Somewhat weak, he is often sick, and keeps a handkerchief near his mouth and nose to keep from being seasick. He smells of heavy perfumed patchouli oil, and is clearly using it on his glossy hair and beard. Like most Pan Tangians, Dal's hair is black. He wears it cut close to his skull, with his widow's peak fashioned like a wide arrow, and his sideburns worn pointy and similarly trimmed. His small goatee is also very angular, groomed around the mouth to resemble an arrow as well; he has a four-arrow design of hair, all pointing inward. He wears ornate clothing—breeches, high boots with flared tops, and a thick, patterned doublet—mostly wrought in colors of brown, red, and gold. His hands are gloved, and he has rings on those gloves. Most of his jewelry has magical sigils upon it. In one hand, Dal carries a chain-leash, connected to his blue-skinned captive Omerginroul (pages 26–27).





Hasper Dal's attitudes and air of righteous superiority have made him no allies among the crew of *Chardros's Lament*, and he would be surprised to learn that Gariv Klos is already conspiring to kill him in secrecy.

Level 3 Wizard, Level 2 Cleric

OGC

Chaos 81, Balance 31, Law 8

Abilities: Str 10 Dex 11 Con 8
Int 16 Wis 15 Cha 15

Hit Points: 18 **Initiative:** +0

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 10 (no armor)

Attacks: Dagger (masterwork) +3 melee; thrown dagger +3 ranged

Damage: Dagger 1d4

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +8

Skills: Alchemy +6, Bluff +4, Concentration +3, Gather Information +3, Innuendo +3, Knowledge (Arcana) +6, Knowledge (Million Spheres) +8, Knowledge (Pan-

Tang Nobility) +6, Knowledge (Religion) +8, Listen +5, Speak Language (Mabden), Speak Language (Melnibonéan), Speak Language (High Speech), Speak Language ('pande), Speak Language (Mong), Speak Language (Myyrrhn), Speak Language (Opish), Spellcraft +6

Feats: Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Evocation), Spell Mastery (3)

Special Qualities: Casts Chaos Spells at +1 level, Heavy Armor Proficiency, Light Armor Proficiency, Medium Armor Proficiency, Rebuke Undead, Scribe Scroll, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Spontaneous Casting, Wizard Weapon Proficiencies

Wizard Spells: Alarm, Arcane Mark, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Hypnotic Pattern, Obscuring Mist, Sleep, Visage of Arioeh

Cleric Spells (Chaos and Trickery Domains): Cure Light Wounds, Detect Magic, Guidance, Protection from Law, Read Magic, Resistance, Summon Monster I, Virtue

Magical Items: The chain-leash he keeps Omerginroul on has a permanent Dimensional Anchor cast upon it. However, unbeknownst to Dal, Omerginroul has been able to pick the lock (DC 25) and it is currently disabled, cunningly held together to appear still locked.

Possessions: Belt pouches (contain material components for spells, a silken handkerchief, several phials of perfumes and colognes, ornate ivory eating utensils worth 300 bronzes). Around his neck is a golden symbol of Chaos worth 2,500 bronzes, and the rings on his fingers are all of gold, brass, and platinum, set with precious stones, worth 4,000 bronzes altogether. Under his tunic is another neck-cord, holding keys to his stateroom, a small lock-box, and to Omerginroul's collar.

OMERGINROUL, extraplanar being

See page 30 for a complete description of Omerginroul's appearance, and see page 84 for a description of the silume.

One of an extraplanar race called the silume, Omerginroul is native to the blue plane of the Chaos goddess Equeur. These beings are able to create a magical gateway once per day and shift through the dimensions to others of the Multiverse. This natural ability is



*** MASTER AND SLAVE ***

(LEFT) Omerginroul (left) and Hasper Dal (right).





similar to a Gate spell, though it needs a small amount (1 hit point) of blood from another living being to activate.

These beings worship and serve Eequor, though their worship and behavior are benign and peaceful, venerating her aspects of a knowledge-bringer and sorceress. Because of this, Eequor does not pay them much attention. The silume are intelligent, refined, and graceful beings. They figure strongly in ancient Mabden lore about Eequor, though their role is unspecified. In fact, they are often depicted as being little more than subservient animals. Thus, when Omerginroul and his mate Liramayn left Eequor's plane and began voyaging across many of the Million Spheres, they were dismayed to learn that often fellow worshippers of Eequor thought they were sacred beasts, rather than honored guests.

Omerginroul and Liramayn voyaged to one sub-plane, unaware that this place was long-forgotten by Eequor, a plane where some of her devoted servants had sought refuge from the persecution they faced on the island of Pan Tang. The two silume were captured by the priestesses, who displayed them proudly as sacred animals and symbols of Eequor's attention. After a decades-long exile, the priestesses assumed that these two beings were a sending from Eequor, and that their demon goddess would shortly return her favor to the priestesses and return them home. When the creatures protested and explained the mistake, the head priestess argued that if they were not in fact messengers from the goddess, they would make appropriate sacrifices to gain Eequor's attention on a day sacred to her. This day would come soon.

Against a grim deadline, Omerginroul escaped the magical cage the priestesses had trapped him in, and managed to shift to another neighboring plane . . . that of the Young Kingdoms, from which the priestesses had been exiled. The silume assumed that a nation that persecuted the priestesses might aid him in freeing his mate. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Omerginroul emerged in Pan Tang, where he was swiftly captured and sold as a curiosity to Hasper Dal, a wizard-priest of Arioeh. After being tortured to reveal his origin, the creature revealed that he has the special plane-traveling ability, but was able to convince Dal that the blood needed must come from a special type of

being (in fact, it is a natural ability and the blood is simply a material component, which doesn't have to be any special type).

Omerginroul has been waiting impatiently as a prisoner. He has finally picked the lock of the slave collar he wears, a chain that has been enchanted to keep him from using his powers. Because Dal doesn't think of Omerginroul as being very intelligent, he doesn't suspect the creature could pick a simple lock. Now accompanying Hasper Dal on a slave-seeking voyage, Omerginroul is trying to find an opportunity to escape to the previous plane to free Liramayn. Then, they will return home, or to a safer place elsewhere in the Multiverse.

Chaos 18, Balance 18, Law 7



Abilities:	Str 7	Dex 22	Con 13
	Int 14	Wis 13	Cha 11

Hit Points: 19	Initiative: +6
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Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 18 (+2 natural, +6 Dex)

Attacks: Claws +1, Bite +1

Damage: Claws 1d2, Bite 1d2

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +4

Skills: Animal Empathy +3, Balance +8, Bluff +5, Climb +10, Conceal Object +7, Concentration +6, Escape Artist +7, Hide +7, Intuit Direction +5, Jump +5, Knowledge (Million Spheres) +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +7, Scent/Taste +3, Sense Motive +3, Spot +4, Swim +7, Tumble +8

Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Mobility, Run.

Racial Qualities: Detect Planar Gate (2 Times/Day), Darkvision 30', Fog, Gate (see above).

Possessions: None.

Other Crewmembers

If the DM wishes to have a few tougher Pan Tangian slavers, use the attributes and descriptions of Sailor/Pirate or Marine in the Young Kingdom Digest in *Dragon Lords of Melniboné*, modified as desired. The other Pan Tangian slavers are assumed to be generic (as described below).

The Pan Tangian slavers are sinister to the last man, all wearing breastplates with grotesque insignias or emblems etched upon the metal. Their hair is worn in a bizarre number of fashions, and many have





numerous facial piercings and tattoos. Their weapons are almost always used to subdue victims, and they rarely strike to kill captive slaves. However, if pressed, they will happily kill unruly prisoners.

Generic Pan Tangian Slaver



Medium-Size Human

Level 1 Warrior

Abilities: Str 13 Dex 12 Con 12
Int 12 Wis 11 Cha 10

Hit Points: 9 **Initiative:** +1

Speed: 20 ft. (breastplate); base speed 30 ft.

AC: 17 (+1 Dex, +5 breastplate, +1 small wooden shield)

Attacks: Club, dagger, scimitar, shortsword, or whip +2;
or hunting bow +2 ranged

Damage: Club, scimitar or shortsword 1d6+1; dagger
1d4+1; hunting bow 1d6; whip 1d2+1 subdual

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities: none

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0

Skills:* Balance +2 (-3), Climb +2 (-3), Intimidate +2,
Jump +2 (-3), Profession (Slaver) +2, Spot +1, Swim
+3 (-4), Use Rope +2

*Skill ratings in parentheses include penalties for armor and shield.

Feats:** Simple Weapon Proficiency, Martial Weapon
Proficiency (All), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Net,
Whip), Armor Proficiency (All), Shield Proficiency (All)

**Not all Pan Tangian slavers have the same weapon proficiencies—it is assumed that they will be using weapons they are proficient in.

Allegiance: Chaos (chaotic evil alignment)

CR: 1 each

Possessions: Each generic Pan Tangian slaver has d100 x10
bronzes worth of treasure, usually in coins, gems, jewelry,
or small items and curios of value. Each has a 20% chance
of having a masterwork-quality weapon, usually a dagger,
sword, or other edged weapon. Each has a 10% chance of
having armor of masterwork quality.

Sample Names: Arohar Toen, Zytrisa'a Ne'en, Gavril
Nam'ir, Jalil Fyrenn, Hedeon Mase'ras, Tam'sool Tas.

Slaves of Pan Tang

All of the rowing slaves on *Chardros's Lament* are male, and are fresh for this voyage. They are in decent health, and they still have some willpower, not having

been rendered insane or traumatized by their experience on the demon island. They come from a variety of countries, and show a wide range of hair colors, skin tones, and languages.

Generic Rowing Slave



Medium-Size Human

Level 1 Commoner

Abilities: Str 14 Dex 11 Con 11
Int 10 Wis 9 Cha 10

Hit Points: 3 **Initiative:** +0

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 10

Attacks: Chain, club, quarterstaff, or unarmed strike +2;
thrown rock +0 ranged

Damage: Chain 1d4+2; club or quarterstaff 1d6+2;
unarmed strike 1d3+2; thrown rock 1d3+2

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities: none

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -1

Skills: Concentration +1, Jump +3, Profession (Various)
+2, Row +4, Speak Language (Various), Spot +1,
Swim +3

Feats: Simple Weapon Proficiency

Allegiance: Usually Balance or Law (lawful good to neutral
alignment)

CR: 1/2 each

Possessions: None.

Sample Names: Ganneth, Rikholster, Cannavar,
Dimundrasten, Korath Korel, Jylum, Zemund

The Arrival

Next, the *Virago* meets up with *Chardros's Lament*, a pre-arranged meeting which the pirates have done several times. The meeting of the two vessels takes place about three days' sail from either Pan Tang or Vilmiro.

The *Virago* has been waiting for the arrival of the Pan Tang slavers for the better part of a day now. If the PCs do not have an idea where they are (Intuit Direction or Sailing roll, DC 15 or 20 respectively), Whyss will be able to identify the skies and the color of the water.





The following can be read or paraphrased to the PCs:

You hear some thumps, and shouts from above. Suddenly, you hear a lot of very muffled pounding, but not from the vessel. There are some heavy thuds and a scrambling of activity from the deck.

If any of the characters have the Sailing skill, ask them to make a check with a DC of 15 to recognize the sounds of banks of oars being withdrawn so a ship can pull next to another.

Whyss listens for a moment, and then says, "Another ship—a few banks of oars. Probably a slaver."

There is a jolt as the ship seems to collide lightly against something—another ship, obviously. The footfalls and creaking from above are the sounds of guidelines being tied, lashing two vessels together.

The hatch opens, and one of the pirates, a Pikaraydan, climbs down, his hair braided and tufts of leather and bone hanging from his armor. He brandishes an axe. Another of them steps down—a dark-skinned woman in black and gold scale armor. She's got a long-bladed knife in her hand.

"Get up there." She says, pointing at the ladder.

If the PCs and NPCs decide to cause trouble, use the suggestions on page 22 to deal with any resistance or escape attempts. The two pirates are Scorrush and Ischune. Two others—Zhedanor and Fisk Woe-bringer—will join them quickly if needed.

On deck, you see the endless expanse of sea and sky. It is getting into late afternoon, and the wind is a bit cool and strong, causing the ship's sails to rustle and snap from the masts where they are wrapped, the loose bits of sailcloth catching wind and making noise. The sky is mostly cloudless. The crew of the pirate vessel is restless, and you can tell that they're uneasy about what's coming next. Their faces, representatives from many countries, but mostly Vilmir, show a mix of emotions. Their hands are on weapons, and they are watching all of you carefully, splitting their attention between the captives and the ship drawing near.

Whyss looks at the sky and water for a moment, then comments, "We're near the Dragon Sea. Three days out. Too far to swim."

The ship tying off on the pirate ship sends a chill through those of you who recognize it. It is a Pan Tāng slave ship—a low-slung trireme with three banks of oars and a single

square sail. The deck of the other ship is nearly six or seven feet above the pirate ship's deck, and a large number of sinister-faced warriors peer over the rail, down at you and the pirates, their dark eyes showing their contempt. As you watch, two of them pull open a section of their vessel's rail, near an open section of rail on the pirate ship. A long step-like ladder is shoved out the opening on the side-rail, and it thuds onto the deck, at a steep angle.

The name of the Pan Tāng vessel is in Mabden ("Chardros's Lament" to those who can read it) on the prow of the ship. The sail depicts a snarling tiger head, overlaid on a red sign of Chaos on a black field.

Then a squad of Pan Tangians comes aboard, their armor rattling as they assemble on the deck. A large man in bluish-black armor who is obviously their leader follows them. Tall and threatening, his armor is enameled with a pattern of dripping crimson blood. He has a wickedly bladed heavy pick slung at his hip, and his beard and hair have

Slaves of the Narrative

Some players will be irritated at being powerless in this opening sequence. In this case, the DM is encouraged to speed this section along as much as possible, to get to the next chapter where the PCs have a lot of freedom.

If players persist in dragging this encounter out (when they have little chance of winning or escaping, as discussed above), or are eliminating their odds of survival, the DM can choose to switch to a complete narrative mode, letting the PCs only act through dialogue. If they continue to try to interrupt the slave purchase dialogue overtly, they will be gagged. Though this is a bit heavy-handed, it will only last a short while before PCs are free and able to act.

Alternately, a DM can, "out of character," remind the players that this is just the prologue, and that they will have plenty of opportunities for action and freedom shortly.





been braided into locks with small claw-like ornaments at the ends.

Following him is a man clad in baroque finery, looking somewhat seasick and holding a kerchief to his nose and mouth. He is almost certainly a noble or magician from the attitude he presents. His beard and facial hair have been trimmed to form a strange inverted arrow of Chaos. In his other hand he holds a long silvery chain, which leads to the neck of the small, cloaked figure that follows him onto the deck, hunched over almost as if it wishes to walk on all fours. The skin of its long three-fingered hands and feet are blue, and the cloak is gaudy, almost vulgar. You hear some of the pirates mutter nervously when they see this mysterious creature.

Whyss mutters, "This is odd. Mostly they'd just let them bring their slaves onto the slave galley . . . but they don't usually buy from pirates. They don't trust them enough, I'd reckon. . . ."

The captain of the pirates steps up to the leader of the Pan Tangians, who stands with his arms crossed across his armored chest. After a moment of appraisal, the pirate speaks first.

"Greetings, noble sirs. Welcome to my vessel. I am Vartan Vensk, captain of the *Virago*." He smiles and combs his beard with his fingers. "I've been told that this was a good stretch of waters to make a profit in, and a friend in common told me you'd be along soon."

"You're looking for slaves. I have some good ones today." With this, Vartan gestures with a wide sweep of his arm at all of you, his captives.

The Pan Tangian looks at him for a long, awkward moment, and then speaks in a deep, thickly accented voice. "My name is Gariv Klos, and this is Hasper Dal." He gestures dismissively at the fine-dressed noble standing near him, with the creature on the leash.

"I am captain of Chardros's Lament, and this sorcerer is looking for special slaves. I'll take the rest for myself, if they're worth it."

Bored by the conversation, the man identified as Hasper Dal crouches next to the hunched, cloaked figure, whispering to it in a soothing voice. If you listen, you can hear him saying, "Now go and examine them, Omerginroul. Remember . . . if they're of the right blood, we'll buy them and things will go easier for you. . . . Even one of them will be enough." He then removes the cloak from the being and it stands a bit straighter, fully revealed.

The creature, hairless and naked, is four feet in height, all covered with blue skin and slight patterns of darker scales, and built like an upright-walking cat. Its legs and arms have one joint more than a man's, and its head is wedge-shaped. The creature's almond-shaped eyes, large and dark, wash over you, and you can see that its face is almost human, though a little blank. A thin mouth rests below a small set of nostrils, and inside the mouth are small, evenly pointed teeth. When its eyes meet yours, you can see that it is miserable and terrified.

"What in the Nine Hells is that?" says Linault Brin, before he is silenced with a rough kick from the tall woman pirate.

"None of them, actually," answers Hasper Dal, hearing Brin speak. "But it will help me get there."

As he speaks, the creature begins to walk down the line of the captives, sniffing each of them carefully. It does not meet your eyes, as if ashamed of what it is being forced to do.

"It will be the key which will return me there, opening the plane gate and allowing me to pass through. For that, it needs to drink from someone with a certain kind of blood."

"That blood, as you can guess, might be found in one of you."

The creature, almost as if on cue, points at one of the captives.

Then another.

All eyes on the deck turn towards both of you.

The Chosen Ones?

With this, the creature chooses one of the PCs, and one of the NPC captives. The DM should choose who gets picked, or can make it a random roll. Remember that this designation represents Omerginroul's choice based on which of the PCs seems best suited to help him, such as having magical ability or other powers.

The choice of which PC is "special" imparts a large responsibility onto that player, as the character chosen will be viewed as essential to their survival from information gained later in the adventure. The DM might want to choose someone with a high chance of surviving, or perhaps choose someone who's the weakest of the group, to encourage the other characters to help defend them.

A recommended selection for the "special" NPC is Korune, because his apparent lack of value makes him a liability initially, and because his insanity can provide





some good roleplaying opportunities. Law- or Balance-aligned characters should have a hard time abandoning a wretch like Korune to his fate. By making him important to their survival, this increases the chance that they'll help him.

"Both of them," says the wizard, his hand stroking the emblem of Chaos worn about his neck. "Hmm, interesting. . . . Purchase them." he says aside to the Pan Tangian captain, oblivious to the glare of contempt the man gives him in return.

The slaver captain gestures back at his ship, and two of the soldiers come forward with a long wooden chest borne between them. Despite being an obviously well reinforced strongbox, it is decorative, with a black and red lacquer, carven with twisting tentacles and dark eyes set across the edges. They bring the box to the captain, and as they do so, the captain reaches under the neck of his breastplate and begins to remove a cord, undoubtedly a key.

The scene is almost deathly silent as the pirates watch the exchange, hoping for a look inside the mysterious crimson box, and the Pan Tangians tense themselves against any foolish attempts at stealing the strongbox.

At this point, PCs who make a roll of Knowledge (Nature), Sailing, or Wilderness Lore at DC 15 will notice that the wind has died entirely.

"Ware! Captain! Another ship!" shouts a man on the crow's nest of Chardros's Lament, as a few other sailors on-board begin to echo the cry. He moves a spyglass into line, and shouts, "Battle-barge!"

As this is heard, a look of dismay and momentary panic crosses Gariv Klos's face. He turns, then, and says to his men. "Onboard! Now! Leave these pirate scum to deal with the Melnibonéan demon-lords!"

His face twisted in fury at the betrayal and the loss of profit, Vartan Vensk shouts, "Stop them! We'll take that gold and let them deal with the battle-barge!"

The deck of the Virago erupts into activity, as the pirates surge towards the Pan Tangians, pushing aside the captives, in an attempt to stop them from taking their strongbox off the ship. The Pan Tangians form a defensive phalanx of shields and curved swords as they begin their retreat up the stepladder, but are cut off by the pirates who had crowded between them and the ramp.

Caught on the outside of the shield-wall near the captives, the Pan Tangian sorcerer reacts in a panic, stammering, "What's happening?" Beside him, the blue creature

pulls at its chain, and the collar springs loose! It scurries towards the captives.

Pirates rush towards the Pan Tangians to stop them, and the air is suddenly full of arrows and javelins, launched from the slave galley, and from the pirates towards the Pan Tangians. Other Pan Tangians from the deck of Chardros's Lament begin to move onto the step-ramp, their arms extended to help their brethren back aboard.

A pirate from the Purple Towns rushes up to you and says, "If we free you—you fight with us, right?" The keys are in his left hand, a long-hafted sea axe in his right. As he waits for your response, an arrow strikes him in the shoulder, and he drops the keys, then turns around, facing the melee and pulling a shield off a pile on the deck.

The slavers and the pirates converge, weapons rising and falling, blood splashing into the scream-filled air.

The keys gleam on the deck. An instant later, an arrow thuds into the wood next to them.

[To the PC chosen earlier by Omerginroul:] The creature grabs your arm and looks up at you. "If you will help me, I can take us from this place."

What do you do?

The Slave Battle: PC Actions

Finally! A chance for the PCs to act! This melee is a sprawling, chaotic mess of activity, with opportunity aplenty for frustrated PCs to crack some heads—either those of their former captors or of the Pan Tangian slavers. Page 192 of *Dragon Lords of Melniboné* contains brief guidelines for handling mass combats, and the DM is encouraged to refer to that section. DMs are encouraged to keep in mind combat rules and modifiers such as those for firing missile weapons into crowds, line of sight, new combatants entering combat, penalties for uncertain terrain, and ways to make the combat varied and unique. This melee should reflect the wildness of the world of the Young Kingdoms, and players should also be encouraged to use the full range of their characters' skills, not just simple weapon skills. The DM should be calling on PCs to check against abilities such as Balance (running across a blood-slicked, wildly pitching deck in the middle of a melee), Climb (scrambling up a net or the mast for a vantage shot), Jump (leaping over a fallen pirate, or even bounding into the air to catch a swinging rope





to kick another combatant), or Tumble (to somersault across the deck of the *Virago* to reach a fallen weapon). One great way to do this is to emphasize these actions being done by the various NPCs, such as the other captives and the major NPCs among the pirates and the slavers.

This should be a memorable combat, but should not turn into the end of the adventure, with all of the PCs perishing in the midst of a violent free-for-all. The DM is encouraged to speed this combat along, but to give the PCs plenty of opportunity to shine, and to flex their captivity-stiffened muscles and take back some of their pride.

On the deck of the *Virago*, there are a large number of weapons that are lying around, waiting to be wielded, and there are also a number of weapons the PCs might improvise. Staves, boat-hooks, chains, ropes . . . all of these are readily available, as are the stacks of shields, barrels of javelins and spears, and the weapons which have fallen from the hands of the wounded or dead fighters.

The Manacle Keys

Most of the NPC captives (except for Korune) will make an attempt at getting the manacle keys off the deck. Roll initiative to see which of them is able to grab the keys first, though the keys should be at the feet of one of the PCs. A Reflex save at DC 20 will be required to successfully snag the keys if more than one character is going for them. Only characters within 6 feet or so of the keys will have an unobstructed grab for them, while everyone else will have a -2 modifier to this roll. If the PCs are slow to try to free everyone, Whyss will draw a knife from his boot and hiss at the PC with the key, "Give me the damned keys! Unlock me now!" while the other NPCs clamor to be released as well. Once freed, they will go for whatever weapons they can find or improvise, and join in the melee, fighting defensively and perhaps retreating to the forecabin of the *Virago*, or attempting to go back down below decks.

Who's Who in the Melee

Here's everyone present on the deck of the *Virago*, with his or her motivations and possible actions during this skirmish:

Pan Tangian Warriors: There are 1d4+4 generic Pan Tangian slavers remaining on the *Virago*. They are bent on defending their captain, the strongbox, and in retreating to the deck of *Chardros's Lament* via the stepladder. Another 1d6 warriors might be able to enter the fray from the step-ramp to help get their companions to safety on their own ship. At the DM's discretion, this number can vary according to the strength of the PC party and the level of resistance they face.

Gariv Klos: The captain of *Chardros's Lament* is going to do all he can to protect the strongbox and fight alongside his men. His ultimate goal is to get as many of his men back onboard as possible, along with the strongbox. The strongbox will take precedence if given a choice, and he will save his own skin before sacrificing himself for his men. He will not do anything to assist Hasper Dal, or Omerginroul.

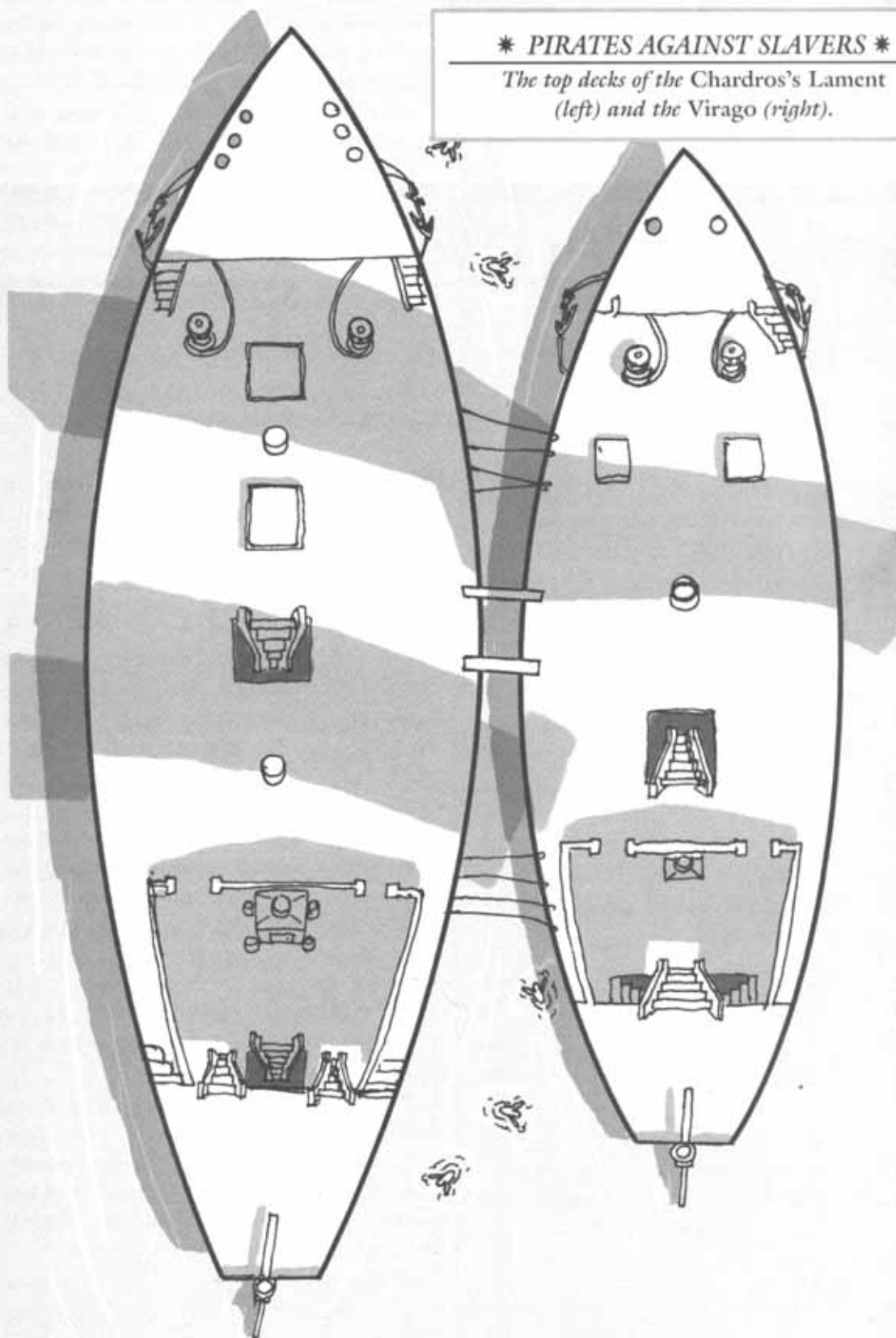
Hasper Dal: Lost in the middle of combat, Hasper Dal is scrambling after Omerginroul, and also trying to get out of the way of the combat, attempting to hide or remain out of the crush of melee. Though he seems to be somewhat foppish, he will not allow himself to be





* PIRATES AGAINST SLAVERS *

*The top decks of the Chardros's Lament
(left) and the Virago (right).*





killed outright, and will use his spell casting to defend himself. If he sees that Omerginroul is beyond recovery, he will attempt to make his way back to the deck of *Chardros's Lament*.

Pirates of the *Virago*: In addition to Vensk, Zhedanor, Ischune, Fisk, Hanaa, and Scorrush, there are 1d6+6 generic pirates on the deck, with the remainder below decks. There are 27 pirates in all. Some of them are below decks, sleeping or eating, and some of them might even remain out of danger while the combat is

Man Overboard!

In the all-too-likely chance that someone has been swept overboard, the following rules and situational modifiers apply.

Climbing: Along the starboard side of the *Virago* is a thick net of ropes, along with an anchor chain, both of which can be used for Climb attempts if someone overboard wishes to get back on deck. The DC is 20 for being a wet, slippery surface. Climbing up the side of *Chardros's Lament* is not feasible, as the sides are sealed and slick, without any handholds (DC 30). Also, there are a large number of slavers with weapons who will hold off any unwanted boarders.

Hanging On: Choosing to remain holding onto the side of the *Virago*, yet not re-entering the fray on deck is an option, with a DC 10 once the character has succeeded in the previous Climb skill attempt. This number jumps to DC 15 once the gate is opened and the *Virago* passes through.

Swimming: If there's a good side to the characters beginning without their armor and weapons, it's that they won't suffer any encumbrance or armor check penalties if they go into the drink. This is not true for the Pan Tangians or pirates, many of whom are wearing armor. The condition of the water just before the fight is calm (DC 10) due to Melnibonéan weather witchery. During the summoning of the gate it is rough (DC 15), and while the *Virago* is pulled into the gate, the water is stormy and wild (DC 20).

Treading Water: Characters who go overboard and wish to remain there will do so until the gate opens,

at which time they will be automatically be pulled through the gate by force of the strong currents.

Left Behind?: If players insist on making a check to avoid their overboard PCs being pulled into the gate, let them do so at DC 35. Failure indicates that they are swept through the gate with the ships and any other overboard characters. A success means that the PCs manage to resist the gate's opening, only to watch the *Virago* go through into the stormy gate. Next, they see a horribly one-sided battle as the Melnibonéan battle-barge launches flaming stones and a veritable rainstorm of arrows at *Chardros's Lament*. The Pan Tangians, reacting in horror and fear, steer their vessel towards the shrinking gate. They just manage to get through as the gate closes behind them, fading into faint blue light, then nothingness.

The PCs will then be adrift, tens of miles from shore, with their only company consisting of floating corpses, a few other survivors from the pirate vessel or the slaver bireme, and some random pieces of wood torn free from the *Virago*. If things were not bleak enough, the Melnibonéan battle-barge shortly sails up and begins inspecting the wreckage to see what happened and if there are traces of the magical gateway remaining.

The Melnibonéans will either leave the PCs to drown, or take them onboard and question them to learn what transpired (and possibly enslave the PCs). If so, the PCs will be outside the main narrative of the adventure, but will be taken with the Melnibonéans as they attempt to pursue the pirate ships. Consult the section on the battle-barge, her captain, and crew on pages 75–77 for suggestions in this case.





ensuing. Pirates are not especially known for their valor or their loyalty to each other. One round after the combat starts, the hatch to the lower deck will be thrown open and 1d6 additional pirates will enter the combat. Their goals are to defeat the Pan Tangians onboard their deck quickly, and to take the strongbox if the opportunity presents itself. They will fight alongside the freed captives if needed, feeling that all men are brothers in the face of the evil of the Pan Tangians and the demon lords of the Dragon Isle.

The Blue Creature: Omerginroul manages to break free of its collar and lunges towards a PC, saying in curiously accented Common Tongue, "Help me! A small taste of blood and I can open a gate to take us away from this! I can help you escape from this place!" If the PC does not comply, one of the NPCs will step up to take the chance. If they do so, the following occurs:

The creature bites down lightly on the proffered wrist. There is a moment of slight pain as a small row of needle-sharp teeth penetrates the skin, then numbness. The creature's mouth convulses and a slight rush of energy is felt as blood is drawn. The creature's eyes begin to glow. White light pours out of the creature's open eyes, and it releases the character's wrist. A definite and intense white-blue glow begins to emanate from the diamond-shaped patterns of scales which cross the creature's hide. The skin where the bite was made has only a slight row of red points, a tiny trail of blood flowing from several of them. The creature stands, its arms extended at shoulder-level, and it throws its head back.

The light begins to flood from the creature now, and it illuminates the deck of the Virago in sharp relief, almost searing in its intensity. In front of the vessel, you can see a ring of bluish-white light forming, writ in the air in runes of blue flame, rotating across the sky. The ring grows, until it is much larger than the entire pirate ship, and where it hits the water it hisses and boils. Under the surface of the water, the runes of blue flame continue to rotate, and the sky begins to still itself. The sounds of the battle slow and grow silent, as both sides of the conflict—pirates and slavers—realize that they are facing something terrible and unknown. . . .

The circle of magic symbols rotates once more, and then comes to a stop. It pulses once, and then, like an immense eye, the area inside the ring opens and shows another place, a storm-tossed dark world, and an island in the distance.

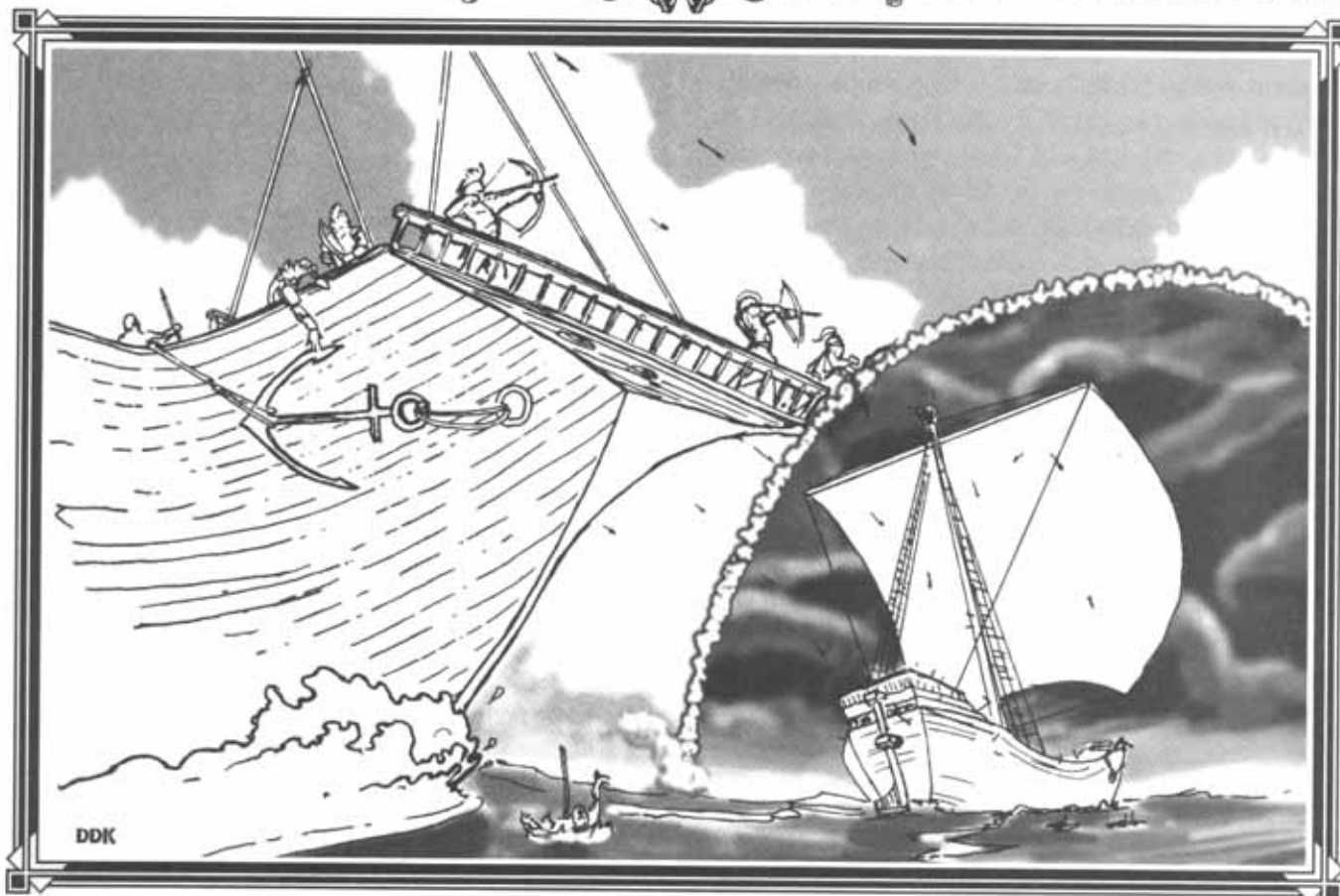


Attacking Omerginroul

If one of the PCs attempts to attack or kill the blue creature, it will simply try to dodge and evade the assault, while it pleads with the attackers that it is innocent and will aid them against the pirates and the slavers. A check against Sense Motive with a DC 10 will reveal that this is true. The DM might emphasize how weak and defenseless the creature is to dissuade such attacks.

If a PC manages to injure him, Omerginroul will scurry away and seek someone else to bite—probably Korune. If he is injured to the point of unconsciousness, then Hasper Dal will find him in the midst of the melee and cast Cure Light Wounds on him. Once active again, Omerginroul will struggle to get free, bite Hasper Dal, and enact the ritual as described above.





Lightning flickers in the skies above that place, wherever it might be, and the roar of wave and wind bursts out of the ring, accompanied by the chill force of storm-winds. The Virago begins to rock and pitch even more, and the gateway grows closer, until it is on the bow of the vessel.

The Pan Tāngians are shouting dully in the background, and the thunderous sound of banks of oars being used to push the Virago away from them shakes the deck. The ring grows slowly as it approaches, and the Virago is pulled through, a tearing of timbers sounding as the ship yaws violently, sending pirates, captives, and slavers sprawling across the deck!

All characters, PC and NPC, on the deck of the Virago must make a Balance check against a DC of 20 to remain standing. Any characters who roll a natural 1 or a modified score of 5 or less are swept overboard (see "Man Overboard!" on page 34).

Through the gate you can feel the whips of stinging rain and brutally cold winds, and hear the sound of thunder! The gate has opened into a stormy place, in the midst of a tempest of immense proportions! The sky is dark, but you can see spots of light ahead . . . an island, perhaps?

Suddenly, there is a tearing sound, as the Virago shudders, her timbers tearing into something. All aboard are tossed once more across the deck! The ship lurches, and a wall of water splashes against all of you with the force of a club!

Everything grows dark. . . .

At this point, the DM should just do a "fade to black" transition and move on to the next section. This is a dramatic point to pause at, and might even be a good time for a quick break, as it is a good cliffhanger to end this chapter on. If the gaming style of the players and DM isn't really suited for that, then by all means play out the intervening moments between the gate and the shipwreck. The following happens:

The Virago hits one of the island spurs and is shipwrecked. Characters onboard should make a Balance, Climb, or Strength check at DC 20 (depending on what they are doing) to remain standing or immobile. Otherwise they are swept overboard and strike another of the island spurs (1d2 damage) or wash ashore on the beach a minute later. Allow Swim checks at DC 15 and assess damage from drowning or damage from





being swept onto rocks if the characters fail. Details about getting from the *Virago* to the shore (or from the shore to the *Virago*) are found below in the relevant section.

Anyone in the water must make a Swim check at DC 15, or be swept into the island spurs (1d2 damage, choose a spur at random). A spur can be climbed with a Climb check at DC 15. From there, characters can see

Introducing New PCs During the Adventure

If any of the PCs have been killed during the course of the adventure, there are options for bringing the player back into play with a minimum of effort, and in a logical manner (considering the geographical and planar isolation of this adventure). If needed, the DM can simply replace an NPC encounter on the island with the new PC, perhaps even giving the PC an opportunity to show his or her new allegiance. (Perhaps the PCs encounter a group of pirates arguing, and one of them seems to be alone against the rest, or an escaped slave is running from a small group of Pan Tangian warriors.) Here are some options:

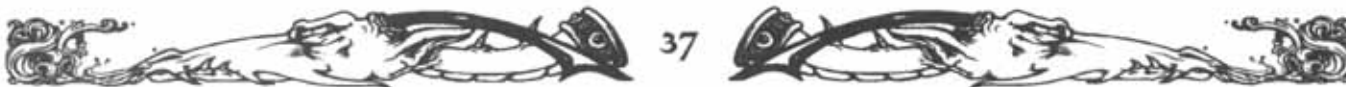
Other Captive NPCs: A player can easily assume the role of one of the additional NPC captives described above. The NPC captives encompass a wide range of talents and abilities that should support any adventuring group. Dierre of the Black Shores and Geirmund the Hare are especially well suited for use as PCs. Linault Brin and Osa Dileel are fairly useful, more experienced but not as competent, generally, as PCs. Korune would be an interesting challenge for the player and the DM, though it could be one of the better choices for a PC "takeover," while Whyss is the least suitable, for reasons of power level and personality.

Escaped Slaves: Sometimes those who imagine themselves the masters of their destinies can suddenly find themselves slaves to fate. As with the PCs and Geirmund, a few of the rowing slaves onboard *Chardros's Lament* are adventuring types, and will seize the opportunity during the sea-battle or the assault by the battle-barge to slip free from their chains and jump overboard, being caught in the magical gate and ending up in the same place as the PCs. These slaves can be of any class or nationality

(except for winged Myyrrhn and full-blooded Melnibonéans), even Pan Tangians!

Pirates: Perhaps onboard the *Virago* is a fairly inexperienced new pirate who's had a change of heart about the life of banditry on the high seas. The character has been biding his or her time, waiting for the right opportunity to escape or desert, and the wreck of the *Virago* provides just that, plus the chance to make new allies who might aid him or her against his or her former companions. The most likely classes for this sort of character are fighter, rogue, or barbarian, though other choices are not impossible. The DM can even allow the player to assume the role of one of the less motivated of the pirate NPCs described, such as Ischune, Fisk Woe-Bringer, or Hotas Ba'att Hanaa. Others, such as Scorrush, are again too powerful for a beginning-level adventure. In this case, the PC should have to provide a convincing and dramatic speech explaining his or her change of heart and attempt to win the trust of the other PCs.

Pan Tangian Deserters: Not all Pan Tangians are the same, and some of them are even potentially good people. Carkan of Pan Tang, for example, became a hero of the Balance and a defender of Tanelorn. It's unlikely that you would find a would-be hero on a slaver vessel, but sometimes life puts people into circumstances they might not entirely be in control of, or appropriate for. Anything can happen. Thus, if the DM and other players are willing to accept one of the former enemies into their midst, then a player can be drawn from the ranks of the Pan Tangian marines, slavers, or soldiers. In these cases, the most likely subject would be a PC of level suitable for the group (it is assumed that all PCs in this game are 1st–3rd level), and the most obvious classes would be fighter or rogue, or possibly the expert/sailor class.





the other island spurs and the beach. Successive Swim attempts must be made to reach the beach.

Part II: Castaways

In which our cast of heroes learns the nature of the strange island they have been brought to, and a cat-and-mouse game begins, full of shifting alliances in which the predator becomes prey, and all seek to avoid the iron collar of fate writ in their futures. . . .

Scaling the Adventure

While the initial part of this adventure does not significantly threaten the characters, this part is very deadly, and can prove overwhelming to smaller groups of PCs. The fellow captives are provided to help provide any skills or abilities the PCs might lack, and a number of pirates or slavers could be allies to cunning or resourceful PCs. Despite this, the large number of NPCs can be a DM's nightmare if all are considered to be present and active on the island. Furthermore, the purpose of the adventure isn't to kill everyone onboard the pirate and slaver vessels—a task which would be daunting for anyone save perhaps Elric himself!

Some DMs might not wish to deal with such a large cast, and prefer a more select group of survivors to match themselves against the threats of the island. In this case, the DM is encouraged to scale the number of adversaries from each group to better match the overall number, levels, classes, playing style, capabilities, and current health of the PC group. It's also a good opportunity for the DM to eliminate any NPCs he or she doesn't want to deal with, whittling the cast down to a more manageable size.

Who's Left?

How many remain of the pirates of the *Virago* depends on two issues: 1) the outcome of the skirmish on deck, and 2) how many died during the shipwreck, being drowned below decks. Count out how many pirates were actually killed during the sea-battle (or the DM can simply choose or randomly determine how many died, if he or she didn't play out the entire on deck skirmish). Next, add to that number of unfortunates another 1d4+4 that drowned or were otherwise killed in the

shipwreck. Subtract this number from 27 (the total crew of the *Virago*), and the result is how many pirates are left to use as encounters; check them off as they are placed and encountered. After that, any encounters specifying "Pirate" become "No Encounter," or the DM can roll again if desired.

On *Chardros's Lament*, the Pan Tangian slavers have been decimated by the attack of the Melnibonéan battle-barge. Their ship has sustained considerable damage, and they are now barely able to keep an unruly and potentially dangerous group of slave rowers from revolt. Additionally, the first mate is likely going to make a move against his captain, an action that will split the loyalties of the slavers, causing them to shed each other's blood.

The DM should consider how many Pan Tangian slaver-marines survive the naval combat and how many may have drowned or been drawn overboard during the flight to the island. There are 55 Pan Tangian sailors, slavers, and marines onboard in the beginning, including the captain. Twelve of the Pan Tangian slavers came onboard the *Virago*, along with Klos and Hasper Dal.

"What Happened?"

The DM should read, paraphrase, or summarize the following information to the PCs:

For a moment, it seems as if the universe was going to come apart as the pirate ship was pulled at breakneck speed through the strange gate in the air. The timbers of the ship creaked as forces tore at its frame, and you could feel the snapping of timbers beneath your feet as the boat's skeleton was tested and broken under the force of the otherworldly passage.

The sky boiled overhead, all was dark. There was a moment of stillness, as the ship increased in speed through the darkness, buckling and creaking as it came apart in sections. As it seemed as if the ship wouldn't slow, you and the other pirates, slavers, and other captives scrambled for safety on the buckling deck, grabbing onto anything solid. The less fortunate were pulled overboard with by the clutch of angry waves, or thrown overboard by a buck of the deck as it struggled and lost. You can barely remember what you did at that time, though all on deck were united in their anticipation and fear of what was to come next.





Then the world exploded about you with a roar of thunder and a spray of sea-water, hitting all of you as if by a shield-rush! The Virago collided against something immobile. A small island, a coral reef, or some rocky spur?

It didn't matter, as it was the last thing on the mind of those who saw the aft section of the ship raise high above the foredeck with the force of the crash, throwing more of you into the waves in a shower of deck-wood, sail-cloth, and rope. The waves washed over you once more, and you lost all thought for a moment. . . .

Now, clarity has returned, and in a fleet second, you wonder where exactly you are now. . . .

The Island

Seen from a distance, this rocky little island appears mostly dark and silent, with little life on it, though dotted with a peculiar spotting of blue points of light, somewhat like torches, and a large central blue glow coming from the other side of the island. The rocks themselves are somewhat black and shiny, seeming to be made of obsidian, while the half-light of this plane reveals the beaches are made of some lighter gray sand.

- * Characters who make a Knowledge (Natural World) check at a DC of 10 realize that this island is made up of the same stone as Pan Tang.
- * A check against Knowledge (Million Spheres) at DC 15 will reveal that certain peculiarities of the skyline and the weather patterns indicate that this is a sub-realm of Chaos, near the Young Kingdoms, but perhaps not much larger than a few dozen miles across in totality. The island itself appears to be over a mile across and over one and a half miles long.
- * Intuit Direction checks against a DC of 15 reveal that the characters and the *Virago* are at the south end of the island, and the blue glow is at the north end of the island or thereabouts.

History of the Island

This island was, long ago, a small island in the Straits of Chaos, held by priestesses of Pan Tang, devoted to the Chaos goddess Eequor. Her church had fled to this place, the only one on Pan Tang where Eequor's worship was allowed, and her priestesses and followers

formed a small temple and colony of worshippers. On the island, Eequor's subjects ruled and worshipped her in secrecy, taking with them their consorts and their families, and dealing with the folk of Dharijor, where Eequor's worship was allowed. They built a city and a temple to her, and continued her strange and degenerate worship. To show her favor to them, Eequor caused a perpetual magical glow to emanate from the magnificent fountain that stood before the temple, making a beacon of blue light to beckon her followers to the temple. This island, colony, and temple were sacred and known only to the priestesses of Eequor, and were regarded as a place of pilgrimage to her secret worshippers throughout Pan Tang, and even in nearby Dharijor. Eventually, however, word of their existence spread to those outside the ranks of Eequor's worshippers.

Thirty-one years ago, the Theocrat of Pan Tang discovered the city and ordered its immediate destruction, sending ships, warriors and sorcerers to destroy the temple and worshippers. They unleashed an incredible sorcerous barrage upon the island, killing hundreds of the priestesses, their followers, and their defenders. When the high priestess prayed for divine intercession, Eequor intervened subtly in the midst of this mighty battle. She broke the island's ties to the plane of the Young Kingdoms, sending it spiraling into a smaller plane of the Multiverse, a pocket realm where it would be left alone and forgotten.

Back in the realm of the Young Kingdoms, the Theocrat's forces thought that their sorceries had destroyed the city and temple outright, so they gave them no further thought. They had no idea that the island had been transported to another realm and was still intact, though the ranks of Eequor's worshippers were decimated and their temple-city was in ruins.

Since that time, the priestess survivors of the sun-dering of their island from the Young Kingdoms realm have continued to worship Eequor, though the effort of their rescue has cost them the favor of the goddess. Eequor has apparently also forgotten about them, letting them remain in planar exile as punishment for the folly of being discovered and losing her sacred temple, her only church in Pan Tang and the finest of her temples in the Young Kingdoms. It seems an unfair judgment, though in truth Eequor has simply realized that their use is limited and does not want to expend the effort to assist these stranded followers. The priestesses



MELNIBONÉAN
BATTLE BARGE

DEAD FIELDS

DEAD FIELDS

DEAD FIELDS

TEMPLE OF
EEQUOR

FOUNTAIN

CITY RUINS

STEEP
JAGGED
CLIFFS

WEIRD STONE FOREST

WEIRD STONE FOREST

WEIRD STONE FOREST

CRYSTAL GROTTA
CHARDROS'
LAMENT

STONE
BRIDGE

BLACK
SAND
BEACH

WATCH
TOWER

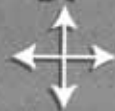
ROCKY HILLS

ROCKY HILLS

SILVER SAND BEACH

The Mysterious Island

N



scale: 1" = 1200'

JAGGED SPURS OF ROCK

WRECK OF
THE VIRAGO



on the island, led by Dima'dra'esh, spent the first decade or so of their exile ruling and rebuilding the temple with those followers that survived. Their numbers dwindled, through natural injury, attempts at sailing from the island (no one returned), and sometimes even suicide.

Now there are only seven of the lesser priestesses left, and their high priestess is Dima'dra'esh. They have little to live for—it is hard work enough to force the earth and sea to supply a meager diet of bland plants, grasses, and fish, and magically conjured water and food have long since grown unappetizing. Because of these factors, all of the priestesses have gone insane with loneliness, boredom, the sameness of their world, and the hopelessness of their predicament. Their madness is not raving or psychopathic, and is a subtle form of lunacy and a series of wildly inappropriate emotional reactions. Most of them wish to go home, but would be just as happy if their world was destroyed, and they with it. This has led them to the desperate plan of action and a hopeful end to their exile, which has come in the form of unwitting visitors to their island.

In all of this time, the only beings to have entered this bleak world were the two wayward silume—Omerginroul and Liramayn. The priestesses captured them and made preparations for the sacrifice, but Omerginroul escaped. Dima'dra'esh hopes to sacrifice Liramayn as a sign of supplication to Eequor, so that the goddess will force open the gate between the planes and return the island to the Young Kingdoms. The priestesses are convinced that this must be done, even if such a return means that they will die in their homeland once they are discovered. It is into this situation that the PCs are thrust.

Geography of the Island

The island is rocky and steep, and is around 1.2 miles across and 1.6 miles from north to south. It features oddly shaped and unusually high rock formations, surrounded with scraggly trees, mostly dead or barely alive due to a lack of sunlight. The island appears made of greenish-black obsidian, with the soil being thin, grayish-white, and chalky, of little use for supporting life. The beaches are covered in a layer of tiny, gloss-gray pebbles rather than sand, and the south end of the island is lower in elevation, with the east shore being extraordinarily steep cliffsides, almost as if the island

was broken off from some larger body of land (which it was). A grotto which leads into a deep, narrow valley divides the island, and the north half slopes upward until it reaches a plateau, upon which is a small temple-city. The northernmost part of the island tapers off gently back to sea level, and a number of small, meager hillside gardens dot the area until it reaches the shore. Ancient, volcanic caves hide beneath the north half of the island, accessible from the narrow valley and beneath the temple city itself.

Signs of habitation are few, but notable. From any point of any altitude on the island, one can see a strange blue glow emanating from the midst of the city, near the temple. From a distance, the lights of many small stone lanterns are visible, giving off a permanent blue glow. These are each filled with a small piece of stone from the beacon fire in the temple fount, and continue to give off light, making the trails fairly safe for traversal. However, they also have the somewhat disquieting effect of throwing strange, long shadows across the place. A stark and ominous lighthouse juts from the rocky hill ridges in the south half of the island, also lit in the same manner. Near the center of the island, a man-made bridge spans the deep crevice valley. Several trails have been marked across the land, some paths edged with stones while others have been fully paved.

The temperature is slightly on the cool side, not cold or freezing, but definitely not comfortable for someone soaking wet and exposed. PCs who've been submerged or swam to shore will be thoroughly miserable initially, but should dry off in a matter of hours, less time if they bother to start a fire or take efforts at drying their garments (wringing them dry or spreading them on rocks).

The water is drinkable, though it is vaguely bitter and has an oily aftertaste. Despite this, it is safe. Boiling it will clear the taste and make it a little more bearable. There is almost no sign of barnacles other than their rings upon the rocks of the shore—the priestesses and the avian scavengers called gharcos have scoured every nook and cranny of the island for sea-grass, driftwood, barnacles, and anything edible that might have grown near the island, or washed up onto the shore. Their gardens and traps at the northern side of the island are covered with nets and cages for capturing drifting sources of food.





Summoning on the Island

If the PCs have the ability to summon supernatural aid, one of the first means of escape from the island would logically be to attempt to summon extraplanar aid, in the form of demons, elementals, or even gods. However, such feats are generally beyond the abilities of typical new or low-level characters. In the unlikely event that the PCs are able to summon supernatural allies or seek supernatural means of escaping the island, the DM can either automatically have any attempts fail, or use the following suggestions.

Elementals: These might be limited to merely air, water, and earth elementals. As none of these beings can traverse the planes, or at least, carry anyone else through the planes, they are of little aid here.

Demons: Demons with dimensional travel capabilities are very rare, and expensive in terms of experience points. (The minimum sacrifice for a such a demon is 3,200 experience points—no small amount!) This feature is reserved for greater demons, and the ability to summon a demon is a 3rd level spell, only available to

5th or higher-level characters. DMs allowing such characters should consider the option of merely stating that the summoning fails.

Elemental Lords, Beast Lords, Lords of Law or Chaos, etc.: The capability to invoke or summon one of these incredibly powerful beings is clearly outside the scope of most starting characters, which this scenario is written for. The DM who allows characters these options at such early levels is clearly running a higher-powered game than this scenario can easily handle—and might wish to similarly limit divine appearances, or delay them for a long enough time that the PCs must do some things for themselves.

NPC Health and Status

If a particular NPC was killed or mortally wounded, was omitted from this adventure, or went someplace specific during the battle, he or she should be moved to that place (or ignored); do not roll for the character's starting location on the table on page 43. See the descriptions of generic Vilmirian pirates on page 21.





and generic Pan Tangian slavers on page 28 for their statistics and some sample names.

This is also a good time to winnow down the supporting cast and even the odds somewhat in the PCs' favor. The DM can easily have any of the NPCs drowned, injured, or unconscious at their starting location. As it stands, there are easily another 1d3 of dead pirates and/or slavers at each location, floating or washed ashore, as appropriate.

Starting Weapons and Equipment

It's unlikely that anyone managed to hold onto a weapon during the passage through the plane gate and the destruction of the *Virago*. However, beginning with no weapons can be difficult, so arm or disarm characters according to the following guidelines:

- a) If the character had a weapon sheathed and connected to a belt, the weapon is still in hand.
- b) If the character had a weapon in hand at the time of the plane gate's creation, a successful Dex check (DC 20) enables him or her to retain it.
- c) A character in a place where a weapon might conceivably be nearby (the deck of the *Virago*, for example), has ready access to a weapon.

Otherwise, let the characters scavenge weapons from those scattered on the shore, still on the wreck of the

Virago, or on the bodies of the other pirates and slavers.

Other equipment should be available at the DM's discretion, with the advice to be lenient, considering how incapacitating the initial scene was. When the characters get back to the captain's chamber and the strongbox onboard the *Virago*, they should have all of their initial weapons and armor returned to them, plus sufficient amounts of other loot and equipment.

Starting Locations for PCs and NPCs

Because of the tumult of the battle onboard the *Virago*, and the extreme turmoil of the ship passing through the plane gate, it is more than likely that characters are separated when the *Virago* crashes. In the suggested method of passing from that scene to this, the DM merely needs to "fade to black," then roll some dice for each of the PCs to determine where they end up (or let them roll for themselves, with the advice "roll high"). If any PCs have spell effects, magic items, or abilities that simulate the effects of luck, add or subtract the appropriate modifier to the d20 roll, to see where fate takes them. Also,

Character Starting Locations

d20 roll	Area	Others Present
1-2	Floating on Wreckage (pages 44-45)	Fisk Woe-Bringer, Geirmund, other pirates (3), Pan Tangian slavers (2)
3-5	The Wreck of the <i>Virago</i> (pages 45-48) . . .	Korune, Linault Brin, Zhedanor, other pirates (4), Pan Tangian slaver (1)
6-8	The Island Spurs (pages 48-50)	Gariv Klos, Hasper Dal, other pirates (2), Pan Tangian slavers (3)
9-13	The South Shore (page 50-52)	Dierre Blackshores, Hotas Hanaa, Osa Dileel, Scorrush, Vartan Vensk, other pirates (3), Pan Tangian slaver (1)
14-20 . . .	The West Shore (page 52-53)	Ischune, Omerginroul, Whyss, other pirates (2), Pan Tangian slavers (2)





if PCs took some precaution against being thrown overboard (such as tying themselves to the mast), if they went below deck, or if they were already thrown overboard during the battle, they should begin in the appropriate place on the chart on page 43.

In each of the areas is a list of the other suggested NPCs present. This splitting and mixing of groups can lead to smaller groups of potentially hostile PCs and NPCs, forcing the PCs to fight or negotiate with the NPCs as they try to unite with their own "group." As the areas are not far apart (most are within earshot or visual range of another area), reuniting all of the PCs shouldn't take very long.

One outcome to this means of distributing starting locations is that if the PCs aren't in an established group or adventuring party (or don't know each other before this adventure begins), they might not want to join forces with each other. After being washed ashore, the pirates are looking for new allies, and they're all opposed to the Pan Tangians—while some PCs and NPCs might cut a deal with the slavers in hopes of getting off the island alive.

Despite these opportunities for conflict and role-playing, the DM isn't required to separate all of the PCs (it is a lot of effort to run five separate areas initially).

A Note About Swimming

It is possible that the requirement for swimming to get from one place to another can threaten or doom a party of PCs, or at the very least, keep them apart inconveniently. This can lead to difficulty running the scenario, or be frustrating to players and DM alike. If this is a danger, the DM is encouraged to allow PCs to Take Ten or Twenty on Swim checks. Alternately, the DM can lower the DC or limit the number of rolls required to succeed in traveling any distance. However, it is recommended to require Swim checks when fighting in the water, or when moving through dangerous areas.

Inexperienced DMs, or those who don't like running large numbers of NPCs, might want to have the PCs arrive mostly together, and encounter the other groups without having to go through the hurdle of negotiating or rejoining somewhere on the island. Having all of the PCs arrive at the same time and the same place at once does stretch credulity a bit, so it is recommended that the PCs be split into two or three small groups and placed near each other.

Floating on Wreckage

Some PCs and NPCs are up in the unfortunate position of floating on some bit of wreckage from the *Virago* or something floatable washed off the deck during the wreck. NPCs who ended up in this predicament are Fisk Woe-Bringer, Geirmund, three other pirates, and two Pan Tangian slavers.

Roll 1d6 and multiply by 100 yards to determine how close the character begins to the shore. Then roll another d20 for each of the PCs and NPCs afloat on wreckage. Characters are only sharing space with each other on a roll of 11–14 (below). Otherwise, they might be close enough to be within sight of each other (DM's discretion, but should require a Spot check at DC 10 to find others).

Some means of adding even more variety to this predicament might be to have various NPCs who are either on sinking pieces of wreckage, or without anything to float on, fighting against any player-character with a safe piece of raft. Fighting while swimming, or standing on or holding onto a makeshift raft, makes for highly dramatic and difficult combat. This should call for Balance checks at DC 20 to remain standing, or opposed Str checks to keep hold of the float while an enemy attempts to seize control of it for his own use.

If the DM doesn't want to bother rolling for the fates of all of the NPCs, here's a quick run-down of what happens to them if the player-characters don't intervene:

- * *Fisk Woe-Bringer*: He makes his Swim roll if alone, and makes it to the south shore (see pages 50–52) unharmed, except for the arrow in the shoulder.
- * *Geirmund*: The thief begins swimming and makes it to one of the island spurs (see below), where he hides for a while, then swims back to shore stealthily. He waits until everyone is gone, or when he thinks it's safe.





* *Pirates (3)*: one begins floating without anything to hold onto, and swims for the piece of wood held by Fisk Woe-bringer. Another pirate drowns immediately. One more begins on a piece of wreckage, but then swims back to the wreck of the *Virago* (see below) and waits there for more survivors. Then it sinks completely and takes him with it.

* *Pan Tangian Slavers (2)*: Both fare poorly. One begins holding onto a piece of wreckage and drowns trying to swim to shore. The other ends up stuck on one of the island spurs, unable to swim back to shore.

For every 15 minutes characters spend floating on wreckage or remaining afloat, there is a 25% chance

they will attract either another tojanada (identical to the one in the sidebar on page 49), or a flock of 1d2+2 gharcos (see the description on pages 51–52 and the illustration on page 53).

The Wreck of the *Virago*

Her hull shattered, the *Virago* will never sail again. The prow of the ship was broken open when it struck the island spurs (see below), and it is beached upon them, half of the upper port side sheared away, exposing two levels of the ship to the outside, particularly the former slave-holding cell and the lowest deck which was

Characters floating on Wreckage

d20 roll Result

- 1–10 . . . Character is on a segment of hull of a suitable size to keep character afloat. Character can paddle this float to shore with a single Swim check of DC 5 (DC 10 with a +5 bonus for having something to float on). Have the character make a Str check of DC 10 to remain on or to hold onto the improvised float during this swim. If the character fails, he or she needs to succeed in a Swim roll (DC 15) to regain a grasp on the float. At the DM's discretion, the piece of wreckage could be large enough for the character to stand on (Balance DC 15 or so).
- 11–14 . . . As above, but the character is sharing this section of wreckage with someone else! Fisk Woe-bringer begins here.
- 15–17 . . . Character is on a smaller section of hull inadequate to support his or her weight, which will sink within 1d4 rounds! Once the float has sunk, he or she must immediately succeed in 1d3 Swim checks (DC 10) to get to the south shore (see pages 50–52) or 1 Swim check (also DC 10) to make it as far as one of the island spurs (see pages 48–50).
- 18–19 . . . After a moment of disorientation, the character realizes that he or she isn't floating on anything! As with result 15–17, he or she must succeed in Swim checks to make it to an island spur or the south shore, with the difference being that the character needs to make the rolls immediately! The PC might also be close to someone else floating on wreckage, and can react accordingly. Geirmund begins like this.
- 20 . . . Tough luck! The character is caught on a segment of the wrecked ship—something like a sail, net, or piece of rope, which is sinking quickly! The PC needs to make a successful Dex check at DC 10 to avoid getting dragged underwater. If the roll fails, the character can continue to roll to get free as long as it's still possible to hold his or her breath. A character with 5 or more levels in Use Rope or Escape Artist gets a +2 synergy bonus (or +4 if he or she has both skills). This is an extremely harsh fate to befall a player-character, and if the DM doesn't wish to kill an unfortunate PC so early in the adventure, it is recommended that the DM roll again on this chart, ignoring any rolls of 20.





mostly used for storage during the ship's merchant/cargo days. The forward port corner of the deck has similarly been shattered and collapsed, with the once-proud figurehead maiden now lost to the hostile waters of this strange new plane. Nearly a half of one section of the hull is torn away. The ship is canted at a strange angle, the broken mast dangling the torn remnant of the mainsail into the water, where it fans out across the side of the ship and flattens in the surf. It is roughly eight hundred yards from shore.

Water has completely flooded the lowest deck, and covers about two feet of the floor on the second deck. Rats from this deck have fled upwards and are found everywhere on the upper deck now. The ship is currently caught against some of the inner ring of the island spurs, over half a mile from the south shore of the island. Though the *Virago* seems secure, the creaking of wood and slow breaking of the frame indicate that the ship will eventually slip free of the rocky projections and slide beneath the dark water. Fragments of wood, large and small, float on the water surrounding the *Virago*, some of which are inhabited by living and dead combatants from the shipboard conflict.

The exact time when the *Virago* sinks is left to the DM, and is mainly a dramatic tool. The sinking of the ship should be used to keep the adventure moving along and to prevent the PCs from spending an inordinate amount of time searching the vessel. The *Virago* should definitely go down before the characters are through scavenging it.

Inside the ship are some of the pirates who did not go on-deck for the slave exchange, along with any PCs or NPCs who fled below-decks during the skirmish. The following characters are assumed to be on the wreckage of the *Virago*:

- * **Korune:** Frightened and curled into almost catatonic shock, the madman is in the former slave pen, attempting to hide near the door. He is unharmed, but is slightly hysterical and is babbling to himself in High Melnibonéan. Anyone speaking that language will recognize it as a classic love sonnet, about a forbidden love between a man of low birth and a noblewoman. Coaxing him out of his state and getting him to leave the ship will require a check of DC 10 against either Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate (depending on which approach is used).
- * **Linault Brin:** Holding onto a railing on deck, half-dazed from the crash, the Ilmioran blacksmith is

ready to get off the ship as soon as possible, but if given the choice, will try to bring Korune along with him. If there are other player-characters on the deck, he tries to ally with them and will seize any opportunity to foil or even kill any unconscious or incapacitated pirates or slavers. Not normally a violent or bloodthirsty man, he views the current situation as desperate times, and acts accordingly, doing anything he can to stay alive and return to his wife and children.

- * **Zhedanor:** Trapped and pinned face down between a broken piece of sailing crossbar and the foredeck, first mate Zhedanor is at half of his normal hit points (or half those remaining from the combat). The wooden beam is across his mid-back, with rough splinters of wood pushed deeply and painfully into his armor and skin. He is bleeding and groaning, struggling against his predicament and trying to free himself. His notched and bloodied sea axe is sunk into the deck a foot or so out of his reach. It will require a check against Strength with a DC 15 to free him, or he will need a DC 20 to free himself (as he does not have any leverage). Zhedanor is tough and nasty enough to know that mercy is not likely to come from his former prisoners, though he will adhere to a truce if he is freed—at least as long as it takes him to reunite with his pirate brethren. If he's not freed, and the PCs leave him trapped, he will curse and shout at them, vowing revenge.
- * **Pirates (4):** These unfortunate souls were caught in the lower deck when the ship wrecked, in the large bunkroom between the two large cargo holds. The DM can decide if they are alive or dead. If he or she has no preference, then two of them are unconscious and lying in the water, one of them is trying to get into the captain's chamber to loot it, and another is searching the rest of the ship for anyone living. Each of them has taken a small amount of damage (d8) from the shipwreck. They are amenable to the prospects of an alliance, considering their present situation. See the generic Vilmirian pirate description on page 21 for their statistics.
- * **Pan Tàngian Slaver:** One of the slavers did not make it off from the ship back to his own, and is now sprawled and unconscious on the rear deck of the *Virago*. A piece of tangled rope and netting is wrapped around his foot, the only reason he is still on-deck and alive. If awakened, he only speaks a smattering of the Common Tongue, and is highly





suspicious of any attempts at alliance. Given the chance, he will attempt to ambush or betray anyone who trusts him, even those who have aided him. See the generic Pan Tangian slaver description on page 28 for his statistics. He has a belt dagger, and there are a few loose weapons on the deck where he can get them.

Swimming and Underwater Activity

Swimming out to the ship from the island spurs takes 3 successful Swim checks at DC 10, and swimming from the shore takes 4 Swim checks. Swimming in the underwater portions of the *Virago* requires a Swim check at DC 15, due to the junk floating in the water, the darkness, and the pieces of the hull which jut out and present an obstacle to passage. Swimming while carrying another is at DC 15. Swimming checks with a makeshift raft or float are at DC 5 to 10, depending on the quality and size of the raft or float, and how burdened it is.

Fighting in the second floor of the wrecked vessel is at a -2 modifier to all combatants due to the slant of the deck and the two feet of water on the floor, and might require rolls for Balance every round or so to avoid tripping over something unseen on the floor. This should be only called for during a combat, to emphasize the danger, and any creatures or foes should also have to make similar checks.

Equipment and Treasure

As mentioned before, almost all of the PC and NPC captives' gear is in Captain Vensk's chamber, thrown into in some wooden bins and chests he uses for storing such things. Real valuables such as coin-pouches, jewelry, and items of obvious value are in a locked drawer beneath his bed, currently underwater, which requires a Search check at DC 10 to find, and

an Open Lock check at DC 25 to pick the lock, or a Strength check at DC 15 to force it open. Any magical scrolls or books are placed in a watertight bladder-sack amongst the other valuables.

Additionally, the following can be found in the captain's storeroom:

- * Groats, bronzes, silver, and gold coinage in a number of coin-purses and pouches, in a variety of mints and denominations, totaling 3,900 bronzes.
- * A small sack emblazoned with the sign of the god Goldar, full of star opals, worth 2,000 bronzes.
- * Fine clothing, male and female, from former captives, worth at least 400 bronzes.





- * A steel flask containing four doses of a Potion of Cure Light Wounds.

Weapons, armor, and the like are found in the makeshift armory located in the aft hold, at the rear of the ship. Characters wishing to get to these will have to go through the pirates' bunkroom, where some pirates can be found (alive or dead). Assume that the armory has a number of spare weapons of mostly poor quality. There is a large barrel of sling-stones, another bushel of arrows, and several spears that have broken apart and are scattered across the floor along with a number of shields and pieces of armor. Characters should be able to easily reequip themselves to their former level, and might find enough superior armor and weaponry for a slight upgrade, though the pirates do not possess any heavy armor other than enough to scrounge a single suit of half-plate.

In the makeshift galley, orange, red, green, and yellow fruits float on the surface of the water. A few hanging baskets of hard-tack and other baked loafs are tilted at the strange angle of the ship's resting place, and much of the food is underwater. Salvageable items include a few baskets of jerked meat, some hard rolls (now sodden), wheels of cheese, and many bottles and flasks of wines and brandies, as well as several casks of ale and beer. Enough food is available to feed a group of thirty for at least three days, if water is rationed.

Threats

Characters who venture to the wrecked hull of the *Virago* should find it a nerve-wracking experience. The most obvious threat is from the pirates and slaver who are still onboard. To make this part of the adventure especially harrowing, the DM might call for checks against Balance, Climb, Search, Intuit Direction, Swim, and Tumble at various junctures, as appropriate, along with checks against Strength, Dexterity, or perhaps Constitution to remain underwater for extended periods of time. If the DM wants to go for quick scares, he or she might have a frightened pirate, a corpse, or even a tojanada (described on page 49), appear suddenly below decks in the darkness, requiring Will checks to resist fright.

Characters who linger around if they're obviously not going to free Zhedanor are in for a rude surprise. In a dramatic show of strength, Zhedanor will Take 20

and force himself free, where he will immediately grab any available weapon and attempt to avenge himself upon any who left him to die. If characters are below-decks, he will wait and try to Move Quietly to ambush them when they come up the ladder, or he'll swing down from the upper deck into the prisoner hold, and attack with a scream of rage. The other pirates below deck are equally dangerous. All of them have weapons available and are prepared to leap into combat if needed. Similarly, the Pan Tangian slaver on the upper deck is a potential threat. Once he wakes up, he could try to kill Zhedanor, or the pirates, or could wait to ambush any player-characters, or he might simply strip off his armor and try to swim for shore.

For further threat possibilities, a monster might be unexpected and horrible. Shortly after the ship settles, a tojanada arrives in the vessel's broken hull, drawn there by the smell of blood in the water. (See page 49 for its statistics.) It might initially enter the ship in the lower level, or it could go right in through the hole near the prisoner hold and back to the pirates' bunkroom, where it detects blood. It is not a particularly large creature, and will flee if enough damage is done to it, but will present some threat. Anyone fighting the Tojanada might find some aid from the pirates stranded on the ship. If the creature is onboard, Korune has seen it and might be babbling about "something is here . . . under the water."

For every 15 minutes characters spend on the deck of the *Virago*, there is a 25% chance they will be attacked by a flock of 1d2+2 gharcos (see the description on pages 51-52 and the illustration on page 53). These should arrive at an appropriately horrible moment, though they will not go below-decks, content to feast on whatever corpses are on the deck.

The Island Spurs

Just off the southernmost point of the island are a series of sharp, dagger-like spurs of glossy, jagged black rock that jut out from the water in a serrated row, almost like the spine of some fearsome great stony beast. There are 18 of the spurs, with the smallest being furthest away from the shore. Some of the spurs are fairly large, more than twenty feet tall and nearly six or seven feet across at the base and many of them are slanted and thick enough to move around on. The island spurs are surprisingly free of any barnacles





or lichen, and there is little sea-grass caught on or around them. Most of them have at least 10'-20' of height beneath the waves, and are part of a spiked underwater ridge. The *Virago* was torn apart on these spurs, and initially rests speared on them, until it breaks free and sinks (see pages 45-46).

Note: in this case, the "base" of a spur is the area at sea level. The true base of a spur is on the ocean floor, and can be up to six hundred feet wide. In the map on page 40, the white areas of the spurs are the portions which are at or above sea level, while the darker areas are submerged.

The spurs are quite slick, both from the stone's surface and from being wet. Moving around on the spurs with any speed or agility, or fighting on them, necessitates a Balance check at DC 10 each round. Getting from spur to spur will require Climb and Swim checks as above.

Any characters waking up on these spurs of rock will be half-submerged in the water, or will be actually caught by their garments on some of the sharp protruding spikes of stone. The default NPCs who begin in this area are Gariv Klos (unconscious), Hasper Dal, two other pirates (one conscious, one unconscious), and three Pan Tangian slavers (one drowned, one unconscious, one conscious). To see if anyone begins on the same spur, roll a d20 for each PC and NPC in this area—with matching results meaning that characters begin on the same spur, and the higher the roll, the closer to shore and the larger the spur.

When characters attempt to make their way back to shore or to the *Virago* via these spurs, allow them to make a single roll, or Take 10 or 20 as required, to simplify matters. Getting onto the island shouldn't be as lethal as what awaits there.

OPEN GAME CONTENT

Tojanada

Resembling a bluish-green turtle with a spindle-shaped shell and a number of extremities protruding at odd angles and places, the creature has four paddle-like limbs for locomotion and two clawed forelimbs. Its head is wide and flat, with a long vertical slit for a mouth and an eye on either side. The creature is roughly three feet in length, and weighs around 60 pounds. It can retract its limbs and thrust them out of any different hole to best suit its current needs. It fights by biting and clawing. Normally, these creatures are found in the domain of Straasha or in service to his worshippers, but they can be found wild in some demon-realms and other planes.

These creatures are described in detail on page 177 of the *Dungeons & Dragons Monster Manual*.

Tojanada: CR 3; Juvenile Small Outsider (water); HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 10 ft., swim 90 ft.; AC 22 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +10 natural); Atk +6 melee (2d6+2, bite), +1 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws); SA (improved grab, ink cloud); SQ (all-around vision, acid and cold immunity, fire and electricity resistance 20); SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 9; Length 3 ft.; weight 60 lb.

Skills and Feats: Hide +11, Intuit Direction +7, Listen +7, Search +6, Spot +9. Blind-Fight.

Special Attacks: Improved Grab (Ex): It must hit with a bite or claw attack, then automatically does damage each round the target is held.

Special Qualities: All-Around Vision (Ex): Opponents do not get a flanking bonus against tojanada. Ink Cloud (Ex): A 30' black ink cloud, which opponents must make a Reflex save against at a DC 13 or be blinded for 1 round.

Possessions: None on body. Its lair is at the southern end of the rocky spur where the *Virago* lies wrecked, about 150 yards from the wreck site. If characters are bloody-minded enough to seek it out, and manage to make Swim and Spot rolls at DC 20, they will find a small crevasse in the side of the spur, about 8 yards underwater, with a number of small gold and silver items, mostly chosen for their shiny-ness. They are worth a total of around 11,250 bronzes. The most notable of these is a large ruby-encrusted pendant, worth at least 10,000 of that above amount, with the rest of the value made up in small pieces of silver and gold, some coins and buttons, and other bits which might be melted down for trade.





For every 15 minutes characters spend on the island spurs, there is a 25% chance they will attract either another tojanada (identical to the one in the sidebar on page 49), or a flock of 1d2+2 gharcos (see the description on pages 51–52). These creatures are hungry and fierce, and will attempt to seize and fly away with anyone foolish enough to remain exposed.

The South Shore

The shore is of chalky silver sand, little more than miniscule shiny pebbles. It does not smell overmuch like the sea, there is little in the way of seaweed, and crushed shells and the normal natural detritus is almost nonexistent. There is not a scrap of driftwood around, other than some fragments from the *Virago*. The beach is about a mile long. Facing the sea, to the

Random Encounters on the South Shore

Below is a chart for random encounters for anyone who returns to the south shore, or goes there for the first time after the initial “wake-up” scene.

d20 roll	Encounter	Comments
1–6	No encounter	No encounter.
7–8	Double encounter	Roll twice again and combine encounters. If one roll is “No Encounter”, there is only one encounter. If the roll is this result again, combine three encounters.
9–11	1d2 Pirates	Either survivors from the <i>Virago</i> , or stragglers from onshore, these pirates are looking for others of their crew. There is a 25% chance they are in the company of one of the “named” characters, or with Captain Vartan Vensk.
12–14	Group of 1d4 Pan Tangian slavers	These are either washed overboard and are soaked and perhaps without real weapons, or they are a search party from <i>Chardros’s Lament</i> , and will sound a horn when they encounter any trouble. If so, another group like the first will run up in 1d6+6 rounds. There is a 25% chance either group is being led by Gariv Klos.
15–16	1d2 Priestesses of Eequor	Either one or two of the priestesses are seeking the source of the recent commotion. They are armed. See their descriptions on pages 74–75.
17–18	Pack of 1d4 gharcos	These terrible avian creatures of Chaos are hunting the fresh meat washed ashore. They will attack anyone in their sight. See pages 51–52 for a description, and page 53 for an illustration.
19	Hasper Dal	He is sneaking around looking for Omerginroul and avoiding the Pan Tangians.
20	Omerginroul	The creature is looking for allies, but will be hiding and moving stealthily to avoid notice.





right, characters can see the beach curling out into the water, and breaking into a sharp series of jutting stone spikes, which impale the wreck of the *Virago*. To the left, the beach continues around a bend. A rocky ridge of hillocks and short mountains of black-green obsidian separate the beach from the rest of the island, looking painful and awkward to climb. In the middle of one ridge, a trail appears to be hewn, marked with two stone lanterns that glow a mysterious pale blue from within. Up over the mountains, a similar glow illuminates the sky, coming from the barely-visible top of a building shaped like a lighthouse.

The scene on the south shore is one of misery. Captives, pirates, and slavers alike lie strewn across the beach, prone, standing unsteadily, or sitting, ranging from dead to shaken and alert. Pieces of the *Virago* rest on the shore, bobbing in the surf, and slightly offshore, poking up from the waves.

The NPCs who have ended up in this area are as follows:

- * *Dierre Blackshores*: She has made it to the shore without any difficulty, and is looking for a weapon, either improvised or washed ashore. If she survives any initial conflict, Dierre will ally herself with her fellow captives, or will try to flee down the path.
- * *Hotas Hanaa*: No swimmer, he swallowed too much water and is unconscious and in the water, his face barely over the level of the water. If no one attempts to pull him from the tide, he will drown in a minute. If saved, he will be grateful and will not act against the person who he owes a life-debt to; however, he will not betray his fellow pirates, or change allegiances.
- * *Osa Dileel*: She was unable to swim to shore, and drowned, floating facedown in the surf a few yards from the tide-line. She is at -3 HP. If someone immediately pulls her out of the water and uses the Heal skill or some magical assistance to raise her HP to a positive total, she will survive.
- * *Scorrush*: The Pikaraydan assassin managed to make it fairly unscathed to the shore, and is scanning the waters looking for more survivors and trying to see the condition of the *Virago*. His axe, bound to his wrist by a loop, is slung over his back. He will make an alliance with anyone who gets the upper hand, but will eventually betray anyone who isn't a pirate.
- * *Vartan Vensk*: One-time captain and now without a ship, Vensk is sitting on the beach near Scorrush,

his head bowed in sorrow and anger. If the player-characters attempt to speak with him, he will be surprisingly receptive to an alliance, as there is nothing to be gained from further bloodshed.

- * *Pirates (3)*: They lie dead along the shore, all drowned, killed in the battle, or some combination of both.
- * *Pan Tangian Slaver (1)*: He remains alive, and is currently moving away from the rest of those washed ashore—heading down the length of the beach towards the east. He holds a spear he scavenged from the shore, and has a dagger still in its sheath. His goal is to find his ship, and rejoin his crew as soon as possible, and will fight to the death if confronted by the pirates or PCs.

Characters might see the need to find some weapons and arm themselves immediately. Consult the section on "Starting Weapons and Equipment" (page 43). If characters want to find impromptu weapons, they can improvise clubs from driftwood pieces of the pirate ship (1d4 or 1d6, depending on size), or find rocks suitable for hitting people with (1d2 to 1d4, depending on size). A spear and several arrows lie on the beach, having drifted ashore from the wreck, and three shields (one pirate and two of Pan Tang fashion) are also available.

The lanterns are of Pan Tang styling, open, low, and carved of dark gray granite shot through with crimson streaks. Inside each is a rough chunk of stone sitting in the groove where a small reservoir of oil once fit. The rock is hand-sized, and weighs a couple of pounds. It glows with a pale blue light which radiates out to around 10 feet, and is cool to the touch.

Around five minutes after the characters wake up, their presence will attract the attention of a small pack of 1d2+2 winged creatures of Chaos called gharcos. Characters will need to make a Listen or Spot check at DC 15 to notice the creatures, which drop suddenly down in ambush with a bizarre wailing screech. Around four feet long from tail-tip to head, these flying horrors look like a cross between a kite, a manta ray, and a centipede. Their bodies are covered with segmented armor like a centipede's, with two vaguely transparent manta-shaped wings. The creatures' undersides are covered in short grasping legs, to pull food into their maws. Their heads are wedge-shaped and sport two long rows of eyes above an X-shaped mouth lined with sharp teeth. They immediately drop





out of the sky and seize a single character, either the largest or the most wounded. (See the illustration on page 53.)

Gharcos: CR 1/2; Small Outsiders (air); HD 1d8; hp 5; Init +2 (Dex); Spd fly 120 ft. (average maneuverability), 5ft. walk; AC 23 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +10 natural); Atk +3 melee (1d4, bite), +1 melee (1d2, 2 rows of grasping claws); SA (darkvision 60', improved grab); SQ (none); SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will -2; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 3, Cha 3; Length 4 ft.; weight 25 lb.

Skills and Feats: Intuit Direction +2, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +3. Flyby Attack.

Special Attacks: Improved Grab (Ex): It must hit with a bite or grasping claw attack, then automatically does damage each round the target is held.

Special Qualities: None

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The DM might use one of the pirates or slavers as the gharcos' initial target, having him or her suddenly swept up into the sky and attacked in mid-air. This could occur at a dramatically appropriate moment, for example if the villain had the upper hand on a player-character. The creatures will attack until they are seriously wounded

(more than half their initial HP in damage), until half of their number is killed, or until they have two captives or kills to take back to their lairs and devour. See the full description on pages 83–84 for more details on these ghastly creatures.

The West Shore

This part of the island is separated from the south shore by only a few hundred yards of rough mountains and rocky foothills. It's possible to hear noise from that shore, and vice versa. Characters on this shore will easily hear the surf and crash of the waves against the beach from both this and the south shores. The beach, like the south shore, is covered with the same pebbly sand, though this sand is black and glossy, eventually turning into flat shoals of obsidian to the north that curves to an inlet. Like the south shore, there is little detritus on the beach, and almost no vegetation. Some pieces of the *Virago's* hull are floating offshore, but few pieces have washed onto the black pebbly sand.

Facing outward towards the water, away from the shore, the right hand side of the shore leads to a darker

Random Encounters on the West Shore

Below is a chart for random encounters for anyone who returns to the west shore, or goes there for the first time after the initial "wake-up" scene.

d20 roll	Encounter	Comments
1–6	No encounter	No encounter.
7–8	Double encounter	Combine the encounters, ignoring any rolls of "No encounter." If this result is rolled again, combine all three encounters, or combine two and have a third show up after the PCs arrive.
9–11 . . .	1d2 Pirates	See "The South Shore" for details.
12–16 . . .	Group of 1d3+3 Pan Tangian slavers . .	See "The South Shore" for details.
17–18 . . .	1d2 Priestesses of Eequor	See "The South Shore" for details.
19	Pack of 1d2+2 gharcos	See "The South Shore" for details.
20	Omerginroul	Returned and looking for allies, hiding from every one hostile to it.

After the first hour, treat any roll of 1–6 as a group of Pan Tangian slavers, in addition to the result of 12–16. The slavers will begin fanning out in small search parties from their ship, and the west shore is the first place they will go.





stretch of beach, which goes around a corner, and then the island apparently continues on the other side of an inlet or cove. To the left, the beach continues and narrows to a near point, continuing in a series of rocky spurs that jut out of the water. The jagged low rocky cliffs and hills separating the two shores are difficult to climb through, and require rolls of Climb and Intuit Direction at DC 10 to succeed.

Elsewhere on the beach are the following NPCs:

- * *Ischune*: She has managed to hold onto her longbow (though few arrows), is awake and wielding a dagger. She has a few spare strings for her bow in her belt pouch, and will try to restring it when she has a chance. Her ideal course of action would be a truce, or alliance with her pirate companions, against the Pan Tangians.
- * *Whyss*: The sailor is barely conscious, and is lying away some distance down the beach. He hit his head during the wreck and barely managed to splash ashore. Cunningly, he will listen to what happens on the shore and throw his lot in with whoever is stronger.
- * *Pirates (2)*: One is dead and the other is searching for a weapon. The survivor is going to try to reunite with other pirates, either those on the *Virago*, on the rocky spurs, or floating in the water.
- * *Pan Tangian Slavers (2)*: One is unconscious, and the other is sitting upright near the end of the beach, nursing wounds taken during the deck fight. They'll both try to get away from the pirates or captives, until they know the fate of their ship and crewmates.
- * *Omerginroul*: The creature, which brought everyone here initially, is hiding (Spot check at DC 10 to find), and will watch the player-characters from his hiding place in a cleft of rocks in the rocky hillocks between the two shores. If he is going to be discovered, or if any violence is brewing, he will spring from his hiding place and race across the mountains as quickly as he can (with a Dex of 22 and the Mobility and Run feats, he should get away). It should be impossible to catch Omerginroul, as the silume knows the island, and likely has one round of a head start. He will immediately head to the rocky hills directly north of the beach, dodging the gharcos at the ancient watchtower, and will hide out in the stone forest, where it is much easier to avoid people hunting him.





The Rocky Hills

Nearly twelve hundred feet thick at the widest area, and stretching from the southernmost tip of the island to the edge of the chasm that divides it geographically, the rocky hills divide the west and south shores. They are made up of the same dark obsidian as the rest of the island, though more weathered and dull than that found along the east shore. The hills are barren of any significant amount of living vegetation. There is dead grass, and soil in the crevasses of the small mountains, but for the most part, there is nothing save the weathered black stone. Characters searching might find abandoned and dead nests, long since dried, and grass and roots which once poked out from the cracks of the mountain, but are now dead or nearly so. A check against Knowledge (Nature) at a DC 20 will reveal that the plants are native to Pan Tang, and that they have been dead or dying out for around 30 years, due to lack of nutrition or direct sunlight.

Moving through these hills is slow going, and any characters doing so are reduced to half their movement rates unless they can make Climb checks at DCs ranging from 5 to 15, depending on what they're attempting. Additionally, the stone surfaces of the mountains and their proximity makes the area ideal for echoes—and characters will suffer a -2 to Move Silently checks due to the likelihood of their footfalls echoing. Additionally, all characters receive a +2 bonus to Listen checks, although an Intuit Direction check at a DC of 10 is required to properly locate the origin of any given noise.

Few beings inhabit this area. The gharcos that inhabit the otherwise-abandoned watchtower (see below) only occasionally fly over the area, and are unaccustomed to finding food sources among the low mountains. For every 15 minutes that PCs are in the area, the DM should roll a d20; any result of 13 or more indicates that a small pack of gharcos (1d4+2 individuals) flies overhead. If PCs make a large amount of noise in the area, either shouting or fighting something, a same-sized pack of gharcos will fly over to investigate and seek out any potential food sources.

The Abandoned Watchtower

Along the trail leading from the south shore is a lighthouse or watchtower, clearly visible from that beach, lit

up with a mysterious blue glow that emanates from the upper story. Standing stark and sharp against the storm-tossed sky, this structure was once a watchtower and lighthouse for the peninsula, and is now abandoned by the priestesses. Nearly 70 feet tall, it is around 25 feet across at the base, narrow and slightly twisted, with a knobbed upper level covered with pointed spires and jutting flanges, almost like a thick-hafted mace. The architecture is clearly Pan Tangian, a fact that even time and ruin cannot disguise. The substance is of stone not native to the island, being made of dark gray granite shot through with traces of crimson. A check against Knowledge (Geography) at DC 20 reveals that this type of stone is common to the hills of Pikarayd. Anyone who has been to the Demon Island can recognize that these stones have been professionally shaped and fitted by the insane masons of Pan Tang.

Gharcos obviously inhabit the tower, as 1d6 of them circle the roof at any one time. In total, there are about 20–30 of them (more or less as the DM requires to make them threatening, but not horribly outnumbering the PCs). At any one time there will be 1d6+3 present, either flying around their nest on the top floor, or resting in the nest. While they might not be concerned with characters at the base of the watchtower, they will definitely attack anyone moving up the stairwell towards their nest on the upper floor.

The tower is uninhabited now, save for rats and the ghastly avian gharcos. Sections of it are crumbled and fallen, and the floor is littered with rubble and overgrown with spiky vines that protrude from the bile-stained stones. The door to the tower is broken open and has been leaned back in place, though no attempt has been made to repair it. Inside is an extremely narrow space that turns immediately into a winding staircase, nearly 5 feet wide, going up, with only a small central area of a few feet across, with an unbearable stench emanating from it.

The floor is deep in animal droppings and vile regurgitation, and anyone who enters the tower's lower levels must make a Fortitude save at DC 5 or be overcome by the smell and faint. The stench is unbearably amniotic, the walls are lined with foul substances, and the floor is covered in bones that have mostly been eaten away by the creatures' stomach acids. Most of the bones are human, and some are gharcos bones.





A closed door sits at ground level in the side of the stairwell, apparently opening into some hollow area under the stairwell. The lock is rusted through, making picking it a task of DC 30. Alternately, breaking down the door is a simple matter of a Strength check at DC 15. The door opens into a curving, long room with a low ceiling that becomes higher on one end. Inside is a rack containing some weapons (a scimitar, two daggers, two spears, a bow with a rotted bowstring, and three quivers of arrows), and a lantern. There is also a woman's suit of Pan Tangian plate armor, in poor condition (armor bonus +10, max. Dex bonus +0, check penalty -7; see also page 60 of *Dragon Lords of Melniboné*). An antique spyglass hanging in a leather sleeve from a wall peg is the only item of real value (around 3,000 bronzes), though the sealed cupboards do have some wines, spirits, dishes, goblets, tableware, and a few trinkets of some meager worth. All in all, the whole lot of items could be worth 200 bronzes. A large number of books are on the floor, soiled and water-swollen, and still others line the shelves. They are all written in Mabden—some of them religious works about Eequor, some about demons or torture, while others are pornographic or obscene in nature. All of the books are in poor condition, and are worthless except to a collector, who might pay up to 100 bronzes for the entire set.

Characters fighting on the excrement-stained steps of the tower stair are at a -2 difficulty to all their attack rolls, and are required to make Balance checks at DC 10 to avoid falling if they are struck in combat.

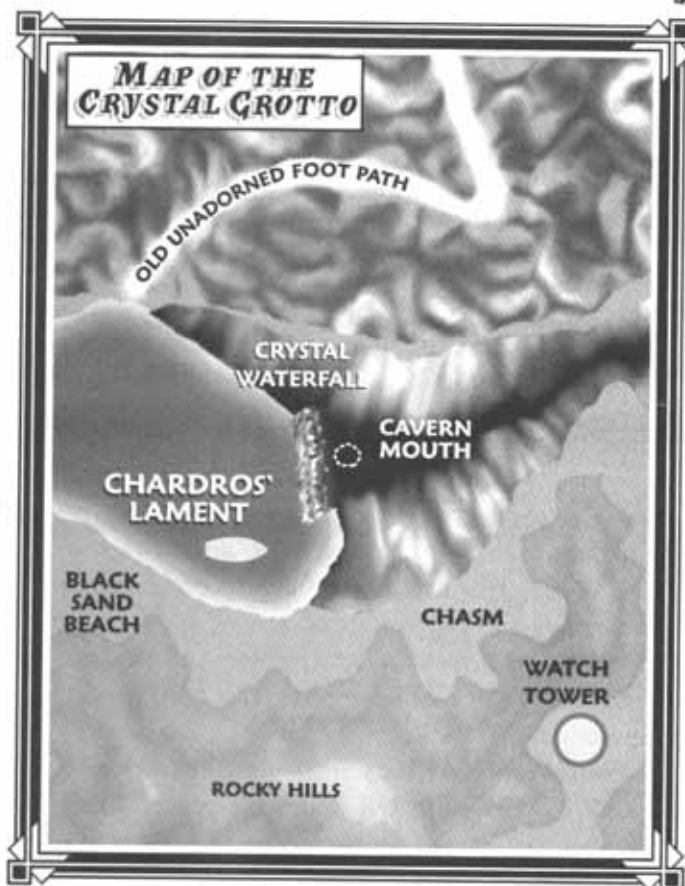
There is little to the tower, as it is nothing more than a hollow shell with a winding staircase up to a low room used as a nest for the gharcos. Sections of the floor have collapsed, and the open sky is clearly visible from the interior of the tower.

The upper level of the tower is in ruins, with large pieces of the floor, walls, and roof fallen away. Only three-quarters of the original floor remains. The room boasts a pylon in the center of the floor, set with glowing blue stones, as a torch to guide ships. The rest of the floor is an elaborate nest made up of twigs, sticks, and bones. This nest is thoroughly coated in gharco droppings and regurgitation, as well as fragments of bone and broken shells. Any intruders on this level are attacked by the mother, whose cries quickly summon any other gharcos in the vicinity. She is a larger, more powerful version of the normal creatures (described on pages 51–52), with maximum hit points and a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. The nest is filled by a number of semi-transparent eggs, nearly six inches long and mostly pill-shaped, inside which pulse unborn gharco pupae, moving slightly in the mostly

Random Encounters near or on the Stone Bridge

d20 roll	Encounter	Comments
1–8	No encounter	No encounter
9–10	Double encounter	Combine the encounters, ignoring any rolls of “No encounter.” If this result is rolled again, combine all three encounters, or combine two and have a third show up after the PCs arrive.
11–13	1d2+2 Gharcos	See pages 51–52 for information about these creatures.
14–17	1d3 Pirates	Check for remaining pirates, adding any named pirates if desired. Use the generic Vilmirian pirate stats on page 21.
18–19	2d4 Pan Tangian slavers	A search party from <i>Chardros's Lament</i> . Use the generic Pan Tangian slaver stats on page 28.
20	1d2 Priestesses	Spying on the new intruders, and will run into the stone forest if they appear to be threatened.





Near the center of the chasm, in one of the narrower parts, is a stone bridge, around 75 yards in length. The bridge is made of actual quarried stone, similar to that of the watchtower. It was fashioned by the same stonemasons, and bears on it stone lanterns on each corner post and along the length. Some of these lanterns are still present, while others have broken off, along with small sections of the bridge. These have weakened the supported areas, so the entire bridge is now somewhat perilous. If PCs or other characters cross it in a hurry, the DM should require a Balance check at DC 10, though anyone can cross the bridge slowly if they are being careful.

From the center of the bridge, it's possible to see the entirety of the chasm, including a slightly occluded view of the sparkling coming from the crystal grotto (see below). A Spot check of DC 30 (base DC 10, -20 for range), will reveal the sail of the Pan Tangian slave vessel *Chardros's Lament*, anchored in the grotto.

Crossing the bridge should be made to seem threatening and dangerous, with the DM describing stones crumbling and falling off from under the bridge, echoing throughout the chasm, and gaps appearing between stones with a grinding shuffle underneath characters' feet.

If anyone weighing over 200 lbs. crosses the bridge or waits on it, the DM should roll a d20 each turn to see if a section of the bridge collapses. The DC for this is 20, with a +1 per character of this weight or more. The DM should add another +1 if the characters are engaging in combat or are especially active.

Unfortunately, this is also a good place for an ambush, and the Pan Tangians will do so if given the chance, coming at people on the bridge from both sides and using bows and thrown rocks to dissuade characters from charging them.

The Chasm and the Stone Bridge

Dividing the island in its thinnest point is a chasm that cuts into it from the west and runs nearly the width of the island. The sides of the chasm are quite steep, with the deepest parts nearing 50-60 yards deep. The west end of the chasm opens into a grotto, and the east tapers off until it disappears. At the widest, the chasm is about 300 yards across until it opens into the much wider grotto. The sides of the chasm show the glossy black obsidian, shot through with veins of crystal and other unusual stones. Climbing the sides of the chasm requires a DC 15 task check.

The Crystal Grotto

The crystal grotto is set into the west shore of the island, nearly at its mid-point, and emerges from (or opens into) the chasm that splits the island in half. It is beautiful and unusual, with a bizarre, wide frozen waterfall of downward-jutting, jagged crystal spears, almost as if made of petrified water, shining with starlight and menace. It falls as if coming from the chasm, and spills into the pool of the grotto, almost a wall of icicles that go beneath the water's surface.





Nearly 50 feet high, the waterfall is around 375 feet wide, with openings in several places wide enough to swim through, or walk into from the sands of the grotto. Amazingly, this striking landmark is in fact made up of crystallized water, the result of an alchemical experiment gone awry. Currently, the blue light emitted by some of the features of the island is caught in the crystal fall and the beach, and almost lights up the grotto, sending crazed prism-light across the water, a place showing some of the wild and enigmatic beauty of Chaos.

Beneath the waterfall is a cavern mouth that opens into a long tunnel leading north, beneath the surface of the island. This cavern is the opening into a cavern and catacomb. The former is natural, while the denizens of the island carved the latter for religious purposes. Finding the cavern mouth is automatic for any who think to look behind the waterfall, and can be reached with a Climb check at DC 10. Finding it inadvertently requires a Spot check against a DC 15. More on the cavern can be found in "The Caverns and Catacombs" (pages 61–68). On the north shore of the grotto is a path, unobtrusive but clearly visible, which leads

upwards into a forest of strangely shaped stone growths.

The grotto is rounded and the sands are the same black sand of the west beach, though crystal shards have littered the beach and make it glisten strangely in the moonlight. It was once a site for worship and contemplation, though the priestesses use it little now.

Few creatures inhabit the crystal grotto. The gharcos stay away, as they do not find much edible here. The priestesses have given up meditating in this sacred place, as the former passage to it is difficult to get to, the grotto itself is about three-quarters of a mile away from the temple, and the lure of meditation has faded considerably over the last three decades of solitude.

Chardros's Lament

The first thing PCs should notice when entering the grotto, however, is that *Chardros's Lament* is anchored here, having limped into the grotto seeking shelter from the storm. It has been badly damaged from the fight with the battle-barge, with large sections of the hull broken by stones from Melnibonéan catapults. Colorful and cruelly barbed javelins and arrows protrude from the

Random Encounters in the Crystal Grotto

d20 roll	Encounter	Comments
1–8	3 Pan Tangian slavers	Guarding <i>Chardros's Lament</i> . They will attack any intruders immediately, calling for help as they do so.
9–10	Double Encounter	Combine the encounters, ignoring any rolls of "No encounter." If this result is rolled again, combine all three encounters, or combine two and have a third show up after the PCs arrive.
11–15	Single Pan Tangian slaver	Relaxing or exploring the grotto, either having slipped away to forage for wood, or looking around.
16–17	1d2 escaped or escaping slaves	Attempting to sneak away without being noticed, they will readily ally themselves with any PCs or pirates who offer them their freedom.
18–19	1d2 Pirates	Spying on the Pan Tangians. They might ally themselves with the PCs, depending on how they're treated. They will instantly join any party that contains others from the <i>Virago</i> .
20	1d2 priestesses	Spying on the Pan Tangians. They will flee if found.





outer hull. Sections of the deck are scorched, and the large sail is half-burnt, the mast charred from the combustible payload of the Melnibonéan catapults. The sail's emblem of a snarling tiger, which menaced the pirates of the *Virago*, now consists only of a roaring mouth and the lower arrows of Chaos.

Three small three-man patrols of Pan Tangian slaver-warriors are scouting the edges of the grotto. On the ground of the south shore of the grotto, the bodies of seven Pan Tangians (or more, if the DM wishes to lower the number of survivors) are stretched, laid out as if at rest. Their swords are on their breasts, and their shields are stuck into the earth at their feet. They have been laid out for burning, but the scavenging parties haven't found any driftwood. Another less ceremonial pile has been made of the dead slaves. They rest in a tangle of limbs, half on the shore and half afloat in the grotto next to the ship, where they were thrown over the ships' rail. There is a racket of pounding and hammering coming from the ship, as the sailors attempt to fix and re-seal the damaged hull. The rest of the slaves are cowed and are chained to their benches on the two rowing levels of the ship, while the Pan Tangian sailors swarm the ship making repairs. Another Pan Tangian slaver is overseeing the efforts of two slaves who are wrestling with a barrel of oil, rolling it down the gang-plank towards the bodies.

When the PCs arrive in the area, if they are able to observe the boat for a few moments without being assailed, they will see the following scene transpire:

On the deck of *Chardros's Lament*, two groups of slavers have formed—one of them gathered around one man in black and yellow studded leather armor, and the other apparently opposed to him. They are arguing, loudly, with a number of angry voices raised at once, speaking in Mabden.

For anyone who can understand Mabden, listening (Listen at DC 10) will yield the following:

"... that's mutiny, no matter what you say!"

"... find the creature ..."

"... not so if Klos is dead."

"What if he finds his way ..."

"Damned wizard and his pet ..."

"... need to find that creature ..."

"Stop this now ..."

... And so on, until the one in black armor shouts the rest down.

He says, "I am the second-in-command, and will command this vessel now, as our captain is dead. If not so, then he must be captured and put under arrest. His association with the sorcerer has resulted in us being in this place, and my order is that we send out patrols and seek out the blue creature, and the sorcerer to force it to guide us home. If we find Captain Klos, he will be returned in irons. There is no argument here! Do this!"

The man in black and yellow is the first mate, En'trim Sho'oon, who is seizing the opportunity for his own takeover of *Chardros's Lament*. With the remaining members of the crew, he is trying to find allies, mostly by casting the blame against Gariv Klos and Hasper Dal. He orders the search parties to bring their former captain back alive and in chains if possible (so Sho'oon can kill him), or else to kill him themselves.

Sho'oon's mutiny ultimately turns bloody as his supporters and those of Gariv Klos come to blows. This may happen while PCs are eavesdropping on the Pan Tangians, or it could occur "off camera," as the dungeon master sees fit. The DM can decide how many Pan Tangians are killed in the battle, but Sho'oon's faction should be victorious. (Of course, any PCs nearby when the fighting breaks out might decide to attack the surviving Pan Tangians, and/or try to free the slaves and enlist their aid against their former masters.)

This is obviously a dangerous place for any player-characters or pirates. Hiding places include the peninsula that extends from the western beach, the rocky hills along the south edge of the grotto, the stone forest to the north, or the chasm above the crystal waterfall. Any intruders must make Hide and Move Silently checks at DC 10 to avoid being spotted. The Pan Tangians' skill levels are Spot +1 and Listen +0.

See pages 22–23 and 33 for a description of *Chardros's Lament*. The DM should decide how many slavers and slaves remain from the original complement.

Gariv Klos's chamber onboard is lush and opulent, with an inhabitant sprawled across his bed in a drug-induced sleep. She is a Vilmirian slave-girl named Raris who's been brought along as Klos's personal servant. Her attributes are similar to the Generic Rowing Slaves, though the DM should switch her Str and Cha with each other. Petite and pretty, she has long red hair and is clad in a shift of pale green silk.





This fine garment contrasts with the iron chain that connects her neck to a ring set into the ceiling. It gives her enough slack so that she can sleep on Klos's bed (which she does often, drugged to pass the time along). She is 15 years old, and more than willing to assist anyone who would help her escape. Gariv Klos is relatively kind to her, all things considered, while she fears the torments Sho'oon would inflict upon her if he becomes captain.

Raris will tell any intruders that Klos has a small compartment hidden in the wall where he keeps a small bag containing a number of jade lozenges worth a great deal of money. She is correct—the small leather sack contains a dozen flat jade bars, worth a total of 2,000 bronzes, inscribed with ancient runes in the mysterious and long-forgotten written language of the Olab. They do not have any mystical significance. Other than the jade, he has a small pouch containing Pan Tangian gold and silver coins worth a total of 5,500 bronzes. His garments might be worth 200 bronzes to a collector, but most of his wealth is on him. If it made it back onto the Pan Tangian ship, the strongbox described in Part I is locked in a reinforced cupboard, to which Klos has the only key. The cupboard's lock requires an Open Lock check of a DC 30 to successfully pick. In a small wooden chest on the floor, there are twenty small bottles, each containing a single dose of a healing salve that restores 1d6 points of damage, though leaving a slightly discolored scar—this salve is for the slaves' injuries, and the scar it leaves itches furiously for several days, then subsides. Also in the chest are six bottles of cure

light wounds potion (one dose per bottle), for use by the slavers.

Hasper Dal's chamber on *Chardros's Lament* contains a small locked chest holding gold coins worth 600 bronzes, a small folded bundle of parchment for notes, an ink stone, a quill pen, a small mirror and a personal grooming set. Additionally, there is a large and expensive wardrobe consisting of several large chests. Together, the wardrobe and the clothing might be sold for 7,000 bronzes. Other items of value here are his spell-books (concealed in a watertight compartment in a wardrobe chest, DC 20 to Spot or Search for), and a couple of small bowl-lamps (a small stone with a permanent Light spell cast upon it, then affixed to the bottom of a bowl—which is set upright when light is desired, or upside down if darkness is required).

The crew-quarters contain a large amount of weapons, armor, and small coin-pouches full of a variety of personal effects. If the PCs are able to loot the Pan Tangian slaver crew's quarters, consider the effects of each slaver to be worth d100 in bronze. The DM should characterize and describe the belongings in whatever detail or character desired.

The Stone forests

Mysterious and grotesque, these unusual rock formations form a semblance of a forest on the island, twisted and spreading across the largest area of the island, with only a few trails through it. The stone forest is another of the manifestations of Chaos on the island,

Random Encounters in the Stone forests

d20 roll	Encounter	Comments
1-10	No encounter	No encounter
11-14	1d2 Pirates	Lost
15-17	1d3 Pan Tangian slavers	Lost, or searching for Omerginroul
18-19	1d2 Priestesses	Searching for the intruders. They are willing to speak if they are in a position of strength, or they will hide amongst the tree-growths and demand to know what the PCs are doing on the island.
20	Omerginroul	Hiding and seeking allies.





though this is less beautiful than the crystal grotto, and is in fact vaguely unsettling and sinister. The "trees" in this forest are of a variety of colors—red, black, or gray—and are often dully striped. They were planted long ago by a Pan Tangian sorcerer-artist, from small seeds which sprouted to full growth in a manner of minutes, crawling across the landscape, stretching to the skies above, and looping back downward to the ground. Formed of a coral-like substance, they're alternately rough and shiny and smooth to the touch—and stretch off in many directions, creating an extensive maze full of treacherous hiding-places.

Many of them have spines that will do a single hit point of damage if they are fallen onto. They are also

somewhat unstable, finding little natural purchase in the obsidian the island is made of, and fallen tree-growths are found everywhere. A Strength check at DC 20 is sufficient to push one over, and a falling tree will do 1d6 points damage if it hits someone (consider it an unarmed attack). Additionally, the tree-growths can be destroyed, but shatter when broken, sending splinters and shards exploding across a small area (1d2 points damage if unarmored).

If someone has strayed from the paths, he or she is likely to get lost. Finding one's way in the stone forests requires several successful uses of the Intuit Direction skill (the DM should decide, but 3 successes seems reasonable). One attempt can be made every two min-

utes. Failing the roll means that the character has become lost or disoriented and must retrace his or her steps. Use a roll of Int or another Intuit Direction to succeed. Alternately, a PC can simply Take 10 and retrace his or her steps without incident.

Due to the long shadows and twisting forms of the strange stone forest, the place is a nightmare for those who would pass through it and be aware. Anyone attempting to ambush another in the stone forest is at a significant advantage, gaining a +2 to any appropriate checks (Move Silently, Hide, etc.) to determine his or her potential for surprise.

The gharcos never come into this area, as they dislike the smell of the tree-growths.

The Eastern Cliffsides

Sheer and jagged, this section of the island appears as if a larger section of this island was sheared off from a larger chunk of land. This is in fact true. There is very little of interest to this part of the island, just an incredibly sheer cliff side,





miles long, exposing glossy black obsidian and basalt. If the PCs spend much time here, they will attract the attention of the gharcos. The DM should roll a d20 for every ten minutes the PCs are on the eastern cliff-side. If the result is 11–20, then 1d4 gharcos fly from their tower to attack the characters, ambushing them from above.

The North Island Slopes

Large, sprawling, and bleak, this area consists of some sloped flatlands divided up into a series of small fields, most of which have withered and been neglected decades ago. The priestesses use a small part of this area as a garden, as they do not need the immense amount of sustenance once required for the temple and the associated town. Once much larger, it is now full of empty and fallow fields, fallen to ruin. Only small sections of a few of the gardens closest to the temple are still being tended, barely enough to produce food for the priestesses.

The Cavern and Catacombs

In the grotto, behind the crystal waterfall is a small, dark entrance to a series of caverns beneath the island. Natural and twisted, the caverns go into the very bowels of the island. The cavern stretches and winds beneath the island's surface, rising and falling in level, with walls of black obsidian, floor covered with a combination of the black pebbly sand of the west shore, and the silvery gray sand from the south shore. The series of caverns

are very narrow, around 6' wide in places, narrowing to a mere 2' wide in the narrowest areas.

The caverns are the only part of the island the priestesses and the gharcos have not scoured for anything edible. As the grotto is sometimes submerged during high tide, sections of the cavern are covered in small, ancient barnacles and sea-slime. The uneven cavern floor ranges from dryness to areas that are completely submerged, with those watery pools full of tiny sea-creatures and plant-life, none of it threatening.

This expanse of natural tunnels goes beneath the city and the temple, where it becomes more ordered, hewn into regular shapes, with mostly-level walls and floors. This area was discovered and mined by the original builders of the Temple of Eequor, turned into a series of catacombs in which they could bury their venerated dead. Some of these dead were enchanted to become undead guardians of the catacombs, to prevent invaders from breaching the temple from the tunnels beneath. Since then, many of the undead have been destroyed, washed out to sea, or simply rotted into nonexistence, but there are still a few active, along with some natural creatures who have made their home in the natural cavern part of the underground tunnel complex.

When describing the area to PCs, the DM should emphasize the difference in environment. The caverns have floors of scalloped and rough stone, full of many small rises and pools. The cavern walls are uneven, slanted at awkward angles—and sometimes projections from the ceiling make it difficult to stand fully upright, while in other parts, the roof expands to nearly 20' in

Random Encounters in the North Island Slopes

d20 roll	Encounter	Comments
1–6	No encounter	No encounter
7–10	1d2 Escaped Slaves	On the run from the slavers of <i>Chardros's Lament</i> , hiding in the hillocks and ditches of the fields.
11–14	Patrol of 3 Pan Tangian Slavers	Looking for escaped slaves and exploring the island.
15–18	1d2 Priestesses of Eequor	Roll 1d6 to determine which is/are encountered.
19–20	1d4+2 Melnibonéan Marines	An exploratory party from the Melnibonéan battle-barge <i>Tempest</i> (see pages 75–77 for details).





height. Rock formations protrude from the floors and the walls, making footing difficult, and movement somewhat of a challenge. The catacombs, in contrast, are well chiseled from the same stone, with sharp edges and flat planes, made as regular as possible. The architecture is clearly Pan Tangian, and for those who would recognize so, it is clear that the catacombs are a crypt, full of reliquaries and the remnants of the dead.

Furthermore, the areas of the catacombs (and not the caverns) are lit with metal brackets filled with the strange glowing blue rock as aboveground in the stone lanterns. The light-sources are iron brackets spiked into the wall, filled with a few larger stones. The stones do not give off any heat, but merely provide a disquieting luminance of blue light.

Following is a list of encounters. Note that these encounters are geared towards a party of 4–8 first level characters, with a few NPCs on hand. If the level or

size of the party is significantly larger, the DM should double or even triple the number of undead in the catacombs and caverns.

Cave A

Just outside, the floor dips and is full of water, making this small cave half flooded, with the water level 3' deep at the lowest point. The sandy floor of this section of the tunnels is speckled with the bright and multicolored pearlescent shells and bones of the small creatures that have died nearby. Right at the juncture of the cave and the passage outside, is the lair of a small, dark-skinned squid, squat in its tidal pool, content in its solitude. The water of the pool has been recently disturbed, with some sand still floating in the water, and a combination of blood and blackness making it impenetrable.

Random Encounters in the Underwater Caves

d20 roll	Encounter	Comments
1–6	No encounter	No encounter
7–8	Double Encounter	Combine the encounters, ignoring any rolls of "No encounter." If this result is rolled again, combine all three encounters, or combine two and have a third show up after the PCs arrive.
9–10	1d2 Escaped Slave(s)	Escaped from <i>Chardros's Lament</i> , hiding from anyone.
11–12	1d2 Pirate(s)	Hiding out from the Pan Tangian slavers, or exploring.
13–14	3 Pan Tangian Slavers	Searching the caverns for escaped slaves or pirates.
15–16	Tojanada	From "Cave F," pages 63–64; see page 49 for a description. There is only one of these, so if it is encountered, it might not be in Cave F afterwards.
17–18	1d2 Skeleton(s)	Animated skeletons from the temple dead. See "Throne Chamber" on page 64 for description.
19	Zombie Guardian	A more powerful animated dead from the temple. See "Antechamber" on page 66 for description. It is unique, so if it is encountered, it might not be in the antechamber afterwards.
20	Omerginroul	Seeking a way into the temple to free his mate Liramayn.





A check of Spot at DC 20 is required to see the squid. Its underside is a fairly shocking pink, while the upper areas of the squid's skin are mottled gray and black. It's a medium specimen, 20' from tip to tentacle tip, and is not overtly hostile.

Squid: CR 1; Animal; HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +3 (Dex); Spd: Swim 60 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +4 melee tentacles x10 (0 damage), bite -1 melee (1d6+1); SA (Improved Grab); SQ (Ink Cloud, Jet); SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +7.

Special Attacks: Improved Grab (Ex).

Special Qualities: Ink Cloud, Jet. (See pages 202–203 of the *Monster Manual*.)

OGC

If attacked, it will do all it can to avoid combat, retreating into the cave itself. Searching the cavern yields nothing of value—the only items present are some broken pieces of ship wood, some human and gharcos bones, and a broken and rusted Pan Tangian shield with the leather straps rotted off and the wooden slats similarly decomposed and useless.

Cave B

More a cul-de-sac or dead end, this cavern is also empty, though the body of a male escaped slave (tall and blond haired) from *Chardros's Lament* lies face-down, body hacked in several places, dead only a few minutes. A Spot roll at DC 20 will reveal that the slave was killed near the squid pool, and most likely crawled through it and down this passageway to die. He has nothing of value on his person. Some pieces of wood and a few tiny glowing sea-creatures are the only other things of note in this area.

Cave C

Mostly empty, this section of the caverns is the lowest, with the roof near the entrance being less than three feet high, making anyone entering it either crawl or squat uncomfortably. This area is full of tiny little bluish soft-shell crabs nearly an inch across, and a thick coat of barnacles, in multiple layers. There are several small pools of water in this area, and some seaweed and algae, but nothing of value.

Cave D

The largest chamber in the caverns, this area has a roof that soars to a magnificent height of around 20', and features a large tidal pool in the corner. Like the previous cavern, there is little of worth here, save for the shells of many dead sea-creatures, barnacles, crabs, and other mollusks. There is a large pool, which is fairly shallow, the water almost crystal clear, displaying a thin layer of shells and detritus. If the characters choose to search thoroughly, in the sandy floor they might find (Search at DC 15 for each of these) one or more of the following: a small rotted pouch containing some rusted pieces of dagger hilts and a whetstone, a right leather boot stiff with water damage, and a bluish-stained skull which has been carved scrimshaw-style with a number of disquieting patterns and symbols (these have no meaning).

Cave E

The passageway to this cave rises and narrows considerably, making it difficult to squeeze into. PCs wanting to investigate this are forced to go one-by-one, and will have to crouch occasionally as they venture up the slope to the small cavern which has been undisturbed by even the waves. No barnacles or sea-creatures have made it up the steep slope. Alas, it is another dead cul-de-sac similar to Cave B (see earlier this page), with little to find but some small wooden dolls. They and their clothes have rotted, but they clearly depict Pan Tangian women and children. Small stacks of rocks are indicative of small houses, benches, and tables. PCs might Spot (DC 20) some small carvings on the wall, which, upon examination, are obviously the carvings of children (from the heyday of the temple), and show several women around a stylized fountain of flame with a woman's face represented in the midst of the flame.

If the PCs have squeezed up to this small area (and likely been disappointed at finding nothing), it is recommended to startle them with a random encounter from the chart above, with the creature having moved into the area while they were exploring the high narrow cavern.

Cave F

This whole cavern is a long and arduous climb to reach, as the way is blocked by large rocks which must each be scaled, squeezed past, or crawled under, and the floor is





covered in mud, making it a thoroughly disagreeable effort to get to the end cavern. Near the end, the cavern floor dips and the area becomes a large pool, which opens into a larger cavern, with a high ceiling and five feet of water on the floor.

This area is home to a tojanada, identical to the one described on page 49.

It is lurking beneath the waves, and has a small alcove at the rear of the cavern in which it has a small pile of what it regards as treasure, mostly gilt pieces of Pan Tangian armor and weapons, and the ornaments which once adorned the warriors who bore them. This mass of junk is shot through with the occasional stripe of silver or gold from the ornamental edges of the weapons and armor, which have long since rusted. Several bones, ranging from skulls, ribs, and fingerbones are also tangled in the mass. The whole mass weighs nearly 100 pounds, and if it were recovered, picked through, and the valuable elements sorted out, it would yield a small tangle of gold and silver, some weapon ornaments, rings, and a few pieces of precious metal chains worth about 500 bronzes.

Skull Chamber

This section marks the first of those in the underground tunnel complex that were carved and formed by the architects of the temple. It is lit with the iron brackets containing glowing blue stones. This small chamber contains a bracket of eight foot-wide crèches on either side, which have been bleached with white, to better display their contents. Each contains a small stone pedestal with a skull sitting upon it. These skulls have been flensed and decorated in a manner similar to the skull in Cave D (see page 63), the very bone stained a curious and almost bright and uniform bluish black. Some of them have etchings approximating skull tattoos, marking them as Pan Tangian women's skulls. The unusual coloration is from the phenomena described in the "Fount Chamber" section on pages 67–68. The skulls are worthless, unless perhaps sold to collectors of unusual curios.

Throne Chamber

Outside the room, the DM should allow the PCs to make a Scent/Taste check at DC 15. If the PCs succeed, they smell smoke, as if from a torch or burning cloth.

This room has a large, high obsidian throne in the center, carved from the floor stones themselves, and set with plates of blue jade and turquoise in silver frames. Two large braziers in each corner of the room are full of the glowing blue stones. Near the foot of the throne is a dead pirate, hacked horribly, with a short-sword still in his hand. Upon the throne is a mummified corpse, almost a skeleton, of a priestess of Chaos or some noblewoman, as can be deduced from her garments. The mummy is bearing a staff across the arms of the throne, and does not seem to be capable of movement. Seated in four low chairs carved into the base of the throne, facing each direction are bluish skeletons in old and rusted armor, with long scimitars held upright, the points between their feet and their hands upon the hilts, with their heads bowed.

Any PCs who enter the chamber have around twenty seconds before the skeletons awaken and arise to defend their mistress, a priestess set to watch over this entrance to the catacombs. They will suddenly rise, with bluish light shining from their eyes, and will begin attacking any trespassers. The priestess is not animate, and remains on the throne.

Medium-Size Skeletons (4): CR 1/3; Undead; HD 1d12; hp 6; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd: Walk 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +2 natural, +2 rusty breastplate); Atk +0 melee scimitars (1d6 damage); SQ (Undead, Immunities); SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 0, Int 0, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative.



Note that there are four other skeletons like these patrolling the catacombs and caverns, so even if others are encountered, the four throne guardians will be present.

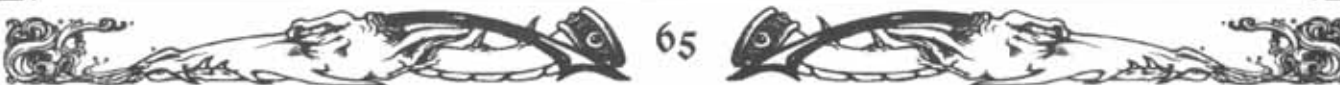
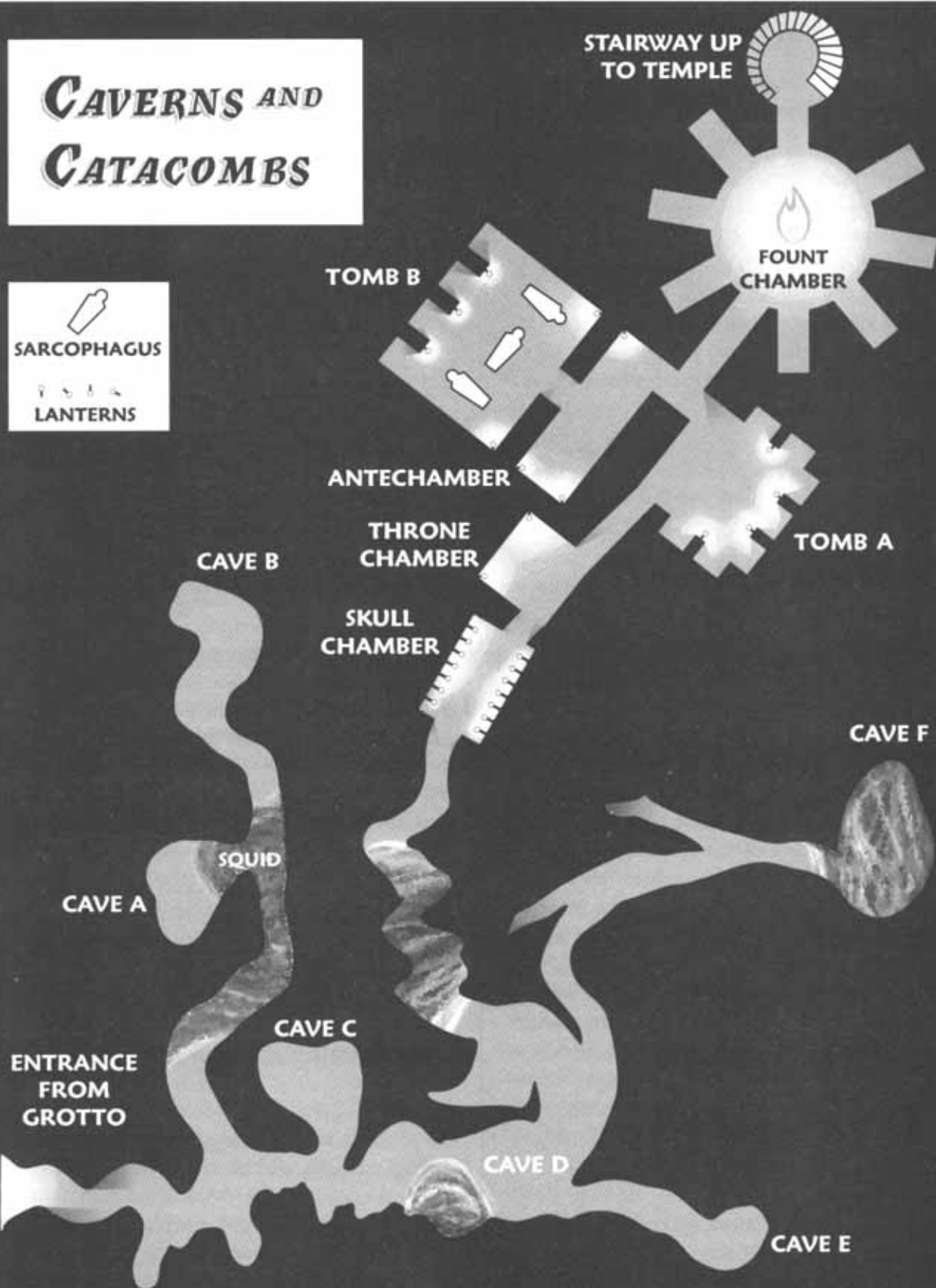
The walls of the chamber are also decorated in a manner similar to the throne, with panels of blue jade, turquoise, and silver inlay. Though it would take a considerable amount of effort, the amount of wealth that could be gleaned from the room is immense, worth at least 10,000 bronzes. Unfortunately, the weight of the silver and precious stones weigh nearly 1,200 pounds, with the panels weighing around 18 pounds apiece. The priestess' scepter is actually a magical rod of enemy detection (see page 197 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

The dead pirate is bare-chested, with a short-sword, dagger, and a pouch containing 115 bronzes,





CAVERNS AND CATACOMBS





flint and steel, and a small pocket mirror and tiny ivory moustache comb. He has a makeshift shirt-wrapped torch that has burnt out. He has been dead nearly a half-hour.

Tomb A

This section is clearly a mausoleum, which was used for the entombment of the priestesses in specially prepared crèches. The entombed priestesses are set, standing, into alcoves, and are clad in garments of metal and set with jewels, and they still bear ornaments and accoutrements of power and authority, such as staffs, miters, and other symbols of their sanctified role as honored dead. Beside them in smaller shelves and on ledges are the skulls and bones of their family-members and consorts, decorated with similar jewels.

If PCs are in a plundering mood, the wealth here is considerable, though warnings carved along the walls and door-frames in runic Mabden and Low Melnibonéan threaten horrible death at the hands of the goddess Eequor's servants should these remains be disturbed. This might be true. The overall weight and worth of this throne room is vast, nearly a million bronzes if it can be all recovered, weighing in the thousands of pounds. The DM is left up to the exact nature and worth of individual pieces of grave treasure, which can be drawn from the description in the paragraph above. None of the items are magical.

The flipside to this unimaginable bounty is that the weight and nature of the riches in this chamber prevent easy looting, and the nature of the relics (Pan Tangian burial paraphernalia) makes buyers few and far between. Furthermore, few merchants will be willing to risk the attention that re-selling this merchandise will provoke. DMs should allow characters to attempt to take as much as they want from this area—though disturbing the grave goods will attract the attention of all of the skeletons in the area (there are eight total—four patrolling and four in the throne-chamber), and enrage the priestesses and the slavers. Attempting to sell these items in the Young Kingdoms will have drastic and immediate consequences—ranging from unscrupulous merchants contacting the Pan Tangians and alerting them to the PCs, to Dharijoran Eequor cultists on the trail of the grave-robbing PCs. This will happen if any items are sold in any intact form—the

DM should define the worth of any partial items (i.e., melted down, or jewels prized from their fittings).

Antechamber

This chamber serves as the entrance to another larger room full of the sarcophagi of the priestesses and champions of Eequor. The ceiling is high and domed with a stylized painting of the Chaos goddess Eequor, and walls have been carved and painted with a number of tableaux, though the thing that PCs will notice first is a large humanoid figure with its back turned, hands stroking the raised surfaces of the murals, as if trying to understand them. The paint of the murals has nearly been rubbed clear in some areas.

As soon as anyone enters the chambers or makes a sufficient amount of noise, the creature will turn and reveal its nature as a female zombie, taller and stronger than even a large man. It has been elaborately painted and tattooed in the manner of the Pan Tangian women, and is extremely tall and strong in appearance, with long arms woven in silvery wire. The zombie wears a sleeveless robe of colored beads woven on wire and cloth that has nearly rotted away. As it moves, it sheds beads, and the floor of the chamber is covered with them, though they do not impede movement or balance. The zombie will fight to the death, and uses the walls of the antechamber to her advantage, slamming characters against the wall or lifting them off their feet and hitting them against the ceiling, or even throwing them into each other. Combat with this creature in a confined space should be intense and brutal.

Zombie Guardian: CR 1; Undead; HD 4d12+3; hp 29; Init -1 (-1 Dex); Spd: Walk 40 ft; AC 11 (-1 Size, -1 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +4 melee Slam (1d8+4 damage); SQ (Undead, Partial Actions Only); SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 8, Con 0, Int 0, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.



Tomb B

The zombie was guarding a long room full of sarcophagi, set into crèches in the wall. The large stone coffins are not especially valuable, though they are carved of imported gray stone. Inside are the wrapped mummies of many dead consorts of the Pan Tangian priestesses—their husbands and lovers, buried plainly, without any grave goods of worth. There are four





recessed sarcophagus crèches, and three freestanding sarcophagi. The recessed sarcophagi are tightly fitted into their crèches, and the coffins are immensely heavy, taking a Strength check with a DC 30 to pull from their resting places, with lids requiring Strength checks at DC 15 to remove. The freestanding ones are a little heavier, with Strength checks of DC 20 to remove the lids. Inside, however, no treasure is to be found.

Fount Chamber

PCs will see a bright blue light shining down the hallway from this chamber. The reason for this is apparent when they enter the area—the catacombs end in a large circular arena beneath the ground, with a central fount filled with bright blue flame. This light apparently goes through a hole in the ceiling and burns brightly above-ground in the central courtyard of the city. The floor of the chamber is filled with bones, some of which are white, some blackened, and some which are even glowing with the blue radiance common to the area. Any characters with a Knowledge (Religion) skill will automatically recognize the fountain as a sacrificial fount,

though the amount of sacrificing is outstanding, even by Pan Tangian standards.

Eight empty sarcophagi crèches radiate from the central hub, and each of them is also filled with bones. The skeletal remains are entirely human, and have been scattered from the center, as if an immense number of bodies were thrown into the pit at once. Inside the center of the fire, it is obvious that the flames are burning around an immense pyre of skeletons, the fount completely full and running over the edges with detached bones. The bones contain no valuables or even show any signs of being clothed when they were disposed of in this fountain. The bones inside the fire are blackened, though they have in fact ossified and some of them have partially become black stone, while others are bluish stone, or even mottled combinations of glowing blue and black stone. If separated from the fire, they will shortly be safe to handle.

The blue fire itself, however, is actually quite cold at a distance, and deadly at close range. Touching it for even a second causes intense pain, blackening the skin rapidly (1d4 damage per two seconds of contact). If a





PC takes more than five points of damage from the fire, it chars through to the bone, which then takes on a bluish radiance.

The northernmost of the empty sarcophagus slots has a concealed door at the rear. Characters who are searching the crèches will need to make a Search or Spot check at a DC 20 to see the door, which has been cunningly concealed to match the stone of the walls of the chamber. The lock that keeps it secure has a DC 25 to pick, or the door can be forced with a DC 35 Strength check. This leads to a small spiral staircase, wide enough only for one person at a time, which leads into a side chamber of the main temple hall (see "The Temple of Eequor," pages 69–71, for details).

If PCs make an undue amount of noise in this chamber, they will undoubtedly attract the attention of some or all of the priestesses, who will first attempt to parley with them from the safety of the edge of the pit. If characters are clearly laden with the spoils of grave-robbing, or have obviously slain all of the undead guardians, the priestesses will be less willing to bargain, and might use the opportunity to attack the characters with thrown rocks, javelins, and sling stones, from a vantage point of relative safety. In this case, the priestesses have 3/4 cover against attacks directed at them, and they will not endanger themselves more than necessary.

Depending on the DM's whim, the PCs might arrive in the fountain chamber to find a group of grinning Pan Tangian slavers, with one or two captive priestesses, ready to throw the women into their own sacrificial flames. Characters might engage the slavers themselves, or be heroic and rescue the priestesses and see if an alliance can be made.

DMs with a flair for highly dramatic (yet ludicrously improbable) timing, might have already introduced Omerginroul and Liramayn's plight, and could have PCs arrive in the fountain chamber just as the priestesses enact their ritual using Liramayn as a sacrifice. Read pages 78–79 for details on this, and assume that the PCs arrive just as the ritual completes and Liramayn is about to be hurled into the fount. Will they rescue the creature in time?

The Ruined City

Partly surrounding the temple of Eequor, the ruined city is a desolate and empty place. The architecture is twisted, dilapidated, with high towers featuring unusually shaped windows and doorways, most of which are fallen or crumbling, with

Random Encounters in the Ruined City

d20 roll	Encounter	Comments
1–8	No encounter	No encounter
9–11	Double Encounter	Combine the encounters, ignoring any rolls of "No encounter." If this result is rolled again, combine all three encounters, or combine two and have a third show up after the PCs arrive.
12–13	1d2 Pirates	Looking around for fellow pirates, and seeking loot.
14–15	Patrol of 3 Pan Tangian Slavers	Looking for escaped slaves, and exploring the island.
16–17	1d2 Priestesses	Moving secretly to assess the threat to their community.
18–19	Omerginroul	Scouting for some sign of how to free Liramayn.
20	Named NPC	One of the following: Vartan Vensk, Scorrush, Ischune, Fisk Woe-bringer, Hotas Ba'att Hanaa, Gariv Klos, or Hasper Dal.





wide holes open to the sky and the streets. The streets are full of rubble, and look blasted by a massive earthquake or war, which destroyed most of the buildings and homes. A map of the area would be useless, as it is merely a large landslide of a former city, with perhaps fifty or so small homes and narrow towers, few in any habitable condition, and fewer still with all their original walls intact. (See the illustration on page 67.)

Only scavengers spend any time in the city, as the majority of it is in rubble and has fallen. At any point in the city, it is possible to see across the entire expanse of the city. The city revolves around the large central fount in the circular town courtyard, the center of which is the sacrificial fount of flame, a bluish pyre burning from a fount below the central courtyard of the temple and city.

Items left in the homes are small objects such as clothes, household items, minor magic items, objects d'art, and books and scrolls. There is little of value left, as the priestesses have scavenged most of it for their own purposes, and all of the wealth of the island is found in their temple or in the catacombs beneath the city.

However, the priestesses did not completely clean the place out, and the DM might wish to reward successful Search rolls with some items of value. Page 172 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* has a table for random art objects that could be found in the city.

As the city and temple are the obvious centers of the island's population, every five minutes the PCs are in the area, the DM should roll for a random encounter from the table on page 68.

The Temple of Eequor

Once grand and now sadly ruined, the temple still dominates the island, with the wide façade mostly



standing unharmed, and lit brightly from the blue sacrificial pyre that burns before it. The temple is made of white and black stone, some from the island and the rest brought from the quarries of Dharijor. The outside of the temple has an irregular, almost organic, appearance; the priestesses of Eequor used the power of Chaos to sculpt it into its present form. At the front of the temple is a pair of immense doors, double the height of a human. Above these doors is an oval-shaped window, and at the temple's top is a cluster of tower spires, many of them broken. The doors are unlocked, though a bit heavy, and creak loudly when opened. (See the illustration above.)





Inside the temple is an immense octagonal-shaped worship room, with large mosaics done in various shades of blue and black and white stone tiles, depicting the worship of Eequor, the flight from Pan Tang, and various illustrations of Eequor's majesty and glory. These are falling apart, and tiles are stacked in neat little piles sorted by color next to each mosaic.

A massive statue of a humanoid female is set into the wall of the temple's central hall, facing the doors. It is clearly a representation of the Chaos goddess Eequor in one of her more horrific, though strangely beautiful, depictions. She is clad in a robe with the border made up of triangular scales. Her body is lush and sensual, and her pose is both majestic and vaguely erotic and beckoning. The statue's carved head is elongated, almost like that of an eel, with the back of it consisting of a number of spiked tendrils that curl back and hang down from her shoulders. Eequor's face is streamlined and has a wide mouth of needle-sharp teeth, with only dark slits in several places for eyes. Her arms end in crab-like claws, which cross her body demurely near her stomach and up at her shoulder. Other tendrils like those from the back of her head project from the middle of her back, fanning out to create a grotesquely peacock-like fan. Her feet are normal, almost dainty, but they have the same elongated toes as Omerginroul. (See the illustration on this page.)

Either side of the immense statue of Eequor boasts an alcove sculpted into the wall, and in each alcove is a silvered cage. One of them is empty, and in the other sits a creature much like Omerginroul. This is Liramayn, Omerginroul's mate.

Two wings project from the central hall of the temple, leading to the remainder of the temple's rooms. The rest of the temple is meager—to the right side are a small library, a kitchen and dining chamber, a bathing chamber, and a small store-room with several weapons (staves, slings and stones, short swords, scimitars, daggers, shields of various sizes, some leather and plate armor, helmets, etc.). To the left side are the personal chambers of the seven priestesses, with one room empty save for rough furniture. Each priestess's chamber contains between 1,000 and 10,000 bronzes in wealth, ranging from ornamentation, jewelry, currency, and other objects of art. The DM should consult the description of each of the priestesses for suggestions on how their chambers will be decorated and appointed. The priestesses will not take kindly to any ransacking of their quarters. The





library has a wealth of scrolls and books, assuming a merchant is interested in the history and precepts of the Church of Eequor. It also has a large desk with the tools and paraphernalia of a scribe, used to create scrolls and sacred texts. A small podium in the library contains the large journal of the priestesses' sojourn on the island. As one might imagine, the past few decades have been fairly uneventful and without much news or change.

Any PCs who are in the temple are almost certain to encounter one or more of the priestesses. Every five minutes, the DM should roll a d20. If the roll is over 5, a priestess is encountered (roll d6 or choose from the entire list of priestesses), and if the roll is 10 or more, two priestesses are encountered. If the roll is a 20, the DM should have three priestesses find the PCs.

There is no map of the temple in this book, as the temple layout is fairly simple.

The Priestesses of Eequor

Escaped to this lonely plane so long ago that they have nearly given up hope of returning to the Young Kingdoms again, the members of this conclave of priestesses have assumed that they would remain on the island for the remainder of their lives, tending their meager gardens, continuing to worship in the slowly-collapsing temple, and dying one by one, giving their last breaths to their goddess Eequor. The high priestess Dima'dra'esh, however, is ready to return and visit revenge upon the Theocrat of Pan Tang. She's viewed the appearance of the two silume as a sign that Eequor is favoring them once more, and she's urged the other priestesses to support her in her attempt to return to the Young Kingdoms.

The priestesses assume, wrongly, that Eequor is behind the appearance of the silume, and that the beings are meant to guide them back to her. Eequor does not have any plan regarding these lost priestesses exiled in some desolate corner of the Multiverse, and hasn't given them a second thought since they were torn from the plane of the Young Kingdoms. However, the sacrifice of the silume will attract Eequor's attention, as she favors that race (slightly), and she pays attention to them (occasionally). She may or may not be offended by the sacrifice, and may potentially manifest as a result. (Like all Chaos lords, Eequor is a capricious being.)





DIMA'DRA'ESH, high priestess of the temple to Eequor

She is old, but disturbingly still has the full figure of a younger woman; only her hands and wrists show the lines of age. A Pan Tangian, her hair is now white, and is worn in several ornate and long braids which protrude from the back of her head, like Eequor's statue. There are also several long streams of hair, which hang down about on either side of her face and across her shoulders. She always wears a metallic, formal mask, which has eye-slits similar to those from the statue. Her robe is a more ornate, formal version of the one worn by Eequor's effigy, and is made of shiny metal plates and flat segments of precious stones, in oblong and uneven rectangles, fitting together in a mosaic of unusual beauty. (See the illustration on page 71.)

Dima'dra'esh walks holding a long staff, curled and split in several places, with a few tendrils that come free and point back towards the top. It is vaguely suggestive of the strange rock formations of the island, and is set with pieces of black stone from the island and the twisted rock formations.

Level 7 Cleric

OGC**Allegiance:** Chaos 108, Balance 66, Law 21

Abilities:	Str 10	Dex 11	Con 11
	Int 16	Wis 19	Cha 15

Hit Points: 38 **Initiative:** +0**Speed:** 30 ft.**AC:** 11 (+1 armored robe)**Attacks:** Staff (masterwork) +6 melee; javelin +5 ranged**Damage:** Staff 1d6; javelin 1d6**Face/Reach:** 5' by 5'/5'**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +9

Skills: Concentration +4, Craft (Weaving) +4, Diplomacy +6, Handle Animal +6, Knowledge (Arcana) +10, Knowledge (Religion) +13, Knowledge (Million Spheres) +11, Sense Motive +7, Speak Language (Common), Speak Language (Mabden), Speak Language (Low Melnibonéan), Speak Language (Old Melnibonéan), Spellcraft +11, Spot +6

Feats: Empower Spell, Leadership, Maximize Spell, Spell Penetration**Special Qualities:** Armor Proficiency (all); Shield Proficiency; Simple Weapon Proficiency; Rebuke Undead;

The Heresy of Eequor

Eequor, the Blue Lady of Dismay, dwells in a plane where the only color is blue and all of its many shades, with no other colors allowed. Her favored worshippers are given the ability to move through the planes in a limited fashion, usually only to visit her own blue plane or some sub-planes that are also sacred to her. Eequor governs knowledge and the sorrow of being alone, and she and her worshippers favor arctic climates and things that are blue or cold white in color.

Pan Tang and the Church of Eequor

As second-class citizens, women are not allowed to become priestesses or sorceresses in Pan Tang. However, a secret sect of Pan Tangian women venerates the Chaos goddess Eequor, whose worship has been banned on the hellish island kingdom. These priestesses enact the rituals and practices of

their goddess in secret, while in Dharijor Eequor's worship is open and widespread.

Though all of the worshippers of Eequor in this adventure are women, there are no restrictions on who may worship the Blue Lady. She has male worshippers and priests elsewhere in the Young Kingdoms, notably in Dharijor, where the priestesses of her cult are venerated and hold positions of power and influence in Dharijoran society.

Characters who can make a roll of Knowledge (Religion) at a DC 25 would know that around 70 years ago, a hidden sect of Eequor's priestesses and worshippers lived on an island near Dharijor, in the Straits of Chaos. Pan Tang destroyed the island when they were discovered. PCs who are from Pan Tang, Dharijor, or are intimately familiar with the Church of Chaos might also be allowed to check to see if they know this information, though at a DC 30.





Spontaneous Casting; Casts Chaos Spells at +1 level; Casts Divinations at +1 Level; Uses Scrolls, Wands, and other Devices as a Wizard of 1/2 Cleric level

Cleric Spells (Chaos, Knowledge, and Magic domains):

Augury, Brazier of Power, Command, Create Food and Water, Detect Law (2), Detect Magic, Detect Thoughts, Dimensional Anchor, Dispel Magic, Divination, Divine Favor, Guidance (2), Light, Magic Circle Against Law, Magic Vestment, Make Whole, Protection from Law (2), Read Magic, Resistance, Shield of Faith, Speak with Animals, Summon Monster II

The remaining novice priestesses of Eequor are all female, and all range from their early 30s to their mid-50s in age. They are Pan Tangian noblewomen, as well, and as such, are all fairly swarthy, with angular faces, high cheekbones, and long, somewhat hooked noses. Their eyes are all dark, black, brown, or very dark green. Some of these priestesses have defied the social edicts that all women of Pan Tang shave their heads to display their social rank, have decorated their long black hair with braids and woven bits of finery into their tresses. Others keep the tradition alive, by choice rather than by decree. Their garments are fairly worn, but have been repaired, and continue to follow out-of-date Pan Tangian style. The priestesses wear heavy robes, layers of velvet, silk, and leather, trimmed in fur and covered in ornate plates of gold, silver, and other precious metals. Some of them continue to wear their rings, jewels, and piercings, while others have abandoned their vanity and opted for simplicity.

They are, like all those of their race, somewhat insane, and cruelty is second nature to them. In their case, however, they have lacked any subjects to vent their viciousness and evil upon, as the population of the island has since dwindled to their current number. They long since tortured and sacrificed all their remaining subjects, servants, lesser followers, husbands, and other men who inhabited the island, either their former lovers, or captive soldiers from the great battle. All of their demons departed, and they have raised the last of their children into the Chaos cult of Eequor. Any demons they had bound once have long since departed, the fledgling population of the island being ill-equipped to satisfy their demonic hungers and sustenance requirements. As such, these priestesses are bored beyond comprehension, and feel that they have little to lose. It is a miracle they've lasted as long as they have. The sudden appearance of the silume upon their

island led them to believe that Eequor had not forgotten them, and that their exile was soon to be over. With the arrival of more outsiders from their home plane, they are frenzied and anxious to make a great sacrifice to the Blue Lady of Dismay, who will reward them and take them home. As they have little chance to learn, or do anything to further the worship of their goddess, they are stymied in their abilities, even in some cases losing their abilities (experience levels) due to not using them.

Following are physical and personality descriptions of each of the priestesses, with notes as to how their attributes and skills differ from the generic priestess described below. DMs wishing to further customize these priestesses are encouraged to do so.

If a random priestess is required, roll 1d6 to determine which one it is from this list: 1) Anda Iridan'uu, 2) Riliish Tem, 3) Can'sal Bha'lorg, 4) Rheen Bhan'kam'sos, 5) Ildona Zus'karne, and 6) Palu'um Thal'hail. The high priestess Dima'dra'esh, and Vikeni Mus'sraa, her second, will only be encountered in the temple, as neither of them takes part in any patrols or errands.

Additional Priestesses of Eequor: CR 2 each; Medium human; Lvl 2; HD 2d8; hp 10; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (no armor); Atk = +1 melee (1d4 dagger, 1d6 quarterstaff, 1d3 unarmed strike); +0 ranged (1d6 javelin, 1d3 thrown rock); Chaos allegiance (Chaos 34, Balance 10, Law 2); SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +2, Craft (various) +5, Hide +2, Knowledge (Arcana +4), Knowledge (Million Spheres) +4, Knowledge (Religion) +6, Speak Language (Common), Speak Language (Mabden), Speak Language (Low Melnibonéan), Spellcraft +6, Spot +3, Swim +1, Extra Turning, Quicken Spell, Armor Proficiency (all), Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Special Qualities: Turn or Rebuke Undead; Spontaneous Casting; Casts Chaos Spells at +1 level; Casts Divinations at +1 Level; Uses Scrolls, Wands, and other Devices as a Wizard of 1/2 Cleric level

Spells (Chaos, Knowledge, and Magic Domains):

Guidance, Invisibility to Undead, Light, Mending, Protection from Law, Purify Food and Drink, Shield of Faith, Virtue

OGC





Other Information: More details about each of the priestesses can be found below, which expand briefly on each priestesses skills and feats.

The Individual Priestesses

Vikeni Mus'sraa: The oldest and most self-assured of the priestesses, she is second to Dima'dra'esh, and can speak for the elder priestess with surety. Her hair is shaved from the forehead to a line over the ears, and worn long in back in a glossy, raven-black cascade of curls that reaches below her waist. She wears linked rings and finger-caps of gold upon her fingers, with slight points upon them. Her forehead is tattooed with colorful and stylish erotic symbols, as her former life in Pan Tang was as a highly regarded courtesan, before she became a priestess. She is the most pragmatic of the priestesses, and tempers Dima'dra'esh's judgment when it is too harsh. Vikeni wears the garments of a priestess, though they have been altered to a more sensual and flesh-baring version, showcasing her lush body to its best advantage. She does not patrol the island with the others, and spends much of her time using the hallucinatory, narcotic, and euphoric drug-plants the priestesses continue to cultivate. She is seductive, and sardonic, and not altogether unlike the devil-tigers of Pan Tang. Vikeni is a level 2 cleric/level 1 expert (courtesan) with Cha 18, HP 16, Will save bonus +7, Craft (Apothecary) +6, Diplomacy +10, Sense Motive +5, and Profession (Courtesan) +8. Vikeni carries a stiletto, which, with warning, will be envenomed (Injury, DC 20, 1d6 Str primary damage, 1d6 secondary damage, lasts 1d3 hours, value 8,500 bronze). She also coats her finger jewelry with a paralytic and euphoric poison (Contact, DC 15, Paralysis, 2d6 Wis secondary damage, 2d6 minute duration, value 10,000 bronze), which she uses to interrogate victims with.

1) **Anda Iridan'uu:** Meek and somewhat subdued in personality, Anda's appearance is striking enough to overcome her quiet. She has been tattooed toe to scalp in black, twisting, thorny branches and leaves which blossom into blue and silver flowers into places such as her cheeks, palms, navel, and the soles of her feet. She wears little more than a cloak and a slight, bare-midriffed shift that leaves little of her tattoos covered. On Pan Tang, Anda was a dancer initiated into the secret, ritual traditional dances of Eequor, as well as the non-forbidden dances of the Pan Tangian society. She

was an artist, and as such, enjoyed some degree of social rank. She is now in her mid-50s, but maintains the twisting, acrobatic and unsettling dances of her people. Her Dex is 17, and she has the skills of Balance +8, Jump +8, Perform (Dance) +8, Tumble +8, and the feats of Dodge, and Lightning Reflexes (instead of Extra Turning and Quicken Spell). She uses a long, curled staff in combat.

2) **Riliish Tem:** A former Pan Tangian noblewoman who, due to a wise marriage to a husband who was both devoted and pliable, had risen almost as far as a woman could in Pan Tangian society, with wealth, an estate, and a society of friends, some of whom were from the Church of the Blue Lady. Then, when her husband was framed and imprisoned by a political rival, and his estates and riches confiscated and plundered by the royalty as punishment, Tem was left with the choice of going into hiding or joining her beloved in prison. Through her Eequor-worshipping friends, she learned of the cathedral, and went there to plot her husband's return. She has had a lot of time to plot, though she has long since given up any thought of actually returning to Hwamgaarl to exact her revenge. She continues to shave the crown of her head, though she has let a fringe of hair grow long, and has fashioned it into a sinuous tangle of braids. She has a regal, aristocratic manner, and sharp, thin features that bespeak noble birth. Her garment is a blue caftan embroidered with thread of precious metals, depicting in many panels the history of the goddess Eequor's worship in Pan Tang. This garment would be worth nearly 1000 bronzes to a collector of such fine workmanship. Tem has a Wis of 18, and the skills of Appraise +4, Innuendo +5, and Knowledge (Pan Tangian History) +5. If pressed into combat, she uses a dagger with a hilt made of blue jade (worth 350 bronzes).

3) **Can'sal Bha'lorg:** The most studious of the priestesses. Can'sal is the scribe and chronicler of the priestesses' exile on the blue plane. She has had a great deal of time to study and learn all of the books and scrolls of the priestesses that survived the cataclysmic battle. In that time, she has also devoted herself to the ritual tattooing of the sacred texts of Eequor upon her body, and in manufacturing a great many scrolls of magical nature. She wears very little, to better display the holy images emblazoned upon her skin. Can'sal has the following





skills and feats: Decipher Script +4, Knowledge (Million Spheres) +5, Scribe Scroll. In the library, she has created and placed scrolls of the following spells: Detect Balance, Detect Law, Detect Undead (2), Guidance, Invisibility to Undead, Light, Make Whole (2), Mending, Protection from Law (3), Purify Food and Drink, Shield of Faith (2), Virtue.

4) Rheen Zus'karne: Wife of a wealthy Pan Tangian tiger-breeder, Rheen became a priestess of Eequor in secret, and when it seemed likely she would be discovered, she fled to the temple, shortly before it was attacked. She is the only woman on the island to have taken any interest in the gharcos, and feeds them bits and pieces of food left over from the gardens, even devoting her days to the observation and study of the creatures' habits and physiology. She has trained several over the course of the years, and has one trained as a personal attack pet. She is short and of average build, and has let her hair grow out again, though she has braided it into a series of tangled loops and tails. She wears a simple robe and a sleeve taken from a suit of leather armor (+1 to AC), for her pet gharcos to land upon. Rheen has the skills of Animal Empathy +5, Handle Animal +5, and Knowledge (Nature) +4, and a pet gharcos of full HP, trained to stay near her, usually in the temple's spires. The creature is trained to attack and fight for her, and will be at her side in a round.

5) Ildona: The only non-Pan Tangian of the priestesses, Ildona is from Dharijor. She is the only survivor of a small coterie of priestess visiting the temple of Eequor on a pilgrimage at the time it was assaulted, and thus, her fate has joined that of her sisterhood. In personality, Ildona is more direct and less conspiratorial than the others, and is clearly an outsider, even after so long. She has grown to hate the deep-seated Pan Tangian xenophobia, which is still directed towards her by the other priestesses, despite their shared roles and their shared predicament. She wears a gray and black gown, decorated with azure and silver insets and trim. Though Ildona does not normally carry a weapon, she has maintained her combat training, and keeps a light mace (magical +1) and a suit of banded mail (magical +1) in her quarters, which she will don immediately if trouble presents itself. She has Str 15, Con 14, HP 17, AC 17, and the following skills and feats: Balance +4,

Hide +4, Intimidate +3, Ride +3, Power Attack, Cleave (instead of Extra Turning and Quicken Spell).

6) Palu'um Thal'hail: At 29, she is the youngest of the priestesses, she was born on the island after it was brought to the blue plane. As such, she has no memories of Pan Tang, and would be just as happy returning anywhere. She wears her hair long and plaited into many braids full of finger-bones, and her garments are those of a male Pan Tangian soldier, altered for a woman's physique. She is extremely attractive, though utterly devoid of any remorse, being brought up entirely in the madhouse of the island. Palu'um is clever and sardonic, and is not particularly devout, never having seen any benefit from worshipping Eequor. She is manipulative and has spent much of her life twisting the priestesses to her whim, and will do so to any would-be rescuers, pretending to be innocent, and then using them as a means to freedom, eventually betraying them. She keeps several daggers hidden on her person. She has a Cha 15, and the skills of Bluff +5 and Hide +3.

The Melnibonéan Landing Party

Several hours after the wreck of the *Virago*, the Melnibonéan battle-barge *Tempest* manages to break through the planar barrier and emerge in the realm of the temple-island of Eequor. The captain is a woman named Aniona Laros, sister to Jessamyn, Korune's lover. They are seeking Korune, once a slave of Melniboné, and are nominally interested in the nature of the island and its inhabitants. They despise Pan Tangians, and will do what they can to destroy the impudent upstarts who would model themselves so crudely after the Dragon Lords. Jessamyn, the Melnibonéan lady who loved Korune, is onboard the ship, waiting for news of her beloved. Once anchoring offshore at the northern edge of the island, Captain Laros and a party of a dozen Melnibonéan marines sets ashore to explore. Jessamyn remains until she knows the fate of Korune. Also onboard are a couple of Melnibonéan wizards who are capable of taking the battle-barge through the dimensional walls and back to the Young Kingdoms.





ANIONA LAROS, Melnibonéan battle-barge captain

She is tall, aloof, and every bit the model Melnibonéan sea captain. Captain Aniona Laros' hair is woven into a series of loops and whirls that cover her head, leaving little hair hanging down near the temples and ears. Her armor is done in a sea-snake motif, and the helmet is open-faced, with a ring of teeth suggesting a piranha or barracuda with an open maw. Her weapon of choice is a cruelly barbed shortspear, with a number of streamers hanging from it with snake-scale patterns upon them. Aniona generally carries a look of extreme confidence mixed with curiosity upon her face. (See the illustration on page 77.) Her sister is the one who loved Korune, and she has been surreptitiously steering her battle-barge after the direction that her divinations told the former slave-lover would be found at. Captain Laros' goals in this are simple: recover Korune (even if only his body), and exact cruel revenge upon those who have caused him pain. She is not without some degree of honor, and will deal favorably with any who have assisted or defended him, and will even go so far as to aid any of his allies, provided that it is not overtly out of character for a Melnibonéan.

Level 4 Fighter, Level 2 Wizard, Level 4 Expert (Sailor)

OGC

Allegiance: Chaos 67, Balance 50, Law 32

Abilities: Str 12	Dex 16	Con 12
Int 17	Wis 17	Cha 13

Hit Points: 60 **Initiative:** +3

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 24 (+2 Dex, +10 Melnibonéan Plate [masterwork], +2 Large Shield [masterwork])

Attacks: Shortspear (masterwork) +11, +13 thrown; Dagger (masterwork) +10, +12 thrown; Longsword (masterwork) +10

Damage: Shortspear (masterwork) 1d8+3; Dagger (masterwork) 1d4+1, 1d4 thrown; Longsword 1d8+1

Face/Reach: 5' by 5'/5'

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +11

Skills: * Balance +5 (+0), Climb +8 (+3), Diplomacy +4, Intuit Direction +8, Jump +6 (+1), Knowledge (Arcana) +7, Knowledge (Million Spheres) +5, Knowledge (Nature) +8, Listen +7, Profession (Sailor) +9, Ride +10, Sailing +9, Speak Language (Low Melnibonéan), Speak Language (High Melnibonéan),

Speak Language (Mabden), Spellcraft +7, Spot +9, Swim +3 (-8), Tumble +6 (+1), Use Rope +5

*Skill ratings in parentheses include penalties for armor and shield.

Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Empower Spell, Heighten Spell, Leadership, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (Shortspear), Weapon Specialization (Shortspear)

Special Qualities: Martial Weapon Proficiency (all), Armor Proficiency (all), Shield Proficiency, Scribe Scroll

Spells: Arcane Mark, Detect Magic, Hell's Sharp Flame, Message, Obscuring Mist, Read Magic, Resistance

Possessions: Masterwork quality shortspear, dagger, Melnibonéan plate armor, and large shield. Silver and jade dolphin-shaped ring with bound medium-sized water elemental.

Melnibonéan Marines

The Melnibonéan marines are equivalent to the Marine on page 166 of *Dragon Lords of Melniboné*, with the following modifications: Con -2, Int +2, Wis +2, +2 to Intimidate skill, Deep Seeing ability, +2 saving throws against Enchantment spells. They wear Melnibonéan breastplates and small metal shields, and carry longswords and bone bows. (Melnibonéan breastplates count as masterwork breastplates with an AC bonus of +7 and weigh 25 pounds.)

LADY JESSAMYN, Melnibonéan Noblewoman

Jessamyn is equivalent to the Capable Noble from page 163 of *Dragon Lords of Melniboné*, with the following modifications: Con -2, Int +2, Wis +2; +2 skill bonus to Alchemy, Intimidate, Knowledge (Million Spheres), and Spellcraft; Deep Seeing ability, +2 saving throws against Enchantment spells. She does not wear armor, and is only armed with a dagger. Unlike many Melnibonéans, she is not a wizard. Tall and raven-haired, she wears elaborate gowns of pale yellow and violet, and her hands, throat, and hair sport a fortune in gems and jewelry. Despite the fact that she clearly does not belong on a battle-barge, she maintains an elegant grace that is evident to any. Now that her husband is dead, she is ready to reclaim Korune and return to Melniboné. If her beloved is restored to her, Jessamyn will be willing to reward any who aid him. She will give each of her lover's allies Melnibonéan silver and gems worth 10,000 bronzes apiece. If Korune is injured or killed, she will do all she can to see that his death is avenged and those responsible tortured and slain, along with those who allowed





it to happen. She has a specially made healing draught that will restore Korune's sanity.

Events on the Island

Time does not stand still for anyone other than the gods, and thus events will continue to transpire on the island. These events are not set in stone, and can be affected by the PCs' actions or inactions, or the outcome of previous events. This chain of potential events is not tied to any particular time frame, as the DM should use it for a guideline, and for dramatic effect. It can change dramatically depending on what the PCs do.

1. PCs awaken on the island.
2. *Chardros's Lament* limps into the crystal grotto. Several slaves escape by leaping overboard and swimming to

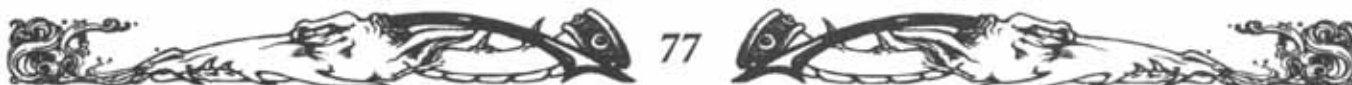
shore. Captain Klos sends several patrols of slavers onto the island, and leaves the ship himself accompanied with Hasper Dal and a search party, to begin searching for Omerginroul and the escaped slaves.

3. Almost immediately after his captain is off the ship, En'trim Sho'oon enacts his plans for mutiny on *Chardros's Lament*. His followers attack those still loyal to Klos. In the battle, an additional number of slaves escape.

4. Ashore on the island, Hasper Dal quickly realizes that Gariv Klos is likely to kill him, and flees from his own countrymen.

5. Under the leadership of Vartan Vensk, the remaining pirates attempt to reunite and begin searching for each other across the island. There are fights with the Pan Tangian slavers.

6. The Pan Tangians discover signs of the priestesses of Eequor. The priestesses begin to try to learn who is on their island and what their goals are. They arm





themselves, and spread out alone or in groups of two to spy on the intruders.

7. Thinking that she will not get another chance, Dima'dra'esh begins the ritual to summon Eequor. This ritual takes several hours (or some dramatically appropriate amount of time), takes place in the temple's main chamber, and ends with the sacrifice of Liramayn. Vikeni Mus'sraa assists her in the ritual.

8. Some of the Pan Tangian patrols return to the ship, and conflict erupts when the mutiny is revealed. Gariv Klos escapes an ambush set by his treacherous first mate and crewmen, and flees alone into the island.

9. The pirates, after spying on the slavers, begin to plot to take over *Chardros's Lament*, thinking that they can force the Pan Tangians to return them to their home seas.

10. The Melnibonéan ship *Tempest* arrives at the island and sends out a small landing craft with the ship's captain and a squad of warriors. They begin to search across the island for the missing slave, and to determine the nature of the island and its inhabitants.

11. A large group of the Pan Tangians, assembled from the patrols of slavers ashore, attempt to assault the temple of Eequor. Using the pandemonium as a cover, Omerginroul attempts to free its captive mate.

12. Eequor is summoned.

13. The Azure Gate is opened, and the PCs can potentially go home to the Young Kingdoms.

"Prompts" by the DM

Following are a few ways the DM can urge events along, should things get a little slow, or characters become a little secure in their ability to defeat enemies, or if they find themselves making allies and minimizing threats.

Freeing of the Slaves: The slaves are ready and willing to revolt, and the conflict between the mutineers and the loyal crewmembers presents an ideal opportunity for them to liberate themselves. The island might suddenly be overrun by a vast number of slaves. (*Chardros's Lament* has a complement of 180 slaves, minus those who have died from recent events, as the DM decides.)

The Arrival of the Melnibonéans: From the battle-barge encountered in the opening of the adventure, a Melnibonéan landing party consisting of a small group of warriors and a captain has landed on the beach, setting ashore in a small craft. They are seeking Korune, the amnesiac slave from the *Virago*, but are also interested in the intriguing riddle this mysterious plane presents.

The Summoning of Eequor: One of the more horrible ways that can happen in this scenario is that PC or Pan Tangian actions might just attract the attention of the Blue Lady of Dismay herself. If Eequor manifests, she will be secretive and capricious, in the nature of the Lords of Chaos. Here are some of the ways Eequor might intercede in this adventure:

- **Appearing Unsummoned:** Like all of the lords and ladies of Chaos, Eequor is capable of secrecy and subtlety. She does not need to be summoned, and can appear at her own whim, regardless of what rituals the priestesses attempt. She might even wish to assay the situation herself, appearing as one of the priestesses, perhaps either in the form of one of those already on the island, or as a beautiful young girl, perhaps even a child, unknown to the others on the island. In this form, Eequor will give a false name and seek help and protection from the PCs. In such a form, she will be toying with them, learning their allegiance, and if she is aided and treated well by them, she will reveal her form and true nature, and mete out her justice and rewards accordingly.
- **Returning the Island to the Young Kingdoms:** As the entire island was formerly an island in the Straits of Chaos, sundered from the Young Kingdoms by her previous intervention, Eequor might perversely choose to return the island once more to its original home. If so, the island will move through the Million Spheres and emerge in the Young Kingdoms, once more next to Pan Tang. Alternately, it might also end up in the midst of the Sighing Desert, according to Eequor's whim.
- **Destroying the Island:** As a lady of Chaos, Eequor is not above petty vengeance and cruelty. Like an angry child, she might respond to her summons by destroying all of those who have distracted her. She might also respond angrily to the killing of the silume, and mete vengeance out with a cruel laugh and blast of hellfire. In such an apocalyptic ending, the characters





might find themselves in a race against time, trying to find a way home as the island is destroyed piece-by-piece by an enraged goddess of Chaos.

- **Scattering the Island's Inhabitants** throughout the Multiverse: Eequor might also merely throw open the Azure Gate and let the island be swept through to parts unknown. This might be the impetus for a campaign setting where the characters travel through a variety of Multiverse settings, seeking a way to return home.
- **Seeking Followers and Champions:** Eequor is always ready to accept new followers and defenders of her faith, and might make it plain to those she encounters that the price for her intercession is service, either to her church, or to her directly. She might agree to return the PCs home, but only after they swear to perform some quest for her, the nature of which will be the weakening of Law's influence in the Young Kingdoms. If there are suitable PCs, she will make subtle suggestions that they might best serve her as her clerics, or even that they seek to attain enough Chaos allegiance to become her Champions. For details on this, see the chapter on Magic & Religion in *Dragon Lords of Melniboné*.

Shifting Alliances

Following are some suggestions on how some of the conflicting and shifting alliances which can emerge from this adventure might be handled, focusing on how each group will deal with the PCs:

Allies with the Other Captives: Of the other captive NPCs, Osa Dileel, Dierre, and Geirmund are likely to stick with the PCs, no matter what. The only exception is Geirmund, who will panic if the PCs cut a deal with the Pan Tangians, because he is convinced that they will betray them and enslave them once more. Linault Brin will be thinking of his wife and child, however, and though he would hate himself for such an action, he could potentially betray the PCs if they are making it unlikely he will continue to live and return home. Whyss is clearly out for himself, and will think nothing of cold-blooded murder or betrayal if it means he will end up on the winning side. The wild card in this is Korune, who might be convinced to join almost any side, and could switch sides in a moment. Though his abilities and aid are not apparently useful,

he will be a solid bargaining chip if the Melnibonéans become involved.

Allies with the Pirates: Though the pirates are willing to let bygones be bygones as long as it benefits them, they will be wary of any alliances with the PCs, thinking that there will be some grudges. Depending on how the alliance is started, the pirates will either be ready to turn on the PCs as soon as it benefits them, or might turn into stalwart allies, some of them even expressing regret at the previous situation. Not all of the pirates of the *Virago* were comfortable with the notion of selling slaves to Pan Tang, and if all goes well, they might even offer to let the PCs join their ranks as pirates, assuming they survive and get an additional vessel.

Allies with Omerginroul: The creature and its mate Liramayn will be all too willing to ally themselves with the PCs, assuming that the PCs are more benevolent than the Pan Tangians (and it should be nearly impossible to find a PC group with less mercy than slave traders of Hwamgaarl). The creature will do what it can to aid the PCs on their quest to return home, with the single and non-negotiable position that they do all they can to aid it in freeing Liramayn. PCs who do ally themselves with Omerginroul will find that Eequor, if she manifests, is better disposed towards them.

Allies with the Priestesses of Eequor: It isn't out of the question that the PCs could ally themselves with some or all of the priestesses, either against the Pan Tangian slavers and/or the pirates. Though the women are somewhat mad, and devoted to the worship of an evil goddess of Chaos, there is no reason why they need to be opposed. With the slavers' likely reaction towards the priestesses being hostile, full of hatred towards their outlawed faith, the priestesses will want all the help they can get, especially if that help can defend them, and put another of the silume in their grasp. If the DM wants to complicate things, the priestesses can be pitted against each other, all their long-repressed hatreds and rivalries stirred to a boil with the new influences on the island.

Allies with Hasper Dal: Once he realizes that he is cut off from the captain, and potentially cut off from the ship, yet wanted by both, Dal is going to be seeking allies. His goals are simple: to reclaim Omerginroul and get himself free of the island and the blue plane as quickly as possible. In fact, of all of the potential allies, he's more than likely the most dependable. Of course, any





arrangement made with him for a return home will likely end if the site of the return is the island of Pan Tang, and at that point, unless somehow compelled to by potential profit, or threat of violence, he will begin by calling for guards and attempting to return the PCs to their destiny as slaves of Pan Tang.

Allies with Gariv Klos: Once he is the victim of mutiny and is cut off from the bulk of his forces, he will be seeking allies. Klos might be even willing to turn to the pirates or the PCs to bulk up his forces for another assault on the ship. Of course, he will betray them in the end.

Allies with the Pan Tangian Galley Slaves: If the PCs are charismatic and enterprising enough, they can create a small army of former slaves who are ready to strike back against the Pan Tangians, and will do all they can to return to the freedom of the Young Kingdoms and their former homes.

Allies with the Melnibonéans: In this matter, Korune is the key. If the PCs have aided the amnesiac slave, and protected him from harm, they will find ready allies in the form of a battle-barge captain and a battle-ready squadron of Melnibonéan marines.

Ways of Solving this Adventure

There are a great many ways this scenario can play out. PCs can do this diplomatically, making allies, negotiating from a position of strength and bravado, until they have a small group of followers and are able to deal with the slavers and the mad priestesses from a position of strength. They might also turn this into a commando-style activity, with ambushes, raids, frequent and vicious battles against any they encounter until they are either dead or standing on top of a pile of bodies.

Though escape from the island should seem hopeless to the PCs, there are several ways they might be able to return to the Young Kingdoms. These means are described below, with suggestions on how that outcome might be achieved and ways it would likely turn out for PCs.

Sailing from the Island: The plane the island is on is fairly small, and there are no other significant landmasses, other than small spurs infested with gharcos. Sailing

away from the island is a dead end, though the DM might wish to be merciful to the PCs, and thus could even put a natural planar gateway somewhere near the edge of the plane which throws them into some deserted corner of the world of the Young Kingdoms, perhaps in the unformed areas south of the Southern Continent.

Omerginroul or Liramayn: Either of the silume has the ability to open the Azure Gate and take the PCs back to their homes in the Young Kingdoms.

The Priestesses of Eequor: To gain the aid of the priestesses, the PCs will undoubtedly have to defend them against the Pan Tangian slavers and the pirates, and might even have to foil the efforts of Omerginroul to free his mate. They'll have to stand by and watch while the priestesses sacrifice Liramayn (or Omerginroul), an action that should earn them some Chaos allegiance.

The Melnibonéans: The *Tempest* has on it two wizards who are capable of taking the ship through the dimensions, and if the PCs have been careful and wise, they might find themselves onboard the battle-barge for the return to the Young Kingdoms.

Eequor's Intercession: If the PCs manage to intercede somehow in the summoning, or are present when Eequor manifests, then they might be given a quick trip home, most likely appearing in a temple of Eequor in Dharijor or elsewhere in the Young Kingdoms.

Continuing this Adventure

There are several means to expand or continue *Slaves of Fate*, using some of the themes and characters introduced. Here are some of the more obvious adventuring paths this adventure might spawn:

Fellow Captives: The other prisoners of the *Virago* are excellent opportunities for allies to the PCs in future adventures. These folk can provide interesting sources of adventure, from helping Linault Brin return home, joining Osa Dileel as a trader, helping Geirmund the thief with "one big score," traveling the Young Kingdoms with Dierre of the Black Shores, or even continuing a life of piracy with Whyss. And then there's Korune. See below for more information on how to use him further.





Korune: Though his amnesia isn't intended to be a focus of this adventure, and he's provided as a sort of red herring which can come of some use later, noble-spirited adventurers might wish to make the restoration of Korune's memory a priority.

Omerginroul and Liramayn: The two extraplanar silume would be valuable allies to a group that planned on doing some adventuring around the rest of the Multiverse. Though they might not make ideal party-members, if they are treated well and aided by the PCs, these two creatures would be likely to visit or assist the PCs again in the future, giving the DM invaluable means for future adventures amongst the other planes of the Multiverse.

The Virago: The PCs, if allied with Vartan Vensk or his crew from the *Virago*, can continue as pirates, or at least have some adventures with the pirate crew. If the notion of a pirate campaign isn't to the liking of the DM and/or the PCs, the pirates should be willing to put the PCs off at any port they desire.

Eequor: Depending on how the PCs interacted with the priestesses of Eequor, and what the final fate of the lost temple was when the PCs left the Azure Plane, the Blue Lady of Dismay herself might be an impetus for future adventure. Do the PCs have allegiance to Chaos now? Are they fleeing the wrath of the Church of Eequor? Have any of them joined her priesthood?

Pan Tang: Do the PCs make a deal with the men from *Chardros's Lament*? How about the mutiny? Which side do they favor: Gariv Klos, or the treacherous first mate En'trim Sho'oon? What about the feckless sorcerer Hasper Dal? Do they help Omerginroul in exacting revenge upon him, or do they let Dal live in return for his aid? Whatever happens, it is certain that PCs allied with the Pan Tangians will end up chained to a bench, rowing, or even worse, being returned to Pan Tang for a life in slavery, madness, and a painful and horrific death.

Melniboné: In the unlikely event that the PCs manage to end up making a deal with the Melnibonéans, they will, at best, have a single favor which they can probably cash immediately to get them off the island. Remember that while Melnibonéans are famed for their cruelty and amorality, they are also somewhat perverse and whimsical in their dealings, and an

unpleasant end in slavery is not altogether certain at the hands of the Melnibonéans. Aniona Laros, in gratitude for the return of the slave Korune, may allow the PCs a small room on the Melnibonéan battle-barge, and will take them through to the Young Kingdoms, either setting them free on a small boat just outside the Dragon Sea, or allowing them to return to Imrryr, where they will be released in the dock-side Foreigner's District. Jessamyn, the lady who sent Korune away, will be there to meet and reward the characters, appropriately to the manner in which they treated him. This can range from a bag of silver coins and gems, a night in the care of Imrryr's courtesans, or an informal tour of the skills of the torturers of the Dragon Isle. Perhaps all three might be in order. Once the matter is settled, the PCs will be ordered to leave as quickly as possible and not to return to the Dragon Isle again, upon forfeiture of their lives. Alternately, if the DM wishes to give them such an unusual patron, they can be thanked profusely and asked to serve once more, for the retrieval of an unusual item from a somewhat difficult place. . . .

Dealing with Treasure

When this adventure is finished, the PCs could end up escaping with nothing but the clothing on their backs and the weapons they scrounged along the way, to a large amount of booty in the form of Pan Tangian burial goods, pirate treasure, magical scrolls and items. If they are especially cunning and successful, they can potentially sail away on a Pan Tangian slave galley, laden with the grave goods from the Pan Tangian catacombs. Such an immense store of treasure will inevitably spawn a series of adventures in itself, stemming with the problems of transportation, security, attention, and trying to turn it into a more transportable form.

Involving Elric or Other Notables

Though involving the Prince of Ruins in such a relatively trifling adventure is almost certain to spell doom for the PCs, and almost all of the NPCs, the DM might wish to bring Elric into this adventure. A huge part of the fun of adventuring in the Young Kingdoms is the potential to interact with such famous and doomed





heroes as Elric. If this adventure is intended as a one-shot, outside of a campaign, then there is no more appropriate way of introducing the tragic doom of Elric to players than to have them meet their end on the point of the black runesword Stormbringer.

A word of warning is in order. Using Elric in an adventure almost inevitably steers players to play their PCs as secondary characters ("Whatever Elric says, I do!"), or makes them feel futile and even more the slave to fate ("Whatever—I know I'm going to end up dead anyway. Hell, I might as well be wearing a red shirt. . .").

One solution is to keep Elric weak initially. Once he is recovered and equipped with Stormbringer, have his personal goals be in conflict with, or separate from, those of the PCs. Have them cross paths rather than adventure together for any length of time. In this fashion, the PCs have the option of defending Elric, and when he is back in power, he will owe them a debt of gratitude.

If the DM wants to bring this incredibly powerful figure into the scenario, here are the following suggestions as to how things might happen:

- The adventure should be set during the time of Elric's wanderings, between the events depicted in *Elric of Melniboné* and *Weird of the White Wolf*. Melniboné is still in strength, and Regent Yrkoon has sent assassins out across the Young Kingdoms to kill his cousin Elric before Elric can return to reclaim his throne.
- Initially, Elric is a fellow prisoner of the pirates of the *Virago*, separated from Stormbringer, nearly unconscious and ill without his rune-sword. Use his weakened statistics, and keep him barely conscious until he is on deck at the slave exchange. In this case, eliminate Korune from the adventure and replace him with Elric. PCs may or may not recognize Elric.
- The pirates do not know who their captive actually is, but the Pan Tangians, particularly Hasper Dal and Gariv Klos, instantly realize the Pale Prince's identity. PCs might notice their reaction to seeing the emperor of Melniboné in chains. The Pan Tangian slavers will do everything they can to purchase the albino without letting the pirates know who they actually have in chains.
- If none of the PCs are so equipped, Omerginroul will seek out Elric's assistance, or that of a player-character next to him. Elric recognizes what is happening, and suspects that Yyrkoon's assassins are onboard the battle-barge. He also does not want to be in the position of being a hostage of the Pan Tangians, so Elric will try to defend Omerginroul while the creature opens the Azure Gate.
- In the initial battle, Elric attempts to summon Stormbringer, which is kept in a chest with the other PC gear in the captain's quarters. For dramatic emphasis, the Black Sword begins thumping and crashing around beneath the deck, chopping at the wooden deck-planks in an attempt to reach Elric's hands. Unfortunately, the *Virago* passes through the Azure Gate and crashes before Elric is reunited with his sword, so it sinks along with the ship.
- Elric is washed onto the island spurs, or the south shore, and is barely conscious. He begs the player-characters to help him find herbs enough to bring his strength up (see his description for this requirement), or to swim out to the wreck of the ship to rescue Stormbringer.
- Unfortunately, the black runeblade is somewhat weakened in this plane (the DM decides how weak it is), and might not give Elric any strength or magical assistance, even if it is used to drink souls.
- The priestesses will attempt to capture the rune-blade and use it in their ritual—as a weapon of Chaos will increase the chance of the sacrifice being noticed. They might even recognize Elric as a sorcerer, and attempt to force him to summon Eequor, or cast a dimensional travel spell to return them home.
- Only when the seal around the plane is broken (either by the arrival of the Melnibonéan battle-barge, or the appearance of Eequor), does the black battle-blade become awake and potent once more. This gives Elric some time in which to wreak his vengeance, and he will begin by trying to kill any and all pirates, slavers, and perhaps all of the priestesses who are opposed to him. PCs may or may not want to take place in this reaping, as Elric's blade is notorious for striking down his allies in the thick of battle.
- If Eequor is summoned, Elric bargains with her on behalf of the PCs or any who have aided him.





Alternately, he uses Stormbringer against her avatar, earns Eequor's hatred, and begins his falling-out with Chaos.

- When the Melnibonéan landing party arrives on the island, they reveal that they are seeking out Elric, and Captain Aniona Laros tells him that Yyrkoon has seized the throne and imprisoned Cymoril, and is intimating that he will resist Elric's return.
- The Melnibonéans grant Elric safe passage back to the Young Kingdoms (though he does not wish to return to Melniboné just yet), and he will in turn extend to the surviving PCs this passage to a safe harbor back in the home realms, letting them keep whatever treasure they've managed to secure from the adventure.

Other "guest appearances" aside from Elric might include Rackhir the Red Archer, Count Smiorgan Baldhead, Duke Avan Astran, or Moonglum of Eshmir, any of which can be encountered before they crossed paths with Elric. Even Theleb K'aarna can be used to replace Hasper Dal. If the DM is concerned with the continuity of the series, however, using these characters is not advisable.

For a very high-powered adventure for a small group of player-characters, this adventure can be run with Elric and a companion as player-characters, and everyone else as NPCs. For an adventure set immediately after events depicted in *Elric of Melniboné*, Rackhir is the better choice. An adventure post *Sailor on the Seas of Fate* and prior to *Weird of the White Wolf* would have Count Smiorgan Baldhead of the Purple Towns as Elric's most likely traveling companion.

Experience Point Awards

Page 166 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* provides guidelines for experience point awards for the monsters and NPCs defeated by the PCs, based on the party's strength and the Challenge Rating of the opponents. DMs are encouraged to use the free-form experience awards, as described on page 168 of the *DMG*, for situations such as alliances with otherwise hostile characters, especially ingenious or effective tactics, or exceptional role-playing from the players. Story awards can be given for finding a solution to the situation that does not involve mere hack-and-slash, and is more in keeping with the themes and tone of Michael

Moorcock's *Elric* stories and the *Dragon Lords of Melniboné* setting.

New Creatures

Two new creatures can be encountered in *Slaves of Fate*. The silume are extraplanar beings native to the home plane of Eequor, while the gharcos are unpleasant avians native to this small plane.

Gharcos

OGC

Small Outsider (air)

Hit Dice: 1d8 (5)

Initiative: +3 (Dex +2, Siz +1)

Speed: 120' flight (average maneuverability), 5' walk

AC: 23 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +10 natural)

Attacks: Bite +3, Claws +1

Damage: Bite 1d4, Claws (2) 1d2

Face/Reach: 5' by 5'/5'

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60', Improved Grab

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will -2

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 3, Cha 3

Skills: Intuit Direction +2, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +3

Feats: Flyby Attack

Climate/Terrain: Island

Organization: Encountered in flocks of 20–30, with one queen (max HP, +1 to all stats)

Challenge Rating: 1/4

Treasure: Low, usually none

These creatures resemble a cross between a kite, manta ray, and centipede. A creature of Chaos native to a minor, water-covered plane of Chaos, gharcos travel in large flocks, using any available island or natural landmark as a roost. The name was coined from the Pan Tangian priestesses—for the Mabden words *g'har cos*, meaning "flying legs." Their bodies are covered with segmented armor like a centipede's. Protruding from two long ridges along the back are manta-like wings, wide and roughly triangular, though like gossamer, vaguely transparent. A long ridge along the lower body hangs far below the wings—the main torso-set with rows of small grasping limbs, bent like a centipede's.





These vary in length, being a couple of feet long at the creature's "chest" to mere inches elsewhere. The average size for these creatures is around 4' from tip to tail, and with a 6' wingspan, with weight at around 25 pounds. The torso ends in a pair of long tails, rat-like and prehensile. Gharcos heads are like an insect's, with two long rows of eyes located on either side. The mouth opens four ways, with several small grasping limbs beneath it. They are vile, and smell horrible, and are somewhat afraid of fire.

Silume

OGC

Small Outsider

Hit Dice: 3d8 (12)

Initiative: +6 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 18 (+2 natural, +6 Dex)

Attacks: Claws +1, Bite +1

Damage: Claws 1d2, Bite 1d2

Face/Reach: 5' by 5'/5'

Special Qualities: Detect Planar Gate (2 Times/Day), Darkvision 30', natural Gate spell (see below)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +4

Abilities:	Str 7	Dex 22	Con 13
	Int 14	Wis 13	Cha 11

Skills: Animal Empathy +3, Balance +8, Bluff +5, Climb +10, Conceal Object +7, Concentration +6, Escape

Artist +7, Hide +7, Intuit Direction +5, Jump +5, Knowledge (Million Spheres) +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +7, Scent/Taste +3, Sense Motive +3, Spot +4, Swim +7, Tumble +8

Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Mobility, Run

Allegiance: Chaos 4d8, Balance 3d8, Law 1d8

Climate/Terrain: The silume are native to the blue plane of Eequor, a goddess of Chaos

Organization: Usually encountered in pairs

Challenge Rating: 1/2

Treasure: Low, usually none

Advancement: By character class, usually Rogue

The extraplanar race of silume is native to the blue plane of the Chaos goddess Eequor. They are able to create a magical gateway once per day and shift through the dimensions to others of the Multiverse. This natural ability is similar to a Gate spell, though it needs a small amount (1 hit point) of blood from another living being to activate. These beings worship and serve Eequor, though their worship and behavior is benign and peaceful, worshipping her aspects of a knowledge-bringer and sorceress. Because of this, Eequor does not pay them much attention. The silume are intelligent, refined, and graceful beings. They figure strongly in ancient Mabden lore about Eequor, though their role is unspecified. In fact, they are often depicted as being little more than subservient animals. *▲



Slaves of Fate

FOLLOWING THE DECLINE OF THE bright empire of Melniboné, nations of the newly named Young Kingdoms struggle to assert themselves and thus ensure their place in the new world order.

The island-nation of Pan Tang seeks most to emulate feared Melniboné, sending her marauders across the oceans to secure slaves, both as labor for her growing industry and as sacrifices in dark magical rituals.

You have fallen prey to these depraved slavers. Are your cunning and skill enough to escape a gruesome fate?

• A D20 System Adventure for 1st to 3rd level adventurers • Set in the world of *Elric*, as created by Michael Moorcock •

SLAVES OF FATE provides an introductory adventure for use with Chaosium's *Dragon Lords of Melniboné* sourcebook for the d20 System. Though designed for beginning adventurers, notes are provided to adjust the level of the challenges given in this book to be more appropriate to the experience of your gaming group.

This adventure can also be easily placed in your ongoing campaign.

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This adventure is best when used with *Dragon Lords of Melniboné*, but ownership of that tome is not required.



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Chaosium Inc.

900 Murmansk Street, Suite 5
Oakland, CA 94607-5018

www.chaosium.com



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