

# ENCOUNTERS ON THE SAVAGE SEAS II



Expand your game with this collection of nautical-themed mini-adventures, creatures, and magic items for the world's greatest roleplaying game

# ***ENCOUNTER ON THE SAVAGE SEAS II***

**Background: Nimgyu**

**Cover Artist: Petar Penev**

**Internal Art:**

Lluis Abadias, Dean Spencer, Lotta Ignatius, Petar Penev, Daniel Walthall,  
Purple Duck Games: Gary Dupuis, Rogue Genius Games: Jacob E. Blackmon,  
Luiz Prado, Wizards of the Coast stock art

**Cartography:**

Dyson Logos, Elven Tower, Jeff C. Stevens, Jean Lorber, Mobral Rox

**Editor: Brent Sweany**

**Produced by: Jeff C. Stevens**

**Layouts: Jeff C. Stevens**

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## ABOUT THIS SUPPLEMENT

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Thank you for purchasing *Encounters on the Savage Seas III*! Your support means a lot to me. Hopefully, someday I'll be able to create RPG content as a full-time job. Until then, I'll settle with producing these fun supplements as a part-time gig. It's a lot of fun!

As with the other *Savage Encounters* supplements, I reached out to writers for encounter submissions. With these supplements, I want to give you a valuable resource for your gaming sessions, and I want to share the imagination, creativity, and the writing styles of various authors with you.

I want to say **Thank You** to all the writers, artists, cartographers, and everyone else who had a hand in making this product what it is.

Thanks for purchasing *Encounters on the Savage Seas III*! We hope you enjoy the encounters!

Now – go play D&D!

- Jeff C. Stevens

Questions or comments? Email me at [jcorvinstevens@gmail.com](mailto:jcorvinstevens@gmail.com) or on Twitter: @jcorvinstevens

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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Several Dungeon Masters Guild writers have created resources which I think you might find useful:

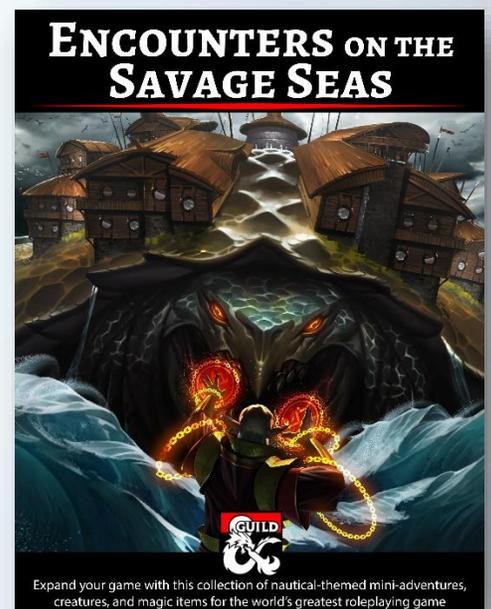
**CAPTAINS AND CANNONS: A SHIP COMBAT GUIDE IN D&D 5E** : a ruleset for running ship-to-ship combat

**TAVERN GAMES** : card and dice games which can be used while the characters travel the savage seas

**CALL FROM THE DEEP: RACES & FEATS** : new aquatic races and feats

**TREASURES OF THE SEA** : 32 sea-themed magic items

**ENCOUNTERS ON THE SAVAGE SEAS**: The first Savage Seas supplement



## USING THIS SUPPLEMENT

Although some encounters mention specific locations, with a little adjustment, each could be used in nearly every campaign and setting.

Text in these yellow boxes is to be read to players.

Text in blue boxes refers to Combat Scaling and Location Features and is intended only for the DM.

Text in these boxes is additional information for the DM, some of which may be shared with players.

Most of the creatures in these adventures are found in the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition *Monster Manual*. Page numbers have been included for easy reference but depending on the printing edition of your *Monster Manual*, they may not match.

This supplement uses creatures from:

*Monster Manual* (MM)  
*Volo's Guide to Monsters* (VGtM)  
*Tomb of Annihilation* (ToA)  
*Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes* (MToF)

In addition, several new creatures have been created for this supplement. You can find these creature stat blocks at the end of the adventure in which they are mentioned.

Unless otherwise noted, all NPCs have the stats of a **commoner**.

## SHIP STATISTICS

As there are several ships mentioned in this supplement, it is advised that you review **Chapter 5: Adventure Environments** of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, which gives details about Waterborne Vehicles and their Damage

Thresholds – the amount of damage required per attack before the ship is damaged.

## AVERAGE PARTY LEVEL

The **Average Party Level** (APL) can be used to calculate the appropriate challenge level for your party. To calculate the APL, add the total levels of all characters and divide the sum by the number of characters (rounding up for .5 or greater).

## SKILL CHECKS AND SAVING THROWS

Specific DCs are written for each of the encounters. You may wish to change these DCs based on the APL of the adventuring party. We suggest the below range:

APL	Check / Save DC
1 <sup>st</sup> thru 3 <sup>rd</sup>	11
4 <sup>th</sup> thru 6 <sup>th</sup>	13
7 <sup>th</sup> thru 9 <sup>th</sup>	16
10 <sup>th</sup> thru 12 <sup>th</sup>	19
13 <sup>th</sup> thru 15 <sup>th</sup>	22

In addition, if you feel a skill check or save is too low or too high, feel free to adjust the DC as you wish.

## MAPS

Unless otherwise noted, for all maps:  
1 square = 5 feet.

## YOU ARE EMPOWERED

As mentioned above, you do not have to run these encounters as written. You (as the DM) are empowered to make changes as you wish – adjusting the encounters as the game is played, if you like. You are part of the collaborative storytelling that is Dungeons & Dragons and you know best how to adjust the encounters so that your adventurers get the most out of the session and story.

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## A CLEAN SHIP SAILS BETTER

By Jean Lorber

Artist: Dean Spencer

This d6 table details the various tasks associated with the maintenance of sailing ships, including small encounters or challenges associated with those tasks.

### USING THIS TABLE

A sailors' life on Faerun's oceans will certainly be punctuated by brief moments of epic danger and quick action, but for the most part, day-to-day life is full of drudgery and boring tasks. Most of their time is spent on the upkeep of their ship. These tasks are absolutely critical to sailors' survival, but boy, they can be menial. You try scrubbing 100 ft of decking with nothing but an owlbear-bristlebrush!

Fleshing out life at sea can help bring a seaborne adventure to life, but most DMs don't want to re-create drudgery at their tabletop. So, let's amp it up a notch!

This table presents a collection of important ship maintenance duties and describes the basic work involved. But it goes on to describe small encounters or difficult circumstances under which these duties could be performed.

### SHIP MAINTENANCE ACTIVITY

Roll	Location
1	Rigging
2	Masts
3	Hull (interior)
4	Hull (exterior)
5	Sails
6	Deck

## RIGGING

It's hard to overstate how many ropes and lines are used on a ship. *Standing rigging* is kept under tension to hold masts in place. *Running rigging* is used to shape and control the sails. We'll leave it at that.

Sailors must constantly splice frayed ropes together, coat tar on watertight lines, and of course, tie and re-tie a dizzying array of knots (from Anchor Bends to Zeppelin Loops).

PCs can learn **basic knots** with a half-day of practice and a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Sleight-of-Hand)** check. On a failed check, another practice session is needed. PCs can learn **advanced knots** with 2 days of practice and a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Sleight-of-Hand)** check.

Once learned, a PC can automatically succeed at replicating a basic knot under normal circumstances. However, if in stressful or time-sensitive situations (e.g. in battle, during a storm), the PCs must succeed on a **DC 10 Dexterity or Intelligence (Sleight of Hand)** check. If the PCs know advanced knots, they have advantage on the check.

Simply getting to loose rigging or untied knots could be a part of a challenge. Sample checks include:

- **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics)**. Balancing on a horizontal mast while tying a knot.
- **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)**. Holding on to a mast while fixing rigging.
- **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) or (Nature)** to time movements with the roll of the waves.

Knowing knots can also be handy in future adventures, granting advantage to checks in many situations (setting traps, climbing).

## MASTS

A ship's masts are under incredible, constant strain as they channel the wind's power from the sails to the mass of the ship. As such, the soundness of these former tree trunks is something that captains obsess about. The selection of a ship's masts is not always optimal. Perfect poles are hard to find, so a captain might make do with an inferior or more brittle species. Cracks in a mast are relatively unusual, so a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Nature)** check is needed to correctly spot them. Ominous groans or creaking from the mast during high winds are the first sign of a weakening timber.

Fixing a weakened mast requires wooden braces, several crew members, and a set of carpenter's tools. With these resources, a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Survival)** check is needed to strengthen the mast, made with advantage if someone is proficient with the tools. On a failure, another 10 minutes of repair is needed before a 2nd check is possible.

Fixing a mast during a chase would be a top priority for a ship's captain but would also redirect crew time away from preparing defenses, securing cargo, or other important tasks.

## HULL (INTERIOR)

The dark, wet inside of the ship's hull is a breeding ground for problematic issues like rot and mold. Even in normal circumstances a ship is likely to have 6 to 12 inches of seawater sloshing around the bottom of the hull.

A small crew of carpenters makes a daily inspection for rotting patches, cracks, or leaks. A successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check is needed to spot any such problems, made with advantage if a PC is proficient with carpenter's tools. In peaceful situations, fixing an issue requires an hour of work with carpenter's tools and a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Survival)** check. The inspectors are



also likely to uncover other issues, like rat swarms or stowaways.

Fixing hull damage during storms, shipwrecks, or battles is a different matter altogether, best run as a skill challenge. Require 3 successful checks before 3 failures, but increase the DC of the checks or the number of needed successes if the hull damage is more significant. The following checks can serve as examples, but PCs may come up with other options:

- **DC 13 Strength (Acrobatics)** check to hold timbers in place despite gushing seawater.

- Two simultaneous **DC 12 Intelligence (Survival)** checks while using carpenter's tools to brace and patch the hole, made with advantage if the PC is proficient with these tools.
- **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check to discern which timbers are still sound versus those that need to be cut away.

## HULL (EXTERIOR)

The outside of the hull must be as smooth as possible to ensure maximum speed. An unclean hull could become home to a literal ton of barnacles, seaweed, or wood-chewing shipworms.

To be truly cleaned, a ship needs to be hauled out of the water for 2-3 days. However, some maintenance could be performed while at sea. In this case, two crew members are tied to the ship and sent overboard with wide, flat scraping spears.

Roll a d4 to determine the level of infestation on the underside of the hull. Two hours of work from two crewmembers and a successful **DC 12 Strength (Athletics)** check is needed to clean each level of infestation. In addition, 1d4 **dire barnacles** are present at levels 3 and 4. These are foot-long, spiky versions of their harmless cousins that fight back if scraped. They also secrete a chemical that has a 20% chance every hour of luring a **reef shark** (CR ½; MM, p 336).

An extended encounter involving hull cleaning involves pirates that have enlisted the help of local mermaids to slow down passing ships. The mermaids affix a small "sail" of woven kelp to the underside of the hull, causing the ship to be noticeably slower. Finding the sail is obvious to anyone looking under the ship, but the structure is held on with sovereign glue. A successful **DC 20 Strength** check is needed to break the small mast and the kelp sail (AC 11) disintegrates after 15 points of damage.

## SAILS

These giant sheets of canvas (or leather in some cases) must be completely free of rips and tears to fully harness the power of the wind. Sailors inspect all sails several times a day for any such defects. To adequately inspect a sail, a PC must succeed on a **DC 8 Intelligence (Investigation)** check. On a failure, any rips (if they exist) go undetected, potentially causing problems during the next tense situation.

A rip in a sail can be patched in a minute with a successful **DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check aided with the right tools (needle, thread, patch) or by using the *mend* cantrip. Otherwise, the patching takes 10 minutes. Most captains invest in crew who can cast the *mend* cantrip. Just accessing the sails could be hazardous, triggering other checks (see 'Rigging').

Extra sails are also stored below-decks, rolled carefully and tucked into the driest compartments (mildew and mold are sail-killers). Shipboard vermin love chewed sailcloth for their nests, so constant vigilance is needed to keep them at bay. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Nature)** check locates signs of vermin (droppings, dirty footprints) and allows a PC to track them to their nest.

## DECKS

Scrubbing (aka swabbing) the decks daily with seawater keeps slippery mildew and fungus from growing on its surface; a slippery deck is obviously treacherous, and fungus could rot the wood. A team of 4 sailors typically scrubs the entire deck every day.

On the PCs ship, one of the officers was derelict in overseeing this activity over the last month and a problem has "grown": a **black pudding** (CR 4; MM, p 241) resides in the cracks and spaces among the deck planking. The pudding is currently harmless, kept in check by the zealous, triple-scrubbing regimen now maintained by the officer. But if the deck isn't scrubbed for an entire day, the pudding forms

that night and attacks sleeping sailors. The officer is very eager to hide his past mistake. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Nature)** check while inspecting the deck identifies tiny beads of black pudding.

## DIRE BARNACLE

*small beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14

**Hit Points** 8 (2d4+4)

**Speed** 5 ft. (swim)

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STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	6 (-3)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	5 (-3)	3 (-4)

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**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Strong Grip You've Got There.** If threatened, the barnacle clamps tightly to the nearest surface, requiring a successful DC 14 Strength check to pry it free.

### ACTIONS

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**Bone harpoon.** *Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.*

## AQUA500

By Jon Green

Map: Jeff C. Stevens

*Estimated Run Time: 30 to 60 minutes*

*Appropriate for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> level*

**NOTES:** DMs and PCs who have played through Tomb of Annihilation will recognize the race format from the dinosaur races of Port Nyanzaru. Feel free to reference that book to expand on this encounter, or to add a betting element

### BACKGROUND

The greatest annual sporting event in Triton society, the Aqua500, is a race through the trenches on the ocean floor in chariots pulled by teams of aquatic mounts. Every year, racing teams sponsored by wealthy Tritons, Sea Elves, Merfolk, and Marid face the dangers of the ocean floor for gold and glory.

### PLOT HOOK

**Jolyn Vuuranath**, a Triton baroness, is desperately seeking racers after her own team was suddenly taken sick (Jolyn suspects foul play, but has no time to investigate before the race). Rather than withdraw her entry and lose status in Triton society she seeks new racers to fill her teams' entry in the prestigious Aqua500. With all known racers already pledged to other teams and nobles, Jolyn is forced to turn to the player characters as a last resort.

Jolyn needs to sponsor at least one character as a racer to save face, but can sponsor up to 5 racers, each with their own underwater chariot and mounts chosen from the Undersea Mount table below. A typical race has 8-20 total racers.

Rewards for winning can be either monetary, or a favor from Jolyn (DMs, tailor to your campaign)

### UNDERWATER MOUNT

The Aqua500 runs a length of 500 feet twisting and turning through the trenches and underwater caves on the ocean floor. To determine the race order each round, players must make a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check based on the Skill DC value for their Underwater Mount. If the check is successful, that player advances in the race! Add the first number in the Speed column to a running total to determine distance traveled. If the Animal Handling check is unsuccessful, the racer makes no progress that round. If unsuccessful, the racer makes no progress that round. When each round ends, if one or more racer's distance traveled is greater than 500, the race ends. If more than one racer has a total distance greater than 500 then the racer that has the highest distance wins. It is possible for racers to tie.

Each racer has a seaweed lash they can use to whip their mount to try and move at the higher listed speed. If they do, the Animal Handling check is made with advantage, but the mount must make a successful **DC 10 Constitution check** at the end of the round or its speed is halved for the remainder of the round.

At the end of a round, if a mount is within 50' of another mount they can attack each other (See the Underwater Mount table for all relevant combat statistics). If a creature has half or fewer of its starting hit points, the rider makes Animal Handling checks with disadvantage.

The racers are unable to attack each other or other mounts, as they have other worries to deal with. Every 100-200 feet, racers may encounter underwater hazards. DMs are free to create their own hazards or use those listed below. Each hazard has a recommended skill check or saving throw associated with it, but DMs should reward clever players for quick thinking.

## USING THE MAP

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The included map gives you an idea of the racecourse's layout. The map isn't required to run the encounter but you might find it helps describe the course as the racers navigate the twists, turns, and hazards.

## HAZARDS

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The following are some hazards the racers may experience:

### A: WHIRLPOOL

A swirling vortex has appeared in the middle of the track. Racers must make a **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature)** check. On a success, the racer is propelled forward and adds 40 feet to their total distance traveled. If the check fails by 5 or less, the racer does not gain or lose any movement. Failure by more than 5 subtracts 30 from the racer's travel.

### B: GIANT CLAM

The race will take riders by a bed of giant clams, each with a lustrous pearl inside. Passing riders may attempt a **DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check to grab a pearl. Failure means the clam slams shut on the mount, decreasing the mounts' movement by half the next round and dealing 5(1d10) bludgeoning damage.

### C: SIREN

A nearby siren's song calls out to the riders, luring them away from the track. Each rider must make a **DC 11 Wisdom Saving Throw** or lose their next turn seeking out the siren's song

### D: REEF SHARKS

(only targets mounts that have been injured) – Ravenous Reef Sharks, drawn by the smell of blood have come to investigate. Riders may attempt to scare them off with a **DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation)** check or lose them amongst the caves and seaweed with a **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth)** check. Failure means your mount is attacked. +6 to hit, 9 (1d12+3) slashing damage.

### E: SUNKEN TREASURE

A chest filled with glimmering gold sits in a forgotten grotto just off the course. Racers may spend 30 feet of their mounts' movement this turn to try and grab a handful of gold from the chest. The first racer that attempts to do so is attacked by the chest, which is a **Mimic**. +5 to hit, 11 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage to the mount.

### F: JELLYFISH

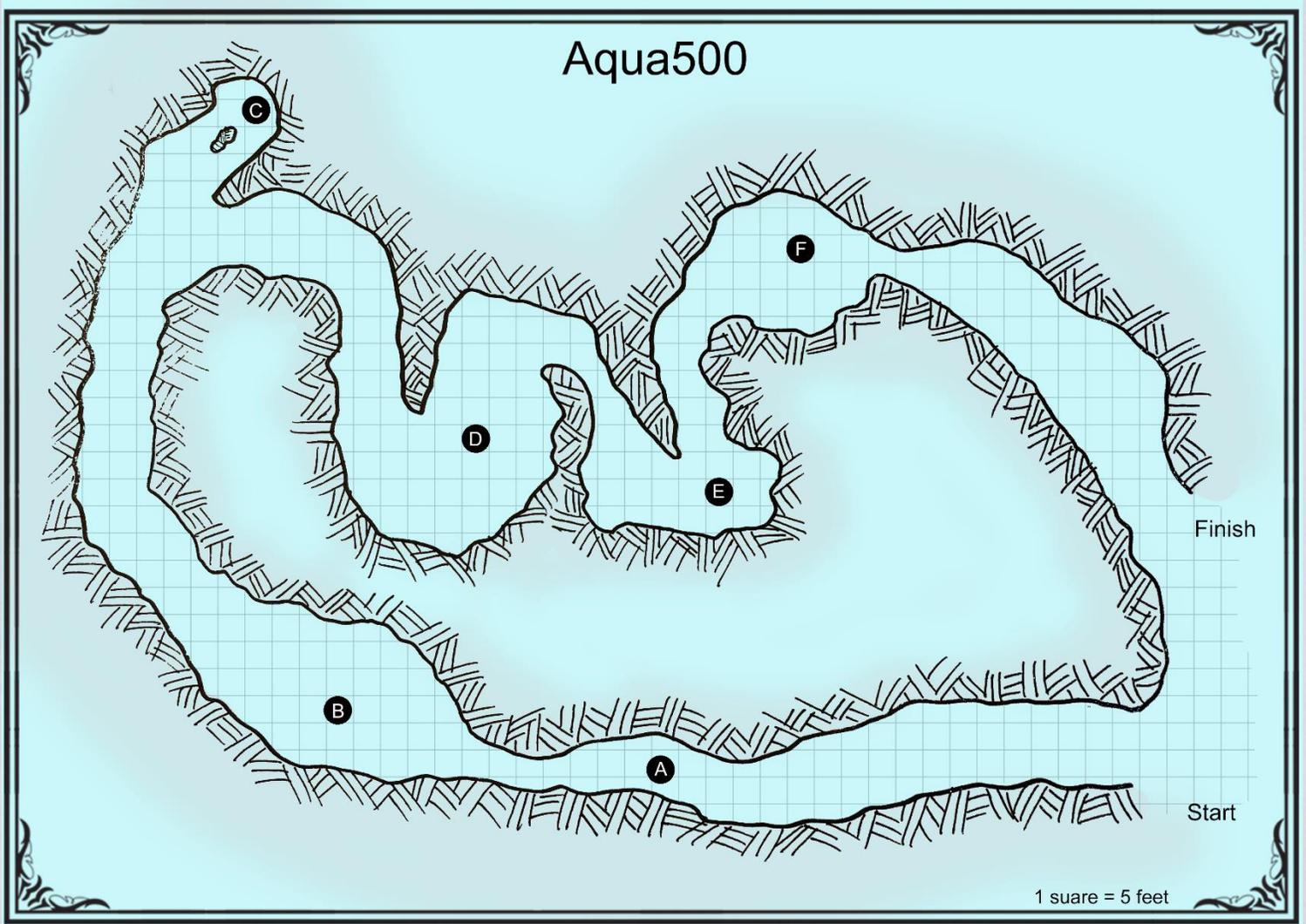
A swarm of stinging jellyfish have moved onto the track. Racers must make a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check to find a path through the jellyfish. If the check fails by less than 5, the mount takes 1d10 piercing damage. Failure by 5 or more deals 1d10 damage, the mount makes no progress this round, and must repeat the check the following round.

## AVAILABLE MOUNTS

Creature	Speed	Skill Check DC	AC	Hit Points	Attack	Damage	Constitution
Giant Sea Horse	30/60	8	13	16	+3	4 (1d6+1)	11 (+0)
Dolphin	45/90	12	13	25	+4	6 (1d8+2)	11(+0)
Giant Octopus	40/70	12	11	52	+5	10 (2d6+3)	13 (+1)
Giant Electric Eel	30/60	14	13	25	+5	4 (1d8)**	13(+1)
Killer Whale, young	50/75	15	12	45	+6	11 (2d10)	13 (+1)
Hunter Shark	45/90	14*	12	45	+6	13 (2d10+2)	15(+2)
Plesiosaur	50/80	16*	13	50	+6	11 (2d6+4)	16 (+3)
Giant Crocodile	45/90	18*	14	55	+8	15 (2d10+4)	17 (+3)

\*skill checks are made at disadvantage if a creature within 50' is at half its hit points or fewer

\*\*A creature attacked by an electric eel must make a **DC 10 Constitution Saving Throw** or be stunned for 1 round



## CHASING OCKUE

By Maxine Henry  
Map: Jean Lorber

Estimated run-time: 90 to 120 minutes.  
Adventure suited to 5 players, APL 2

### BACKGROUND

Amolgula is an agricultural, halfling village in Trocophorn Marsh, where villagers grow a lotus-type plant in the deep tidal creeks. The village consists of raised wooden dwellings with narrow wrap-around porches, as the area floods when the tide is high.

The village council is made up of **Noad** (nonbinary halfling), **Timm** (female halfling), and **Lulit** (male halfling). At the time of this adventure, Timm and Lulit are currently away on business.

### PLOT HOOK

**Charis** (male halfling) is the resident marshwitch. He helps with small weather tweaks, and aquaculture techniques, but has the bad habit of shape-changing villagers who get on his nerves. The village tolerates this “eccentricity” since the shape changing never lasts long and is more of an annoyance than something to take up before the village council.

However, the village bard, **Ockue** (nonbinary halfling), is missing, and was last seen near Charis’ house. The village council asks the party to find Ockue, preferably in their own shape.

**Note: Unless specified, all DCs are 13.**

## MISSING PERSON’S REPORT

The marsh air is salt-scented and humid. A breeze makes the chimes in the open window sing, as Noad offers the party glasses of the local small beer before getting down to business. Read or summarize the following:

“I’m glad you’ve come to help us. We’re a small village, and all of our members are important.”

Noad gives the party the following information, as well as directions to Charis’ house:

- Ockue was last seen two days ago near Charis’ house
- Charis has a habit of turning villagers into aquatic or semi-aquatic critters, but it’s usually a very short-term transformation
- It’s probably nothing, but the village would like their bard and their marshwitch back, preferably unharmed

As compensation, room and board while the party is in the village is offered, as well as 50 gp for the group.

### HOUSE ON THE EDGE

Charis’ house sits over part of a tidal creek and while the door is locked, opening it is relatively easy (**DC 13 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools**).

The one-room house is 2 ft. off the ground, and measures 20 ft. by 15 ft. with a 5 ft. ceiling. It contains the following:

- A table piled high with illustrated books on various fish
- A curtained off toilet area containing a clean chamber pot
- A cupboard for bedding
- A fireplace and hearth (cold) with cooking utensils
- A washbowl on a stand

**Intelligence (Investigation), or Wisdom (Perception)** checks reveal a secret (unlocked) compartment in the washbowl stand. A **Dexterity** save halves the damage from a poison spray trap 6 (1d4 + 4 poison damage). Depending on the party-strength, the poison damage can increase up to 14 (3d4 + 4) as needed.

There is a notebook in the compartment with the following information:

- Sketches of villagers and marsh animals, with lines matching villager to animal and notes about the appropriateness of the choice
- Notes about duration and size limitations on shape-changing magics

On the porch outside are empty glass containers of various sizes and hand nets used for catching bugs or small animals.

**Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation)** checks in the house find traces of marsh mud and salt on the porch nearest to the water. **Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Nature)** checks reveal that there was a container on the porch for a while, containing water and perhaps other things, but that it spilled.

**Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Investigation)** checks find halfling tracks that head further out into the marsh. While at high tide the water covers the entire marsh and comes into the village. However, the water only ends up being a couple inches deep and moves slow enough that tracking is possible, if difficult.

Successful checks allow the party to track Charis through the creek system. In one of the creeks, they encounter a group of 7 **Giant Crabs** (CR 1/8; MM, p 324). The creek is about 30 feet wide. The crabs are currently feeding. While the party can engage in combat, it is avoidable since the crabs prefer their meals slow and/or dead.

#### TACTICS

- Once 4 crabs are dead, the rest flee
- If the party is strong, increase the number of Giant Crabs to 9. If the party is weak, have the crabs run instead of fight

#### NOTES:

- Post-encounter, **Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation)** checks reveal that the crabs were feeding on the remains of a dragonborn, but the method of death is uncertain
- **Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Medicine)** checks reveal that the dragonborn has been there for a couple tendays, and probably has been washed further into the marsh on the tides

#### SKILLS TO THE TEST

It takes a day for the party to find Charis at the edge of the marsh where it meets open water. Charis freely admits that:

- He shape-changed Ockue into a scorpionfish with a decent swim speed
- Ockue jumped out of the container on his porch, and into the creek system
- Ockue has been collected by a family of traveling **Merfolk** (CR 1/8; MM, p 218) and Charis doesn't have anything to trade to get them back

Charis asks the party for help, and if the party accepts, Charis offers *potions of water breathing* to any party members who need it. These potions have been modified so that after drinking them, the party members can also speak normally underwater.

"I'm glad I was prepared for emergencies. It's a house-blend though, so it might tingle on the way down."

The merfolk family, consisting of 9 adults and 3 younglings, don't want to let Ockue go; whenever Ockue's fins move, music is heard.

**"We'll be the envy of the other family groups!"**

To get Ockue back, the party needs to complete 2 of the 3 options below:

- **Charisma (Persuasion)** checks to convince the merfolk that Ockue wasn't originally like this, which makes the merfolk sympathetic to their cause
- Construction of something that makes music underwater to take Ockue's place
- "Play a game" where a party member takes the dodge action only, and a **Giant Seahorse** (CR ½; MM, p 328) attempts to charge. (All damage done by the Giant Seahorses are non-lethal, and merfolk are on hand to stabilize and heal.)

**NOTES:** For the "Play a game" option, any other fun "game" can be used instead.

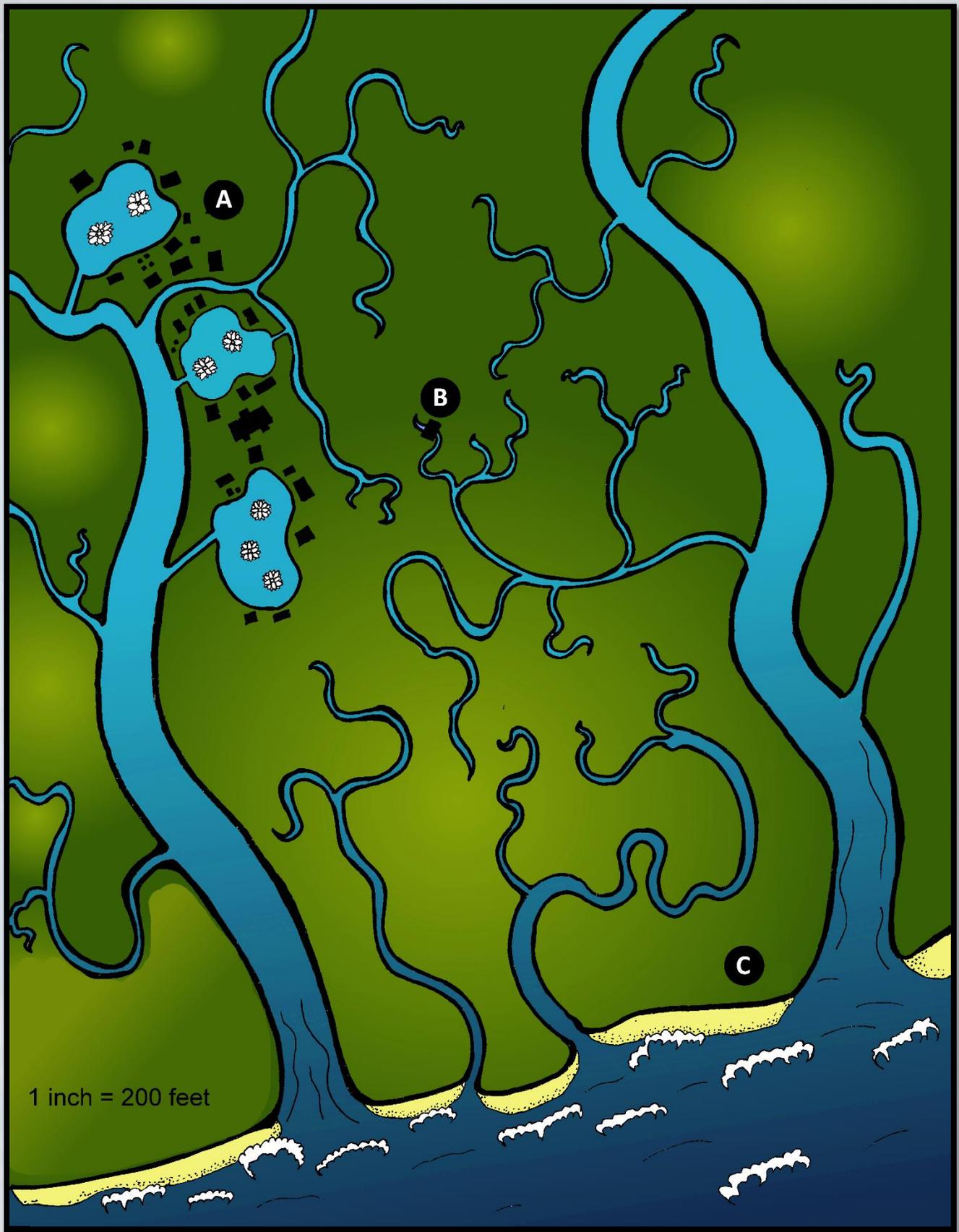
If the party attacks the merfolk, they scatter and dash using their reaction, taking Ockue with them. Effectively, Ockue is lost, and Charis continues to search on his own, rejecting the party's help if it is offered.

If the party is successful in their negotiations, once they have Ockue, Charis admits that he's not sure how Ockue stayed shape-changed so long or if he'll be able to undo the process. 3 successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Wisdom (Insight)** checks while assisting Charis does the trick.

## CONCLUSION

Ockue, now in their regular shape, promises to roast Charis in song for the trauma of traveling through the creeks as a fish and being trapped by merfolk, and at the same time is thrilled that they have so much more material to work with.

The entire group returns uneventfully to the village where they receive their rewards: 50 gp, and a *potion of water breathing* (from Charis). If the party members bring up the body of the dragonborn, Noad admits that lately the marsh has become less safe. They ask for the location of the body and say that they'll send a group to retrieve and bury it.



# THE CURSE OF CAPTAIN

## WINDCALL

By Jean Headley

Art: Courtesy Wizards of the Coast

Map: Mobrai Rox

*Pearl Meadow is a small coastal village. The people make their living mostly through fishing, but the wealth of the village comes from a carefully maintained oyster bed. Two or three times a year, the pearls are sold, and the money used to purchase things the villagers need and can't make themselves. Primarily metal goods such as pots, needles, knives, and fishing hooks.*

*However, a vengeful spirit has taken control of the village and, unless the adventurers can help, her actions may destroy the villagers.*

### BACKGROUND

The current headman of the village, **Baruch**, is an ambitious man. He grew up hearing stories from his mother about the wider world, and the wealth of great cities. Eventually, he grew discontented with what the village had to offer. Baruch hatched a daring plan to gain the riches and luxuries he'd only ever heard about. He recruited a few like-minded people from among the villagers, and they set about arranging the shipwreck of a passing vessel.

They got their shipwreck, but not as they had wished. First, the storm that brought in the ship was incredibly violent. Instead of sinking the ship in fairly-shallow water where the cargo could be easily "salvaged", the storm dragged the wreckage up the coast and the cargo sank to far more dangerous depths. Second, the captain, **Arianna Windcall**, was a skilled weather mage oath-bound to the powerful Lady Nerissa.

Arianna, even as a spirit, is attempting to fulfill her oath, and is extracting vengeance as well. She has possessed Headman Baruch, and

each night she calls to her crew. Each crew member possesses a villager. Using the possessed bodies, they are slowly recovering the cargo belonging to Lady Nerissa. They choose different villagers each night so as not to kill their hosts, but the work is beginning to take its toll. Four of the weaker villagers have already succumbed.

### PLOT HOOKS

- The heroes stop in the village to rest for a night, only to have strange noises and activity disturb their sleep.
- The mayor of a nearby town is concerned; they're not getting their usual consignment of fish, oysters, and pearls. He will pay the party 50 gold if they'll go find out what's going on and send word.
- The heroes have been sent to determine the fate of the *Sea Sprite*. Lady Nerissa has grown very concerned that Captain Windcall and the *Sea Sprite* have not returned. She received a *sending* from Captain Windcall two weeks ago stating they were heading to Pearl Meadow to take on pearls and fresh water, and there has been no word since. Lady Nerissa will pay 200 gold per person if they return with the *Sea Sprite*, or with proof of the *Sea Sprite's* demise. Captain Windcall's logbook would be sufficient.

### PEARL MEADOW

The village is a collection of circular homes in a semi-circle facing the beach. There is a larger building that serves as the headman's home and a common hall for the village. There is also a large square building of new construction just north of the cluster of homes. On closer inspection, the heroes will find that the new building has neither embellishments nor windows. Its large front door is locked. Although there are no guards, the heroes will be closely watched if they approach the building without

stealth. If they attempt to pick or break the lock, half a dozen of the villagers will appear to stop them.

To approach the building unnoticed (during the day) requires a **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth)** check. Picking the lock requires a **DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools**. The simple iron lock could be broken. It has an AC of 19 and 5 hit points. However, the noise is likely to attract attention.

If the heroes wait until nightfall to investigate the building, they will discover that it is impossible to approach unnoticed because there are villagers coming and going from shortly after sundown until shortly before dawn.

During the day, the heroes may try to intimidate or question the villagers in order to get answers. Unfortunately, the villagers are far more frightened of Captain Windcall than they are frightened of the heroes. A successful **DC 18 Charisma (Intimidation)** check will get a terrified response such as, "Please! It wasn't our fault! It was Headman Baruch! I don't want to be chosen. I don't want to be chosen!" The subject will then run away.

The heroes may try to persuade the villagers to divulge information. A successful **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion)** check will get various replies:

- The Headman made a terrible mistake and the village is paying for it. I just hope no one else dies.
- Four people have died already, worked to death. Old Nestor, poor Justina what with that baby and all, Markos, and harmless old Helene. We're all going to die if we don't get some rest soon.
- We're being forced to work all night. Every night! The ghosts, they come. It's terrible. Terrible! Baruch is to blame! May the gods damn his soul.
- We just wanted something more from life. We sabotaged the lighthouse. We

were going to salvage what we could from the wreck. Well, we're salvaging it all right. For the Captain! May the gods forgive us.

As sundown approaches, the villagers become more and more nervous. With a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** check, a character knows the villagers are frightened.

At sundown, the heroes must succeed on a **DC 13 Charisma** saving throw or be possessed by a **ghost** (CR 4; MM, p 147) of the crew of the Sea Sprite.

After sundown, speaking to the villagers is much harder. There is a 50% chance that anyone the heroes approach is possessed by one of the Sea Sprite's ghosts. Possessed villagers will be largely unresponsive, saying only that they have to get the work done. Neither persuasion nor intimidation will sway them from their purpose.

Villagers that weren't chosen for the night will mostly likely be in their beds, trying to get what sleep they can. They know that they will be working the next night.

### HEADMAN BARUCH

If the heroes go to speak with Headman Baruch, they will find him in one of three places.

- In the morning he is at his home.
- After noon, he is at the warehouse, cataloging the salvage.
- After sundown, he is at the salvage site overseeing the efforts there.

No matter where or when he is found, Baruch moves and speaks with a distracted air. He has an unearthly light in his eyes, and an unhealthy pallor to his skin. He is easily angered, but quickly returns to whatever he is doing and ignores the source of his anger. This is a result of his possession by Captain Windcall.

A character who succeeds on a **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception)** or **Intelligence**

**(Investigation)** check will realize that the book Baruch is using to log the salvage is Captain Windcall's logbook. Characters with proficiency in **water vehicles** will have advantage on the roll.



The possessed Baruch will respond to the heroes with brusque courtesy. However, the more they question him about what's going on, the ruder he becomes. After three questions, the heroes will have to succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check or be summarily dismissed. Each question after that will increase the DC by 2. Eventually, Baruch will summon

two of his henchmen to “escort” the heroes away.

Baruch makes it clear that he is busy. The whole village is busy and if the heroes could move on, that would be great. He will not admit to his true nature (that of Arianna's ghost) nor will he discuss the nightly possession. He will dismiss such talk as frivolous. He will admit that the village is engaged in salvaging as much as possible from the Sea Sprite. He will tell the heroes that it is the village's responsibility since they were the ones who neglected the lighthouse and caused the shipwreck. If the heroes mention deliberate sabotage, Baruch will get very angry, and summon his henchmen to “escort” them away. (The henchmen will take the heroes at least a hundred feet away and tell them, not politely, to stay away from the Headman and the salvage operation.)

The salvage site is a fifteen-minute brisk walk north of the village. The beach is littered with broken rope, tatters of sail, broken and discarded boxes, barrels, and crates. It's more than just normal flotsam and jetsam from a shipwreck, as it also includes personal and mundane items discarded from the salvage operation.

During the day, the area is abandoned. At night, every possessed villager is here, either going out in the village boats to dive for more salvage, or sifting through the recovered items for anything valuable.

## **BREAKING THE CURSE OF CAPTAIN WINDCALL**

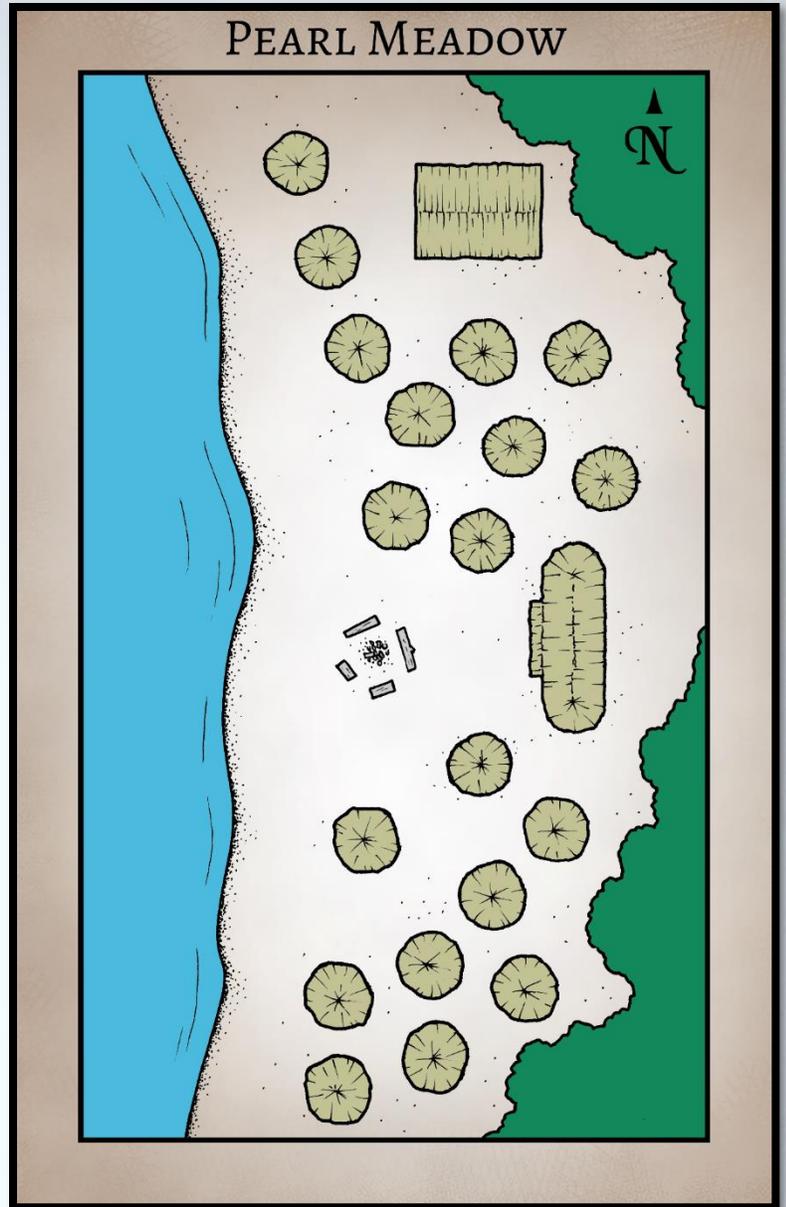
Though Captain Windcall's oath of fealty is strong enough to bring her back from the dead, each night she is defeated leaves her a little weaker. Given a respite, she will regain her energy. If the heroes can defeat Arianna's ghost three nights in a row, they can sever her link to the Material Plane, and send her spirit to its final rest. Though Arianna would prefer her crew continue to work on recovering the cargo,

if she drops to less than half her health, she will summon up to four crew members to assist her. Two will be possessing villagers and two will be incorporeal. The crew have the stats of a **ghost** (CR 4; MM, p 147).

The heroes can try to assist in bringing the cargo to shore. Each night the heroes help, Arianna will give the villagers the night to rest. The heroes will need to make successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** checks to swim down to the cargo, tie the ropes around the containers, and return. The village has recovered about half of the cargo in the past ten days. With the help of the heroes, they can complete their work in another week.

**NOTE:** If the heroes choose to help recover the cargo, consider making this more challenging by adding encounters with dangerous sea life such as sharks, or a giant octopus.

Alternately, the heroes can promise to bring help from another town or village to retrieve the cargo. With a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check, Arianna will agree, and give the villagers a one-month reprieve. However, she will also cast *geas* on one of the party members to ensure they fulfill their end of the bargain. The hero must succeed on a **DC 14 Wisdom** save or be charmed by Arianna for 30 days.



## ARIANNA WINDCALL

Medium undead, lawful neutral

**Armor Class** 11

**Hit Points** 65 (10d8 + 20)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

**Damage Resistances** acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** cold, necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone restrained

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Dwarvish

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Ethereal Sight.** Arianna can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when she is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

**Incorporeal Movement.** Arianna can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. She takes 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage if she ends her turn inside an object.

**Spellcasting.** Arianna is an 9th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Arianna has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *blade ward*, *dancing lights*, *mending*, *true strike*

1st level (4 slots): *chromatic orb*, *fog cloud*, *shield*, *witch bolt*

2<sup>nd</sup> level (3 slots): *gust of wind*, *hold person*, *locate object*

3<sup>rd</sup> level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *counterspell*, *sleet storm*

4<sup>th</sup> level (3 slots): *conjure minor elementals*, *control water*

5<sup>th</sup> level (1 slot): *animate objects*, *geas*

## ACTIONS

**Withering Touch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6+3) necrotic damage.

**Etherealness.** Arianna enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. She is visible on the Material Plane while she is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, but she can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

**Horrifying Visage.** Each non-dead creature within 60 feet of Arianna's ghost that can see it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more the target also ages 1d4 x 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it the target is immune to Arianna's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a *greater restoration* spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

**Possession (Recharge 6).** One humanoid that Arianna can see within 5 feet of her must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by her; the ghost then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. Arianna now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. Arianna can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead and she retains her alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. She otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, Arianna ends it as a bonus action, or Arianna is turned or forced out by an effect like the *dispel good and evil* spell. When the possession ends, Arianna reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to Arianna's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

## THE HALF MOON

By R P Davis

Artist: Luiz Prado

Map: Dyson Logos's "The Wreck of the Wight's Shadow," redrawn to remove the holes in the hull.

Estimated run-time: 30-60 minutes

*The Half Moon* is a combat encounter optimized for five characters of 7th level.

### BACKGROUND

The characters are sailing aboard the Half Moon, a cargo ship which occasionally takes passengers.

The *Half Moon* is a single-masted wooden cog, 70 feet on the waterline and 25 feet across her beam. Her bow rises into a figurehead of a mermaid pointing one arm ahead and up the bowsprit. Her stern rises into a sterncastle over the master's quarters. She flies a single lateen-rigged sail from her raked mainmast. Her crew are all expert sailors who know well the local waters.

The heroes have booked passage on the Half Moon to travel from one place to the other as part of their main quest. The ship also carries a cargo of textiles, wine, and preserved meats for trade along the coast, as well as other passengers.

One of those other passengers booked passage with the intent of sending the Half Moon's passengers and crew to a watery grave. This foul necromancer plans to summon a pack of **lacedons**—aquatic ghouls—to devour everyone on the ship but him, so he can steal her and use the fine ship to his own foul ends.

At your option, another passenger can be an agent of your story's main villain, dispatched to watch the heroes and, if possible, hinder them if their activities might impede the villain's plans.

### PLOT HOOK

The encounter begins *in media res*.

### NPCs

**Astolfo.** Astolfo is a **necromancer** (NE human, VGtM p 217) who is madly devoted to a capricious deity of the sea (in the Forgotten Realms, this can be Umberlee or Talos). He is short, portly, and squat, quite hairy except for his bald head, and always smells of stale sweat. If questioned, he claims to be transporting rare and precious seeds to a town one port beyond where the heroes plan to disembark. This cover story also explains the small, ornately-carved wooden box he always carries, which contains his *circlet of undead summoning* (see New Magic Items).

**Kirsa Mustayne.** Owner, master, and commander of the Half Moon, Kirsa is an extremely competent half-elf woman who brooks no nonsense from either passengers or crew (treat as LN **knight**, MM p. 347).

**Volkhard.** A hulking, middle-aged human man, Volkhard has been Kirsa's first mate for years and, if anything, runs an even tighter ship than his captain, to whom he is utterly devoted (treat as LN **veteran**, MM p. 350).

**Haraga (optional).** Posing as a jolly, annoyingly curious tourist, Haraga (NE halfling **master thief**, VGtM p. 216) is the spy sent to keep tabs on the heroes. Whenever one or more of the heroes is above-decks and not obviously busy Haraga tries to engage them in small talk, intending to

draw out of them information he can pass on to your campaign's main villain.

## THE HALF MOON

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Only those areas of the ship which come into play are described.

### MAIN DECK

The main deck has no features of interest other than the grated hatch which leads to the hold, and a door which leads to the aft quarters.

#### AREA 1: STERNCASTLE

The after part of the main deck in the sterncastle is off limits to passengers unless accompanied by a crewmember. A short passage leads farther aft.

**Captain's Quarters.** The largest compartment aboard, this is Kirsa's private room. In a locked box on the starboard side is a supply of 6 *potions of greater healing* and a jar of *Keoghtom's ointment*. Another locked box contains the ship's funds, which total 935 gp in assorted coins and trade bars.

**Secure Storage.** The small compartments to either side of the passage are secured with heavy wooden hatches which are always locked. Kirsa and Volkhard hold the keys.

### MIZZEN DECK

#### AREA 2: HEAD

Far forward is the toilet facility for crew and passengers.

#### AREA 3: PASSENGER QUARTERS

All the way aft is the compartment usually used as crew quarters but converted to house passengers when any are aboard. The crew

crowd their hammocks into the forward area around the gangways which lead below. There is no privacy in the passenger quarters and no security unless the passengers provide it themselves.

#### AREA 4: GALLEY & GOAT LOCKER

On side of the fore-and-aft passage are smaller rooms. Starboard (4A) is the galley and pantry. Port (4BA) is the sail locker and Volkhard's quarters.

### ORLOP DECK

Barely above the bilges, this is the main cargo hold.

#### AREA 5: AFT

Aft is the brig (used now for storing cargo).

#### AREA 6: KEEP YOUR SECRETS

Forward is a secret room known only to Kirsa and Volkhard, used to smuggle such goods as they might be tempted to carry.

## THE VOYAGE BEGINS

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Read or paraphrase the following:

The Half Moon weighs anchor and sets sail on the morning tide. It is a pleasant day, the winds are favorable and the ship tacks back and forth through patches of mist. Soon, the coast is lost to view astern.

The day's travel is uneventful. Sailors busily scamper fore and aft, stowing gear and cargo and performing maintenance like coiling rope and folding sails. Food is served at sundown, when the watch changes.

## General Features

**Terrain.** The sea.

**Weather.** Cool breezes above-decks, warm and humid below.

**Light.** Bright sunlight above-decks. Below, the decks are lit by *driftglobes* providing dim light.

**Smells and Sounds.** Above, salt tang on the breeze, the cries of a wheeling gull, and the flap and sigh of wind in the rigging. Below, sweaty sailors and bilge, with waves slapping on the hull and the creaking of a wooden sailing ship under way.

**Development.** During the day, an alert adventurer (**passive Perception 15 or higher**) notices Astolfo sneaking down the ladder into the orlop deck. Before the hero can pursue, Astolfo reemerges. If questioned, he says he was checking on his belongings. This is half true, because he was fetching a nautical chart he needs to correctly time when to summon the lacedons. Insight checks to determine his honesty are made with disadvantage.

If a hero tries to inspect Astolfo's sea-chest, it is locked and trapped.

The chest contains his spellbooks (which contain the spells listed in his stat block as well as 1d6 others of your choice), 2 changes of clothing, an assortment of nautical charts pertinent to the coastline in the heroes' adventure area, 2 *potions of greater healing*, and 400 gp in assorted coins and gems.

## Acid-Spraying Trap

*Simple trap (Levels 5-10, moderate threat)*

**Trigger.** When a creature tries to open the chest without opening the lock, the trap triggers, causing the chest to release a 30-foot cone of acid. The lock can be picked with a successful **DC 16 Dexterity** check using **thieves' tools**.

**Effect.** A creature within the trap area must succeed on a **DC 16 Dexterity** saving throw or take 22 (4d10) acid damage. A creature struck by the acid takes 11 (2d10) acid damage at the end of its next turn.

**Countermeasures.** A successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** check notices the trap. A successful **DC 16 Dexterity** check using **thieves' tools** disarms it. Unsuccessfully disarming the trap triggers it.

**Development.** A character keeping an eye on Astolfo after nightfall sees him on the main deck, furtively glancing at a nautical chart and glancing at the stars, muttering under his breath. If questioned, he says he's trying to find a shipwreck. Again, this is half true, for the shipwreck contains the lacedons he intends to summon. Again, Astolfo's partial truths cause insight checks to be made with disadvantage.

## COLD HANDS FROM BELOW

After nightfall, read or paraphrase:

The seas are calm, and the Half Moon is making good way, sailing a reach on following seas. The motion of the sea is soothing and the breeze refreshing. The cloudless night sky sparkles with brilliant stars.

At midnight, Astolfo sneaks into the orlop deck to use his *circlet of undead summoning* to call a group of lacedons from a shipwreck far below.

## MINDING ASTOLFO

If a character is monitoring Astolfo's activities, read or paraphrase the following:

As the ship's bell chimes midnight, you see Astolfo glance about, then disappear below-decks.

The heroes can follow, making Dexterity (Stealth) checks against Astolfo's passive Perception of 11. If he notices the heroes he pretends not to notice, but when he reaches the orlop deck casts *dimension door* into the brig, which is locked from the outside. He uses the *circlet* from there.

The lock on the brig is opened with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity** check using thieves' tools.

## DEAD FROM THE DEEP

If the heroes aren't watching Astolfo, read or paraphrase the following whenever at least one hero is on the main deck:

You see one of the sailors peer over the gunwale to check one of the fishing lines the crew trail behind the ship. A ghastly, dripping, clawed hand reaches up and slashes at his throat. With a strangled cry, the sailor falls back, blood spurting from his neck! Volkhard, at the helm, shouts, "What's that? To arms, me bullies! Repel boarders!" With one hand on the wheel, he clangs the watch bell madly with the other.

In moments, 20 **lacedons** clamber onto the main deck.

## TACTICS

**Lacedons.** The lacedons attack until slain, driven by the magic of Astolfo's *circlet*. They throw any living creatures they paralyze overboard to drown. The lacedons don't attack Astolfo.

**Sailors.** The sailors are as keen to defeat the undead as the heroes, but are also afraid of them. Crew use their ranged attacks unless forced into melee. A total of 6 sailors (treat as human **bandits**, MM p. 343) fight under the orders of Kirska and Volkhard.

**Astolfo.** If a hero looks for him, Astolfo is notably absent, preferring to hide in the orlop deck until the carnage is over. Should the fight go against the lacedons, he casts *mage armor* and *stoneskin* on himself, then uses *dimension door* to teleport himself into the rigging, from where he casts spells.

**Haraga (optional).** If you include Haraga, you can decide if he joins the fight on the heroes' side, using his abilities to greatest advantage. If the fight goes against the heroes, he tries to cast off in one of the ship's two jolly boats and escape to shore.

## TREASURE

The lacedons have no treasure.

Astolfo has the *circlet* as well as the items in his sea-chest.

## SCALING THE BATTLE

**APL 11-12:** Decrease the trap damage to 28 (8d6) psychic damage. Decrease the Intelligence saving throw to DC 15.

**APL 14-15:** Decrease the trap damage to 55 (10d10) psychic damage. Increase the Intelligence saving throw to DC 17.

## CONCLUSION

If the adventurers defeat the lacedons and Astolfo, Kirsra offers them 100 gp each as well as free passage for this trip and the next they take aboard the Half Moon.

Additionally, she says they can keep Astolfo's belongings. At your discretion, this is of significant interest to Haraga, because of the powerful magic item and spellbooks they seize. This could lead to further adventures as Haraga's employers try to steal the items from the heroes.

### CIRCLET OF UNDEAD SUMMONING

*Wondrous item, legendary*

Created ages ago by forgotten yet powerful necromancers, this thin platinum band acts as a beacon to undead.

As an action, you can mentally cause the circlet to radiate, calling undead creatures within 500 feet of it toward it. These undead creatures are friendly to you, but you don't control them. The undead must see you wear the circlet to be friendly to you.

The circlet only works at night, and once you use the circlet you can't use it again until the next nightfall.

## LACEDON

*Medium undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 22 (5d8)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Int +3, Wis +4

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** Common, any known in life

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Rise from the Watery Grave.** A creature slain by a lacedon rises as a lacedon the next midnight. It hungers for the flesh of the living.

### ACTIONS

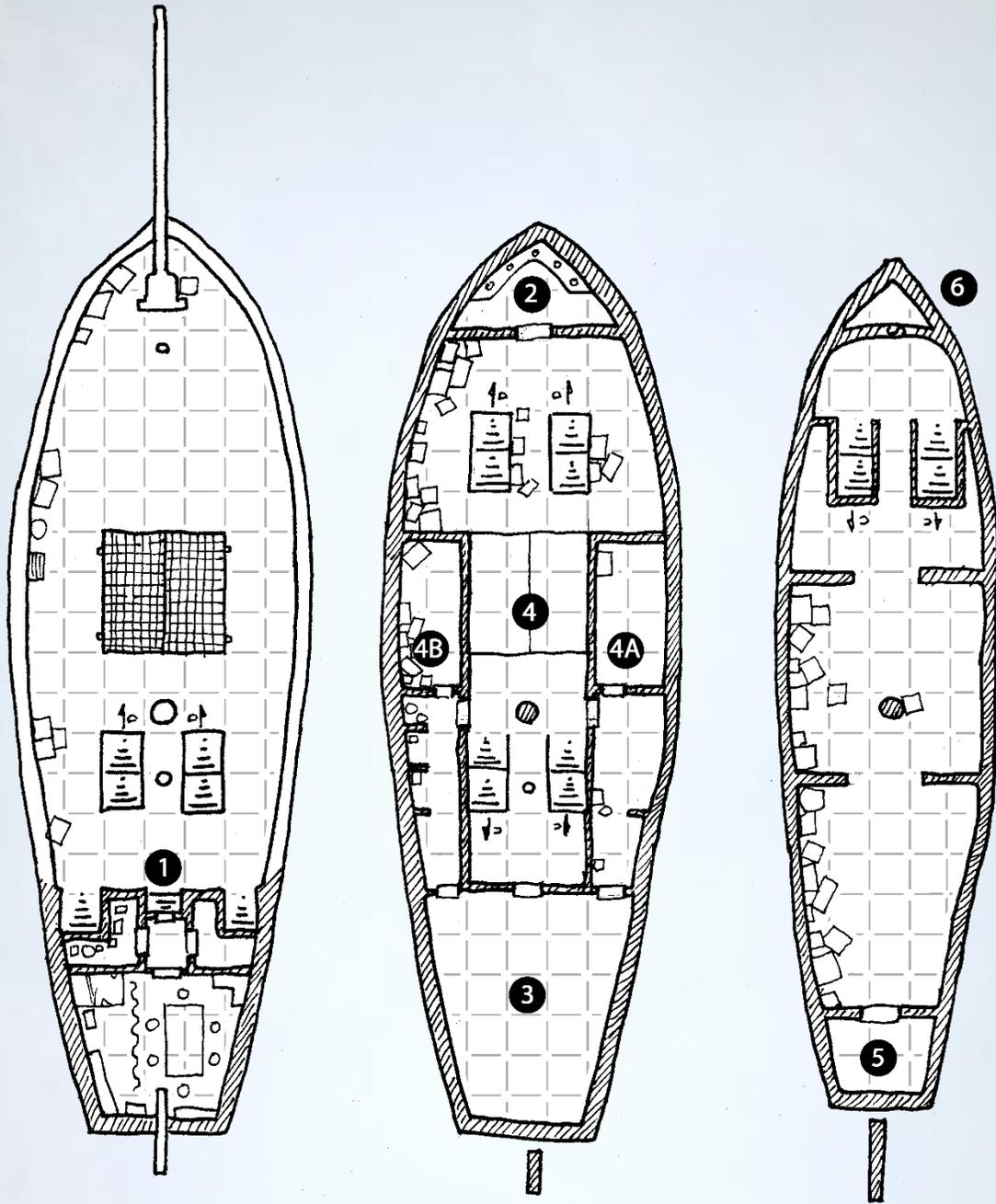
**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If this happens while in a body of water, the victim can hold its breath as per the rules for suffocating, and may drown.

### DESCRIPTION

A lacedon is the aquatic version of a ghoul, resulting from the death of a humanoid at the hands of another lacedon or a ghoul while at sea. Like their terrestrial cousins, a lacedon has needle-sharp teeth and vicious claws which rend flesh and cause paralysis. Their skin tends to range from pale white (almost translucent), to blue, to dark, inky black. They can swim as fast as they can walk, and are known to lead ships astray to cause shipwrecks so they can feed upon sailors in the water.





## HEART OF THE BRUJA

By Travis Legge

Estimated runtime 60-90 minutes

*Heart of the Bruja is a short undersea adventure designed for four to six characters of levels 3-4.*

### BACKGROUND

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The triton protectorate of Pumana has thrived beneath the waves for many generations. Though the tritons have repelled sahuagin, merrow, and all manner of undesirable invaders from their protectorate, a coven of **sea hags** (CR 2; MM, p 179) has recently made a home near Pumana. Setting their sights on corrupting the honorable tritons, the sea hags have struggled in the search for a temptation that would entice the nobles of Pumana.

Recently, the hags tried to manufacture an enemy for the tritons, in the hopes that the tritons would come to the hags for help in eliminating this threat. Using their magic, the coven summoned a giant shark to attack the triton settlement. Unfortunately, the plan backfired. The hags lost control of the giant shark and one of the sisters, Morgan Knucklebones, was injured severely by the shark. The other sisters, Agatha Toestealer and May Middenheap, fled the scene of the attack, leaving Morgan for dead.

The tritons were able to fight off the raging shark without the aid of the hags. When the shark was dispatched, the prince of the protectorate, a triton named Keros Pumanath, found the unconscious and dying Morgan. Because Keros is a virtuous and merciful soul, he stabilized Morgan and took her into his custody. At first, he intended to nurse the hag back to health so that she could be interrogated about

her coven's role in the shark attack. However, as the hag regained her senses and Keros interacted with her, he came to see something beautiful and wounded within her. Morgan, too, was surprised by their interaction. No one had ever shown her kindness or mercy without compulsion or manipulation. Against all odds, the pair seem to be taking the first stumbling steps into true love.

Naturally, the tritons do not approve of this union, nor does the hag coven. Either of these factions would be happy to use some adventurers to solve the problem for them.

### PLOT HOOKS

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The player characters can become involved in this story in a number of ways. If they are aboard a ship, their ship could be capsized, or the party members tossed overboard by a weather anomaly or by an attack from the giant shark that the hags had summoned. This puts the party at a disadvantage as they are adrift and at the mercy of the waves. In such a scenario, the tritons or the hags could rescue the party, asking for their aid in return for saving the lives of the party.

If the players are undersea explorers, they might happen upon the lair of the hags or upon a perimeter patrol of triton **scouts**. Both groups are eager to negotiate for the party's aid in separating the lovers, likely by killing whichever is not part of their own culture. The tritons and the hags are both willing to pay handsomely for the service.

### ROLEPLAYING TIPS – THE TRITONS

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If the party meets the tritons first, the adventurers are taken to an audience with King Nalos (NG male triton **noble**). Nalos, traveling

with two triton **guards** (CR 1/8; MM, p 347) swims out to meet the party outside of the triton settlement. Nalos then presents his case, pleading with the adventurers to save his son, who he claims has been ensorcelled by an evil sea hag. Nalos offers a Necklace of Adaptation and 500 gold pieces for the safe return of Prince Keros.

Should the party happen upon the sea hags, they find the ladies distraught as they search an area of coral for spell components. The sea hags immediately beg the adventurers for mercy, claiming that their sister has been abducted by evil tritons. The sea hags barter with the adventurers, offering spellcasting services, magic items (common or uncommon, likely cursed) or an exchange of favors in exchange for Morgan's safe return.

### THE LOVE SHACK

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Realizing that his people present a threat to Morgan, Keros has taken her away to a small shack his family owns at the southern edge of the protectorate. If the adventurers are acting in the employ of the tritons, Nalos can provide directions to the small home, claiming that the hag may have taken Keros there to rob the place's treasures. In reality, Nalos figures, correctly, that Keros would head to the shack for safety. If the party is acting at the behest of the hags, Agatha provides them with a dowsing rod that holds the power to lead them to Morgan. The hags and the tritons can both provide water breathing spells if the party should require them.

Once the heroes make their way to the shack, they find a small domicile constructed from coral and seashells, set inside a crevice in a large rock. The facing of the shack makes it virtually

impossible to approach the door unseen without the use of magic. When the party enters the area Keros comes out to greet them. If questioned, Keros attempts to lie about Morgan being there, making a **Charisma (Deception)** check resisted by the **Wisdom (Insight)** checks of the party. If the adventurers state that they don't believe him, or attempt to enter the home, Keros begins fighting to defend Morgan. On the second round of combat, Morgan joins the fray.

Keros and Morgan attempt to debilitate and distract the adventurers long enough to make an escape. They refuse to abandon one another, and if one of the couple are imperiled, the other panics and surrenders. If one of them are killed, the other fights to the death to avenge their fallen partner.

If the party is willing to parley with Keros and Morgan after the pair's initial attempt at deception, Keros explains his feelings for Morgan. Morgan declares her love for Keros as well and admits to being as surprised that his kindness touched her as anyone else might be. Whether the party believes that the lovers are speaking the truth of their hearts is best left to roleplaying, though the Dungeon Master may assign Ability checks to determine if the characters feel like they are being deceived.

### THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER

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Keros is absolutely in love with Morgan. There is no deception on his part, nor is he the victim of some sort of spell or enchantment. His feelings are true, genuine, and sprung from the circumstances described above. The truth of Morgan's feelings is left to the Dungeon Master to determine. While the story is written from the perspective that Morgan's heart has, in fact,

been touched by the triton prince, this need not be the case. The Dungeon Master must determine for themselves whether or not the power of love is greater than the hag's tendency toward evil and selfishness.

## **CONCLUSION**

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The adventurers are stuck in a very challenging predicament with no clear right answer. If they side with the couple, allowing Keros and Morgan to escape, they must explain themselves to whichever faction sent them after the couple. Lying to the tritons is marginally easier than lying to the hags in this instance, but neither course of action is guaranteed to be safe or fool-proof.

If the party manages to subdue their target without killing them, they are able to return to the faction that hired them and collect their reward. Neither faction wants their person of interest killed. If the adventurers kill both of the lovers, they might be better served to simply try to flee before their failure is discovered.

## KEROS PUMANATH

*Triton veteran (male triton), lawful good*

**Armor Class** 17 (splint)

**Hit Points** 58 19d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft., 30 ft. swim

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)

**Skills** Athletics +5, Perception +2

**Damage Resistances** cold

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Primordial

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Amphibious.** Keros can breathe air and water.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Keros's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 10, +2 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells:

1/day: fog cloud, gust of wind, wall of water

**Emissary of the Sea.** Keros can communicate simple ideas with beasts that can breathe water. They can understand the meaning of Keros' words, though Keros has no special ability to understand them in return.

**Guardians of the Depths.** Keros has resistance to cold damage and ignores any of the drawbacks caused by a deep, underwater environment.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Keros makes two trident attacks. If he has a dagger drawn, he can also make a dagger attack.

**Dagger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., or ranged 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

**Trident.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., or range 20/60 ft, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage if used with two hands.

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage

**Personality Traits:** Despite my noble birth, I do not place myself above other folk. We all have the same blood.

**Ideal:** Respect. Respect is due to me because of my position, but all people regardless of station deserve to be treated with dignity.

**Bond:** I am in love with someone that my family despises.

**Flaw:** By my words and actions, I often bring shame to my family.

## MORGAN KNUCKLEBONES

Morgan uses the game stats for a **sea hag** (CR 2; MM, p 179) with the following additions:

**Personality Traits:** I never volunteer information, and I respond only to questions. I laugh at my own jokes — the darker, the better.

**Ideal:** Community. Loneliness is the path to madness. That is why I have minions to keep me company. (Lawful)

**Bond:** I am in love with someone that my family despises.

**Flaw:** I will not tell a lie, but I can still say nothing, nod suggestively, or bend the truth a little to suit my needs.

## THE HORROR ADRIFT

By Patrick E. Pullen

Artist: Dean Spencer

The Horror Adrift is a short, sea-based side quest made for 4 to 6 players of 5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> level. The encounter begins while the characters travel by sea vessel, and is easy to place anywhere there is a large body of water like a sea or ocean. The encounter can be scaled up or down by adding/removing the number of undead or changing the type of undead encountered. The Mage can also be changed to a different CR caster.

### SUMMARY

The adventurers are on a sea vessel in route to their destination when they see smoke on the horizon. Investigating the smoke, they find remains of a ship which has recently been sunk. They witness the main portion of the smoldering ship go down as they sail closer. When they anchor nearby, they discover a halfling floating in a life boat. He claims to be the lone survivor of a pirate attack, however, during the night, things take a turn and the PCs find out that the halfling is not all he appears to be.

### BACKGROUND

**Hamilton Buryplot** is a halfling **necromancer** (CR 9; VGtM, p 217) that sails the seas with his undead crew attacking and robbing merchant vessels. He is in desperate need of a ship as his was just sunk after floundering for hours. The ship suffered critical damage while leaving the last port when crashing through a hidden reef barrier. Ignoring the damage and assuming it was minor, Hamilton sailed on. Hours later when the ship began to list heavily on its

starboard side, the halfling went below to discover large amounts of water had filled the cargo hold and was starting to spill into the orlop (middle deck). The halfling searches the horizon through his spyglass and notices the PC's ship. He quickly devises a plot. The necromancer commands his undead to abandon the ship and wait for the approaching craft to anchor. They are then to use the chain as means to climb up and cling onto the hull. After nightfall, they are to board the ship and kill all the passengers. Hamilton then sets his vessel on fire to alert the other ship, climbs into the life boat and waits.



### BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs are aboard a ship heading to a predetermined destination. Any character that is on deck or has an exterior view off the starboard bow can make a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check (passive Perception DC 14)** to notice smoke rising in the distance. If none of

the PCs witness the smoke, a crewman in the crow's nest will eventually call it out.

### **SMOKE & MARAUDERS**

Once the smoke has been discovered, the captain has the ship stir closer to investigate. He will anchor near the wreck searching the water for survivors.

As the wreck closes read or paraphrase the following.

The smoldering hull of what appears to be a merchant vessel slowly slips below the water's surface as your ship approaches and the captain yells for the anchor to be dropped.

Once the PC's ship comes to a stop, the undead below climb up the anchor chain and cling to the bottom of the hull. If any of the heroes enter the water and discover the undead, they will attack ahead of schedule. If the undead are defeated, the halfling will claim that they were part of the pirate crew that must have fallen overboard during the attack. He will continue to behave like a victim until the PC's ship makes landfall, then thank them for their help and casually slip away. You may be able to use him as a future villain if things go this way. If the undead go unnoticed, continue with the halfling's plan to have them attack after nightfall.

The lifeboat will float close enough to the ship for anyone on deck to discover an injured halfling curled up inside.

Read or paraphrase the following:

A lifeboat floats near and you can see that a halfling is balled up in the bottom. He looks up with a horrified expression and quickly looks around. You can see blood dripping from his forehead and soot smeared about his face "Help me, please! Hurry, before they return!"

Once pulled to safety, the halfling introduces himself as Barrel Lumpbelly a merchant from a nearby harbor town. His real name is Hamilton Buryplot, a necromancer and leader of an undead pirate crew. The halfling claims that a pirate ship attacked his vessel and sunk it. He was able to escape by hiding, then swimming to the lifeboat when the pirates sailed off. He appears panicked and is constantly looking around to see if he can see the pirate ship. He begs the crew to raise anchor and leave the area in case they return.

Barrel will play the part of the humbled victim and appear to be gracious for being saved. Noting the heroes' weapons and gear, the halfling will engage them and ask what they do? If they claim to be adventurers or mercenaries for hire, he will pretend to offer them a job when the ship gets to its destination. You can provide a ruse yourself or say that the halfling will be entering a dangerous area and needs an escort. While he questions the PCs, he is essentially sizing them up.

**NOTE:** Try to roleplay the halfling as the victim as sincere as possible to avoid the players getting suspicious. Offering them a task and payment should be enough to misdirect them. Remember that just because the halfling is not being honest, does not mean the PCs automatically get a check to see if he is or not. The exception would be if one of the PCs has an ability, ongoing spell or magic item that automatically alerts them to dishonesty. Don't allow a roll unless the player specifically states it.

If a PC does wish to see if the halfling is being deceitful it will be a contested **Wisdom (Insight)** check vs the halfling's **Charisma (Deception)**. If the lie is exposed, the halfling will try to play it off as being embarrassed by the truth and wishing not to talk about it. If that fails and the PCs push the matter, the halfling will attack and his undead minions will enter the fray the following round.

### **WAITING FOR NIGHTFALL**

After engaging the PCs for a while, the halfling will claim to be exhausted and head below deck to rest. Once night falls, he will wait for the attack to begin and join in the following round.

### **THE ATTACK BEGINS**

After nightfall, the undead will scale the sides of the ship and climb aboard the main deck in various places. They will attack anyone that is near them and fight until destroyed. The halfling necromancer will join the fight the following round.

### **Scaling the Combat**

APL 5-7: 8 skeletons (CR ¼; MM, p 272), 2 shadows (CR ½; MM, p 269), Necromancer (with 50 starting HP)

APL 8-11: 12 skeletons (CR ¼; MM, p 272), 4 shadows (CR ½; MM, p 269), Necromancer

The fight should be epic with the number of combatants. Hopefully it will be a fun and memorable encounter.



## THE LIVING STORM

By Janek Sielicki

*An elemental terror prowls the seas, a living embodiment of every danger of the vengeful waters. From afar, this terror is like any other gale; a danger, but one that can be overcome by a competent crew aboard a hearty vessel. As the storm winds blow fiercer and ever nearer incessant lightning reveals this is no normal squall. The storm wall of boiling dark clouds holds two giant, ghostly eyes which remain ever fixed upon their prey. Crew scrambling about their ships, looking into their doom will see the living body of the storm itself, humongous and seemingly made of clouds, sea, and electricity come to vengeful life. Between the thunderous booms and crashes of the storm's fury, perceptive sailors may hold on to their lives long enough to discern a rumbling rhythm, words in a language long forgotten, before their own screams and the drowning cries of their mates are swallowed by the Living Storm.*

### LEGENDS

No one really knows how the Living Storm came to be. Some old sailors — when well in their cups and actually willing to talk about such terrors — tell of a wizard suspended in the middle of the Storm. The clouds and lightning are the manifestation of his wrath. The reason for that anger, they do not know. Sembian merchants know a legend of a storm that does not come ashore. It stops a mile from the coast, sending huge waves against the land, as if throwing an elemental gauntlet in challenge to an unseen force. Sometimes a tremor shakes the sands, as if something deep underground was trying to answer that challenge. Forgotten halls on the Elven island of Evermeet bear depictions of an ancient battle between the gods, with the deities using enormous storm-creatures as their soldiers... but that would

mean there is more than one, and the thought is too terrifying to bear.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CATASTROPHE

Within the 2-mile radius of the Living Storm the rules for heavy precipitation apply, as detailed in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. If there is a substantial body of water in the area it floods after 2d10 hours of heavy rain, rising 10 feet above its banks and inundating the surrounding area. The flood advances at a rate of 100 feet per round, moving away from the body of water where it began until it reaches the edge of the area of effect; at that point, the water flows downhill (and possibly recedes back to its origin). Light structures collapse and wash away. Any Large or smaller creature caught in the flood's path is swept away. The flooding destroys crops and might trigger mudslides, depending on the terrain. The wind is strong enough to uproot weak trees and destroy light structures after at least 10 minutes of exposure. Otherwise, the rules for strong wind apply, as detailed in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### ENCOUNTERING THE STORM

The Living Storm is a deadly threat to most parties, taking it head-on is rarely a good idea. Consider the following options:

#### A BRUSH WITH DEATH

*Hard encounter for a party of APL 3*

The characters are sailing to their destination when suddenly a lookout calls a warning, "A huge storm is approaching!" the crew move to secure the ship, it's obviously not the first storm they've faced. A character who succeeds at a **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival)** check, or with passive Perception 15, notices that the weather phenomenon is actually changing course and

speeding up, as if it were chasing something on the sea. A character who succeeds at a **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **DC 23 Intelligence (History)** check recognizes the creature.

In this scenario the Storm ignores the characters' ship, which gets caught only in the Storm's periphery.

- It takes the ship 10 rounds to escape the Storm. As the encounter begins, the ship's captain can make a **DC 12 Wisdom (Water Vehicles)** check to reduce the number of the rounds required to escape by 1 per each point scored over the DC.
- Each round, gale-force winds assault the deck and each character must succeed on a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw or be swept into the sea.
- The deck is slick and very unstable, creating difficult terrain. A character who wants to move more than half their speed in a round must succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw or fall prone.
- Creatures of the sea follow the Storm, feeding on what's left in its wake. On the first rounds three **giant crabs** (CR 1/8; MM, p 324) climb aboard and try to snatch a crew member. On the second round a **giant octopus** (CR 1; MM, p 326) plops into the rigging, lashing out at anyone within range.

## A NARROW ESCAPE

*Hard encounter for a party of APL 8*

The encounter starts as above, but this time the Storm seems to be bearing straight at the characters' ship! In addition to the tests detailed above, a character can make a **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight)** check to see that the ship's captain (or another important NPC if one of the characters

is the captain) pales and looks as if they know the reason behind the Living Storm's attack.

When pressed, which requires a successful **DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidate)** check, that person reveals that they are the storm's target. Due to a blood curse, each third child in a new generation of the sailer's family must be sacrificed and given to the sea. For centuries, the curse's effect was avoided by simply not travelling by sea. Over the years, the curse became just a family legend – until now!

As the crew hear this, they want to throw the NPC into the sea and save the ship. Will the characters agree, or will they attempt to save the NPC by fighting or convincing the crew otherwise? Remember that this all takes place mid-combat, as rain and sea creatures lash at the ship. Additionally, consider the following options:

- Refer to the weather effects described in *A Brush with Death*. Additionally, each round roll 1d6. On a 5 or 6, a lightning bolt strikes a random location on the ship, dealing 17 (5d6) lightning damage to the hull and everyone within a 10-foot radius. The targets can make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw to receive only half the damage.
- Instead of crabs and an octopus, a group of 5 **sahuagin** (CR ½; MM, p 263) and 1 **sahuagin baron** (CR 5; MM, p 264) climb the ship and attack the crew.
- The Storm goes away once the NPC is thrown into the sea or otherwise made undetectable (teleported away or taken to another dimension).
- To escape the Storm, the captain must make three successful **DC 18 Wisdom (water vehicle)** checks. Each time a check fails, the storm advances. After three failed checks, the Storm engulfs the ship. After three successful checks,

the ship navigates into a channel between two islands and the Storm cannot reach it. For extra challenge and excitement, consider treating a natural 1 as two failures and a natural 20 as two successes.

## STORM CHASERS

*Difficulty varies for all APL*

There is a special group of captains all others think to be completely crazy. These daring individuals chase the Living Storm and ride their sturdy ships as close to the gargantuan elemental as possible in order to catch the storm's essence into specially prepared crystal bottles. If they return, they sell those *Storm in a Bottle* artifacts for tremendous amounts of gold, because one such object can turn the tide of any battle. Less powerful versions are also obtainable and when a storm chaser's ship approaches the storm, bottles of all sizes and shapes hang from the railings and spars. Most of them end up smashed, but those that survive the encounter make their owners very rich!

The adventurers may be asked to assist the ship as it approaches the storm: replacing broken bottles and corking and securing filled bottles. The danger increases as the captain dares the raging storm, skirting it longer in hopes of gathering more essence, creating a more powerful magic item.

Typically, the Living Storm doesn't concern itself with ships that linger on for a minute. However, it becomes annoyed with those who continue to trail it, turning its attention to the pest in its wake.

## STORM IN A BOTTLE

*Wondrous item*

In order to charge the container and capture the Living Storm's essence, the container must spend a number of minutes indicated in the table below within 50 feet of the storm.

**Uncommon; Ceramic vase, 1-minute charge time**

**Effect:** When the container is smashed, anyone within 5 ft. is imbued with the Storm's strength and fury. Their next attack gains +17 to hit and deals 3d6 +10 bludgeoning damage and 10 cold damage. After that the creature gains 2 levels of exhaustion.

*Container cost 250 gp*

**Rare; Glass bottle, 2-minute charge time**

**Effect:** When smashed, this container releases a powerful storm, whose effects are the same as the Living Storm's *Stormy Weather* feature.

*Container cost 400 gp*

**Very rare; Stained glass, 3-minute charge time**

**Effect:** When a creature inhales the essence trapped in this container, they gain all resistances and immunities of the Storm. The effect lasts for 10 minutes. Moreover, they also gain *Legendary Resistance 1/day*, which lasts for 24 hours.

*Container cost 1,200 gp*

**Legendary; Crystal bottle; 5-minute charge time**

**Effect:** Upon smashing, the container releases a Living Storm, which stays in the area for 1d4 rounds and then dissipates. The storm cannot be controlled and assaults anyone and anything in the area.

*Container cost 2,000 gp*

## ULTIMATE GUARDIAN

*For parties of APL 10 or higher*

The Living Storm makes a fantastic guardian creature for high-level adventurers. It may serve as a perpetual barrier, blocking the way to a key quest place, or descend suddenly, confining the party on an island, where they must complete their tasks. Refer to **The Living Storm** stat block.

## CURSE OF THE STORM

Having been cursed in some way, the Living Storm chases the adventurers. Rather than destroying them outright, the elemental toys with its prey by capsizing or destroying their ship, blocking their path, or steering them off course. Until eventually it becomes tired of the game and decides to drown its toys. If the cursed party wishes to bypass certain doom, they'll have to find a cure.

## BATTLE BETWEEN THE STORMS

The adventurers and their ship find themselves caught within a battle between two or more Storms. This could occur abruptly, as the ship sails into the battle to reach its next destination, or gradually, as the rival storms slowly approach one another and engage in a god-like brawl. As the two elementals battle, the adventurers and their ship suffer secondhand effects.

Roll	Description	Effect
1	<b>Deadly Cascades:</b> The Storms exchange melee blows, causing sheets of thick seawater to fall.	Each creature on the deck of the ship must succeed on a <b>DC 15 Strength</b> saving throw or be knocked prone and pushed 10-feet in a random direction.
2	<b>Crushing Hail:</b> The Storms unleash a barrage of hail at each other.	Each creature on deck must succeed on a <b>DC 15 Dexterity</b> saving throw or suffer 12 (4d6) bludgeoning damage as they are struck by hail.
3	<b>Flying Whale:</b> One storm tosses a killer whale at the other.	The ship suffers 10d6 bludgeoning damage as the whale clips the ship as it falls back to the sea. Each creature on deck must succeed on a <b>DC 15 Dexterity</b> saving throw or suffer 6d6 bludgeoning damage for flying debris. Strangely, a bowl of petunias falls on the ship as it is recovering from the impact of the whale.
4	<b>Rimefrost:</b> <i>The Living Storms shield themselves in ice accumulations.</i>	Ice begins to fall from the Living Storm's and form into bergs in the waters below. Movement speeds drop to 5ft for 1d4 rounds and roll again on the Battle Between Storms Table.
5	<b>Fight for Me:</b> One storm thunders out, "FIGHT FOR ME!"	The Storm lifts a sunken treasure ship from the depths, shatters it, and spills 1d10 X 100 gold onto the characters' ship.
6	<b>Anchor Smash:</b> <i>As the battle is joined fierce winds begin to rip your ship to shreds.</i>	Winds howl and tear at your ship, yanking the anchor free of its compartment and sending it and its cable smashing through your ship. Roll a d20, on the result of a 20 the anchor takes a vital part of the ship (sails, masts, decking, etc.) with it as it flies free into the storm.
7	<b>Chain Lightning:</b> Living Storms wield electrostatic energy as they lash at each other.	An errant bolt of chain lightning strikes a target on the ship. At random, a target must make a <b>DC 15 Dexterity</b> saving throw. The target takes 10d8 lightning damage on failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Three creatures or objects within 5 feet of the initial target must also make the saving throw, as the elemental lightning arcs between them.
8	<b>Maelstrom:</b> The fury of the Storms causes deadly whirlpools to appear on the ocean surface.	The captain of the vessel must succeed on a <b>DC 15 Water Vehicles</b> check to steer the vessel around the maelstroms. On a failure, the ship takes 6d6 bludgeoning damage and all aboard must succeed on a <b>DC 15 Dexterity</b> saving throw or be washed into the sea.

## WRATH OF GOD

*APL varies*

This encounter takes place in a coastal town, port, or other strategic resource. The local priests are panicking, having lost a sacred relic from their temple and received word from their god of the ocean that doom is on the horizon. Whilst the priests scramble to appease their god, they hire the characters to protect the town from violent signs of divine retribution. This proves wise when an angel of the god in question appears over the coastline, pronouncing imminent apocalypse. The angel has the statistics of a **deva**, and carries the word of the ocean god on its lips. It pronounces that the sins of the townsfolk have displeased the god, and that the town will be destroyed by the ocean at the third dawn after the visitation, unless the relic is returned to the shrine. The angel then departs. The townsfolk accuse each other, and chaos begins to break out as families rush to evacuate. If the characters fail to locate the relic or broker peace with the ocean god a living storm arrives on the morning of the third day and causes carnage, destroying everything it touches until it is somehow thwarted.

## ADDITIONAL ENCOUNTER IDEAS

- One or more demons, sahuagin, or other extraplanar invaders might hide forces inside a Storm whilst preparing a land assault at a key target in your world.
- The Storm could be the result of a magical spell gone awry, with the foolish mage trapped in the eye of the storm, channelling the errant spell.
- The Storm could have crossed over from the elemental plane of water/air at the behest of the cults of Elemental Evil working together.
- The storm could be the result of an approaching extra-terrestrial force affecting the tides.

## THE LIVING STORM

*Gargantuan Elemental, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 11

**Hit Points** 313 (19d12 + 190))

**Speed** fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	21 (+5)	30 (+10)	12 (+1)	22 (+6)	26 (+8)

**Saving Throws** Str +17, Dex +5, Con +10, Int +1, Wis +13, Cha +15

**Skills** Perception +13, Survival +13

**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical weapons

**Damage Immunities** poison, lightning, thunder

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21

**Languages** Auran, Aquan, Common

**Challenge** 23 (32,500 XP)

**Stormy Weather.** A vicious storm covers the area within a 2-mile radius from the Living Storm. Each round, anyone within the storm must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or become restrained as they battle to stay upright. Moreover, the terrain within the effect's range is difficult terrain. Finally, due to rain and darkness all Wisdom (Perception) checks are made with a disadvantage.

**Innate spellcasting.** The Living Storm's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *call lightning*, *chain lightning*, *control water/control winds*, *sleet storm*

1/day each: *ice storm*, *whirlwind*, *tsunami*, *storm of vengeance*

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If the Living Storm fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** The Living Storm has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The Living Storm makes three slam attacks or one slam attack and one crushing waves attack or two crushing waves attacks.

**Slam. Melee Weapon Attack:** +17 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d6 + 10) bludgeoning damage, 10 (2d6) lightning damage and 10 (2d6) thunder damage.

**Crushing Waves.** At the Storm's command, the sea rises and furious waves engulf entire ships. The Storm points at any sea craft within 180 feet. All creatures on the deck or in the rigging must make a DC 15 Dexterity or Strength saving throw, suffering 3d8 bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half damage on a successful one.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The living storm can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. The living storm regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Elemental Recharge.** The Living Storm gains two legendary actions, increasing the total to 5 legendary actions.

**Lightning and Thunder.** The Living Storm absorbs the storm and empowers its slam attack. Until the end of the Living's Storms next turn, its slam attack deals 20 (4d6) lightning damage and 20 (4d6) thunder damage.

**No Escape.** The Living Storm makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

**Hand of the Storm (cost 2 Actions).** The Living Storm creates a whirling vortex of air and water under the ship, lifting it to a maximum of 90 feet into the air for up to 30 seconds. This requires the Living Storm to concentrate on the vortex. Anytime the Living Storm takes more than 30 points of damage in a single turn, it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the vortex ends.

While in the vortex, the Living Storm can move the ship 30 feet in any direction per turn.

When released from the vortex, the ship plummets to the sea, suffering 9d10 bludgeoning damage when it lands. All creatures on the ship must make a DC 15 Strength check, suffering 4d10 bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Summon Creatures of the Sea (costs 2 Actions).** The Living Storm reaches into the depths, and a wave carrying a sea-dwelling creature washes over the target ship or area. The creature or creatures appear within 10 ft of the designated spot. They are frenzied and attack anything within reach, but if they are water breathing - they also move towards the sea. Randomly determine the creature or creatures:

Roll 1d6	Creature summoned
1	Water (50%) or Air (50%) elemental (CR 5; MM, p 124)
2	5 giant crabs (CR 1/8; MM, p 324)
3	2 sahuagin (CR 1/2; MM, p 263)
4	1 giant octopus (CR 1; MM, p 326)
5	1 merrow (CR 2; MM, p 219)
6	1 plesiosaurus (CR 2; MM, p 80)

## MALADY OF THE SEA

By Jason Bakos

*“Life at sea can be treacherous. Any sailor worth his salt will tell you how the biggest enemy, after a storm at sea, is disease. Truly, these waters are riddled with some mysterious maladies, and our crew just stumbled onto one.”*

### A SHIP IN NEED

This story begins with the adventuring party on a ship sailing the seas. Another ship is sighted in the distance, and on their mast a peculiar flag is flapping in the wind; green with a black skull with no eyes. The flag is used to signal that the crew has fallen ill and that they are in need of assistance. It is a flag that everyone respects, even pirates. Not everyone helps, but it will be very difficult to find a crew willing to attack a ship with this flag raised. A creature may recall all this information with a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (History)** or **Wisdom (Survival)** check. A creature with the Sailor background automatically knows this information.

## THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter truly begins if the adventurers choose to help. If they do, they approach the ship. When they get close enough to the ship, read or paraphrase the following:

The ship, upon closer inspection, seems perfectly normal. Life on board appears to be continuing as if nothing is wrong. The sailors seem young and they mostly wear old clothes, but they do not appear to be carrying weapons, save for some knives that can be attributed to utilities. As you approach, a man dressed in garments befitting those of a captain stands close to the edge of the ship, welcoming you.

The captain is indeed trying to talk to the strangers who have decided to approach his ship. He wants to make sure they mean well as, deep down, he fears that scumbags that would take advantage of a Disease Flag still exist. When they approach, he introduces himself as Finos, captain of this merchant ship, which is on its way to the nearest port to find a cure. Their original destination is far away, but their cargo, tons of various merchandise, must be delivered at all costs. If the adventurers could help them, then they would be saving them weeks of travel, which can be rewarded.

## CAPTAIN FINOS

This tall human with dark hair and a tan from working outside all day is the captain of the crew, which means that he is responsible for commanding the sailors, navigating the rough seas, and handling any communications that require delicacy and charisma. He cares about his crew deeply and is worried that they will meet their end at the hands of this mysterious disease. He has a talking habit, always ending

his sentences with a whistle, which can be both hilarious and feel totally out of place.

### FIRST MATE SHALANA

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A young elf who has always dreamed of spending her days at sea, feeling free and unbound by the land. She is aloof, but at the same time very smart and always has her wits on her. Her ability to gain the respect and fear of the crew puts her in the ideal place to organize them and control all small tasks that the crew must take care of.

### THE FLYING OAK

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Both the ship and the crew go by the same name, which they owe to the majestic way the oak ship seems to be flying when it sails the seas. The crew is generally wary of outsiders but in their state of distress they are willing to do anything they can to help the adventurers. The only problem is that their disease will cause them to do more harm than good.

## VUTRIM'S TREACHERY

### ORIGINS

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An ancient creature known as Vutrim dwells the deep seas. It once created a disease with the intent to decimate ships and watch as the waves swallow them. As they sink, both the ship and its crew become easy prey for Vutrim's long tentacles. Vutrim appears as a giant octopus-like creature in visions, though its true form is much more hideous and incomprehensible to humanoid minds.

### CAUSES

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Spending prolonged periods of time at sea can lead to a lack of quality food, as even the most

precious materials rot with time. If a creature goes days without eating or just eating the same type of low-quality food, such as bread, beans and salt pork, then it becomes susceptible to the disease. If those conditions are met, the next time it comes into contact with tainted seawater, it must make a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw, or become infected with Vutrim's Treachery. This can only happen in the seas that Vutrim's presence has poisoned and only with seawater from this area.

### SYMPTOMS

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The symptoms of this disease appear in succession, presenting themselves in stages.

**Stage 1:** At first, the infected creature notices blue and green skin spots all around their body, although they can be very bright and noticeable on the torso and inside the mouth.

**Stage 2:** After that, an infected creature's thought process is disturbed, as Vutrim projects images into its mind that lead to confusion. This confusion leads to mistakes, which can be fatal for a sailor or passenger on board a ship. Once every hour, an infected creature must roll a d10. If the result is 3 or lower, then it gains one level of exhaustion and its thoughts become cloudy. Confusion due to the infection may commonly be attributed to heat stroke or dehydration.

**Stage 3:** Finally, the more serious symptoms manifest, and at this point the infected creature is at death's door. Extremely painful stomach cramps cripple it, as its organs slowly die on the inside, and its eyes cry tears of blood. Once every hour, the

creature must make a death saving throw. As with normal death saving throws, a creature must fail three in order to die. A natural 20 will revert the disease to stage 2 for one hour.

**Stage 4:** When the creature finally succumbs to the disease, the internal organs that have been affected quickly dissolve, leaving behind a dangerous liquid that slowly eats through the body, eroding it. The liquid then proceeds to melt the wooden decks and eat away at the ship, with the intent of sinking it.

The symptoms do not have a specific trigger after which they appear, nor can anyone be certain of when the next stage of symptoms will manifest. However, as a rule of thumb, the stages last approximately this long:

Stage	Hours
1	24
2	12
3	6
4	2-4

## DIAGNOSIS

Vutrim is a merciful elder evil. It gives the infected visions that reveal its identity, but it mixes them with other visions of random scenery and incomprehensible events. Thus, it gives a chance to a clever diagnostician to understand its masterplan and put an end to it, perhaps even taking pleasure in the occasional defeat at the hands of a smart mortal.

A **DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine)** check is required to diagnose Vutrim's Treachery. Characters with the Sailor background or with proficiency in Religion may have knowledge of the ancient monster's existence, which could

bring the DC down to **15**. A *detect poison and disease* spell can also locate the source of the problem, pointing to every infected sailor and identifying the water as the source of the problem. The Medicine check is still required to present the cure to the players.

## CURE

The infected creatures must be fed with quality food, though the effects will be greater if the recipe contains lemons and oranges (or other fruits that are rich in Vitamin C). The melted fluids that the deceased excrete can also be neutralized with lemon juice. The disease can also be cured with healing spells such as *lesser restoration*, or *heal*, though these have no effect on the fluids that could sink the ship.

## HANDLING INFECTION

The players can't be infected unless they too have been having problems with their food. Having said that, unless they have already cured the disease, they have no idea that this is the case. It will be interesting to see what they come up with in order to protect themselves from the disease. Let them roleplay whatever idea they have, but don't let it become the main focus of the encounter, as it will quickly grind to a halt.

## THE SITUATION AT HAND

Right now, a large part of the crew and some of the passengers of the *Flying Oak* have been infected, as food rations have become short due to an accident in the kitchen. The following table presents a summary of the information needed to understand the graveness of the situation.

<b>Total Humanoids</b>	<b>50</b>
Crew	30
Passengers	20
<b>Total Infected</b>	<b>22</b>
Stage 1	12
Stage 2	5
Stage 3	3
Stage 4	2

These numbers show that the ship is in a hazardous situation. If nothing is done, in less than a day, the unfortunate souls that have passed away will melt and cause serious damage to the ship. If the heroes don't figure this situation out, it's highly possible that the ship and its passengers are doomed to become sustenance for Vutrim. Note that Shalana, the first mate, is one of the 12 that are in Stage 1 right now. The first patient who presented these symptoms did so two days ago.

## INVESTIGATION

This encounter is, at its roots, a mystery. The heroes arrive at the ship, ask questions, and get conflicting and confusing answers. The characters then must, with their wits, knowledge, and arcane prowess, figure out what's wrong with the crew. The investigation can go in several directions, and as a result, is a thing the DM must handle in order to present the information organically. Presented here are some possible results from the heroes' inquiries and investigations.

**If they ask about what caused the disease,** some sailors will say that it's the awful food they have to eat, now that provisions are scarce. Others will say the air feels thick and makes them dizzy, some will claim that the sea water leaves a weird taste behind when swimming in it, and some will be sure that the

singing they heard during the night was a curse. Only the first is true of course.

**If asked about the symptoms,** at first, the crew will be reluctant to share the full extent, not revealing the 2 bodies that have been laid to rest in the hold of the ship. Only through a **DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **(Intimidation)** check will they reveal that the disease ends up making people bleed from the eyes, and that the crew has hidden those in stage 3 and 4 away, to protect the rest of the passengers.

**Many will add symptoms to the disease that don't actually exist.** Some of these include: heavy, difficult breathing, an irresistible itch, loss of vision, a feel of their heart pounding fast, a burning sensation whilst urinating, and so on. Feel free to add anything to this list, as long as it serves its purpose; to mislead. To see through the lies and piece together the puzzle, the adventurers must figure out which symptoms can be attributed to the disease. To do so, a creature must succeed on a **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation)** check, or a **DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine)** check. The medicine check might also reveal which symptoms belong to the disease and which to another malady. For example, the burning sensation from peeing is more likely the unwanted complication of a sailor's night-time visit at a certain facility in the last port town.

**The infected have been seeing dreams** that are purposely shown to them by Vutrim to confuse them. Two sailors and one merchant who have been sailing with the crew will come up to the adventures to talk about their visions. The first, a sailor with a heavy build and thick accent will talk about his dreams of his hometown, where everyone was sick and died from the same illness. A successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight)** check will reveal that the sailor named Ben is

homesick, and that this is likely not something related to the disease. The merchant will also come up to them and state that he has been getting some weird visions about the ship crashing on an iceberg. He feels like the visions started right after he tripped, fell, and scratched his hand on the wooden deck. The last sailor, a dwarven woman with a thick accent but lively eyes will inform the heroes of her dreams. These are the true ones sent out by Vutrim as a clue. She describes a huge creature lurking in the deep, eating ships that have sank, along with their crews. A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Insight)** check will reveal that the sailor named Areltha is telling the truth, and if the heroes discover the rotting corpses in the bottom of the ship, a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Medicine)** check will suffice to connect the dots and realize that this is potentially true. If the adventurers ask anyone else about the dreams it becomes clear that, while many have had visions, the only one consistently appearing is that of Vutrim.

***If the heroes search through the food provisions of the ship,*** it becomes painfully obvious that there is a severe shortage of healthy foodstuffs. This can serve as a good clue to the origins of the disease. No other irregularities are found in the supplies of the ship.

## **EASY FIXES**

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If the heroes cannot solve this mystery, but they wish to see it resolved nonetheless, consider using an NPC or other entity to guide them. Perhaps a deity or a warlock patron might offer some insight into the nature of Vutrim and his schemes, or maybe an ally might know something about him and his disease.

## **REWARDS**

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Depending on the behavior of the party and the success at dealing with the disease:

***If they cure the disease completely,*** with subtlety, and without picking any fights, the captain will reward each adventurer with 400 gp from his own pocket and will also bestow them with a *Cloak of the Manta Ray* and a *Potion of Water Breathing*.

***If they manage to cure the disease but they create too much of a mess and discomfort for the passengers,*** Captain Finos is still grateful to them, and will reward them with 400 gp each.

***If they only manage to diagnose one part of the disease and help with things,*** Captain Finos gives them 100 gp each and thanks them for trying.



DEAN SPENCER

# NIGHTMARE AT 20,000 LEAGUES

By Andy Dempz

Art: Courtesy Wizards of the Coast

Map: Mobraal Rox

Estimated run-time: 60 to 90 minutes

*Nightmare at 20,000 Leagues is a short investigative adventure designed for five characters of 1st-4th level. Higher level characters may have an easier time with the adventure.*

## BACKGROUND

The *Saucy Carp* is a cargo ship that sails the trade triangle of Waterdeep, Caer Callidyr, and Baldur's Gate. The ship takes finished goods from Waterdeep to the capital port of Caer Callidyr on the isle of Alaron in the Moonshaes. From there, it carries arms and armor to Baldur's Gate, where it picks up grain and jewelry to take to Waterdeep. It also takes on a small number of passengers at each stop as long as they are willing to pay or to perform unskilled labor in exchange for passage. Unbeknownst to the crew, the ship picked up a **quasit** in Waterdeep that intends to wreak havoc upon the ship.

## PLOT HOOK

The party could be hired on in Waterdeep as ship guards for the trade circuit, or they could be traveling to the Moonshaes to seek adventure there.

## SETTING SAIL

The journey from Waterdeep to Caer Callidyr takes around thirteen days depending on the weather or other hazards. The first few days

pass uneventfully, giving the party a chance to explore the ship and meet the crew. Read or summarize the following:

The captain of the ship says your journey has been blessed by Valkur, the patron of sailors, ships, and favorable weather, and so it seems, as the first few days pass pleasantly enough. Captain Haab is a Northlander from the Moonshaes. He seems to be entirely focused on the ship but treats the crew fairly, if with some social distance. His first mate is another Northlander named Caelynn, a similarly competent sailor. She is more friendly with the crew and cordial to passengers, but she does seem to have a bit of a temper. The only member of the small crew who rubs you the wrong way is a dwarf named Karbek, who seems to be keeping a suspicious eye on you.

An adventurer native to the Moonshaes or with the Sailor background can attempt a **DC 12 Intelligence (History)** check to see if they recall any knowledge of the Northlanders. Consult the table below for what they recall. Results are cumulative.

Roll	History
12-15	The Northlanders originally came from the isles to the north of the Moonshaes as raiders, but many have settled into agrarian lifestyles.
16-19	A recent revival of their raiding ways was led by an individual known as the Storm Maiden.
20+	Despite claims that she was blessed by the gods, the Storm Maiden was lost at sea, and her followers dispersed.

## THE CREW

The essential members of the crew are described below. The remaining ten members of the crew are **commoners** (CR 0; MM, p 345).

**Captain Haab:** LN male Northlander **bandit captain** (CR 2; MM, p 344). Haab is disinterested in anything that doesn't concern the ship or its voyage.

**Caelynn:** NG female Northlander **bandit** (CR 1/8; MM, p 343). Caelynn is friendly but quick to anger. It is her responsibility to deal with troublemakers on the ship.

**Bosska:** CN female Nelanther **bandit** (CR 1/8; MM, p 343). Bosska learned to sail among the pirate tribes of the Nelanther Isles but made her way north after being shipwrecked on the Sword Coast. She has a pet **flying monkey** (CR 0; ToA, p 220) named Jimbling that she bought from a Chultan sailor in Baldur's Gate.

**Karbek:** NE male shield dwarf **bandit** (CR 1/8; MM, p 343). Karbek hired on last year as a guard and ended up joining the crew. He is watchful to the point of being overly suspicious, but he is not as observant as he'd like to think he is. His accusations are false and unmerited as often as not.

**Mixlit:** CE **quasit** (CR 1; MM, p 63). Mixlit was summoned as a familiar by a wizard in Waterdeep but got trapped in a crate of dried plums bound for Caer Callidyrr in the course of his mischief. He intends to sink the ship so that he may respawn in the Abyss or return to his master.

## ENVIRONS OF THE SAUCY CARP

### GENERAL FEATURES

**Terrain.** Wooden decks, wet and slick at times. Somewhat cluttered with rigging and other gear.

**Weather.** arm, but with a cool sea breeze.

**Light.** Bright light during the day from the clear skies. Dim light at night from the stars and moon.

**Smells and Sounds.** The rhythmic splashes of the ship cutting through the waves, the calls of sea birds, the voices of the crew, and the creaks and groans of the ship against the wind.

### AREA 1: MAIN DECK

As the party explore the main deck for the first time, read or summarize:

Most of the crew are busy at work on the main deck while there is daylight to be had. They shout back and forth to each other over the waves and wind, relaying orders and confirming actions taken. You were informed upon boarding that you were welcome to be present above deck as long as you didn't interfere with the crew's duties. While the message was relayed in a cordial manner, the iron cage suspended from the aft of the quarterdeck implies that discipline is taken seriously aboard the Saucy Carp.

### MOVEMENT ON DECK

Due to the wet wood surfaces, rigging, and working crew, the deck is difficult terrain. Creatures without the sailor background who succeed at a **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check (**DC 15** during a storm) at the start of their turn may move through the deck as if it were normal terrain until the start of their next turn. Characters with the sailor background make this check with advantage.



### AREA 1A: THE CAGE

An iron cage is suspended on a 5-foot long pole mounted to the quarterdeck. A 10-foot long pole with an iron hook on one end is kept on the deck in order to retrieve the cage to put prisoners in or let them out. The cage can hold two medium humanoids and is held shut by a padlock. Caelynn keeps a key to it on a leather necklace she wears along with keys to her quarters and trunk. Haab keeps a key to the cage in his quarters among the clutter on his desk. The padlock can be opened with a successful **DC 12 Dexterity** check using **thieves' tools**. The lock has an AC 10 and 15 hit points.

### AREA 2: LOWER DECK, FORE

As the party enters the fore lower deck, read or summarize:

This space is used by the crew for eating, drinking, socializing, and gambling. A heavy wooden table is permanently attached to the floor. There are benches on the two long sides and barrels serve as improvised stools on the ends.

Any crew members who are not working or sleeping are likely to be found here.

### AREA 3: LOWER DECK, AFT

As the party enters the aft lower deck, read or summarize:

The room is primarily used to store tools and rigging but a few hammocks are hung on the walls for the crew to use. A ladder leads up to a trap door in the ceiling. A spiral staircase leads to the decks below.

### AREA 3A: CAPTAIN HAAB'S QUARTERS

The trapdoor in the ceiling leads to Captain Haab's quarters. If he is not present, then it is locked with a padlock. The padlock can be opened with a successful **DC 12 Dexterity** check using **thieves' tools**. The lock has an AC 10 and 15 hit points.

Captain Haab's quarters are sparsely furnished. A hammock is suspended in one corner of the room. An unlocked trunk holds Haab's personal belongings. A plain desk is thickly covered with maps, navigation charts, and instruments. Among the clutter is a key to the cage suspended from the rear deck and a key to Caelynn's quarters. Either key can be found by spending 5 minutes searching and

making a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** check.

Haab typically begins each day by meeting with Caelynn in her quarters and plotting the day's journey. He then spends most of the day above deck, returning to eat his meals alone and read for an hour before sleeping at night. He is currently reading a book called *Of Ships and the Sea*

#### **AREA 4: SUB DECK 2**

As the party enters the second sub deck, read or summarize:

The front two thirds of this deck are divided by a wall with two doors, but both parts are used by the crew for sleeping and storing their belongings. Hammocks are slung between iron eyelets in the walls and ceiling. Underneath them are small trunks that presumably contain the crew members' clothing and personal effects. A door blocks entry to the rear third.

During the day, the crew who worked the previous night can be found sleeping here. There is little of value among the crew's belongings, but a character who spends 5 minutes searching and makes a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation)** check finds 1d10 sp and a trinket from page 160 of the Player's Handbook.

The rear third of this deck is occupied by Caelynn's cabin and can be accessed by the door from the crew's quarters or from a door off the spiral staircase. Both doors are locked and can be opened with a successful **DC 12 Dexterity** check using **thieves' tools**. Caelynn keeps the key to both on the necklace she wears. Her quarters are furnished with a hammock, trunk, a desk, and a tapestry, which hangs on the port side wall. Her trunk is locked

and can be opened with a successful **DC 12 Dexterity** check using **thieves' tools**. Within it are her clothes and personal effects, a small bundle of love letters from someone named Eirnin, and a silver dagger. The tapestry depicts a human woman receiving a golden necklace from six dwarven craftsmen.

#### **AREA 5: UPPER CARGO DECK**

As the party enters the upper cargo deck, read or summarize:

The central part of this deck is used to store barrels and casks full of provisions for the ship's crew. The fore and aft portions are partially full of cargo bound for Caer Callidyr.

Mixlit the quasit is trapped in a crate of dried plums among the cargo on this deck at the start of the adventure.

#### **LOWER CARGO DECK**

As the party enters the lower cargo deck, read or summarize:

The main part of this deck is used to store cargo and provisions. The rear is taken up by a small empty room. The door is open and an unused padlock hangs from it.

Among the cargo is a small scroll case that contains a spell scroll of *see invisibility*. It is protected by a *glyph of warding* that casts *hold person* on anyone who tries to open the case without first succeeding on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** check. The spell save DC for the glyph is 14.

The small room can be used as a brig when necessary. The padlock uses the same key as the cage and can be opened with a successful

**DC 12 Dexterity** check using **thieves' tools**. The lock has an AC 10 and 15 hit points. The door has an AC 15 and 18 hit points, or it can be broken open with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check. Attempts to break it down may attract the attention of any crew members present on the lower or upper cargo deck, but unless excessive noise (such as from a *thunderwave* spell) is made, it won't be heard above the cargo decks.

## EVENTS

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The party has three days to familiarize themselves with the ship and crew. The rest of the adventure proceeds as a series of events over the next four days. The DM can run these as set events or allow the characters to make contested **Charisma (Persuasion)** checks against Karbek as he tries to convince Caelynn to imprison them. Mixlit stays invisible when other creatures are around but will not be invisible if he thinks he is alone, such as if the characters are successfully hiding. If confronted he tries to avoid combat by using his Scare action and fleeing to another deck to hide until the next event. The events are as follows:

### DAY 2

- In the afternoon, Mixlit gets into the crew's personal belongings on sub deck 1. He throws things about and shreds a number of hammocks. Karbek tries to turn the rest of the crew against the characters and begins demanding that they be locked up for the remainder of the voyage.

### DAY 3

- In the morning, Mixlit is observed ruining some of the spare rigging on subdeck 1 by Bosska's pet flying monkey, Jimbling. Mixlit attacks Jimbling who escapes with some injuries. The noise may attract the characters' attention if they are nearby. Otherwise,

Bosska becomes suspicious of the characters and joins Karbek in rousing the crew against them.

- In the afternoon, Mixlit picks the lock to Caelynn's quarters. If he is not caught, he gets into her trunk and throws her belongings around the room. If he is not caught, he shreds her tapestry and love letters. If Caelynn finds her room vandalized, she orders the crew to imprison the characters until they reach Caer Callidyrr. The crew imprisons as many characters as will fit in the cage and locks the remainder in the room in the lower cargo deck. Captain Haab supports her decision but remains uninvolved unless the characters respond with violence.

### DAY 4

- Mixlit tires of plums and breaks out of his crate. He rummages through the other cargo on that level, breaking into containers and making a general mess. Karbek suggests the characters are the vandals, but Caelynn isn't likely to be convinced as the destruction is so random.
- Mixlit returns to the lower cargo deck to break into more crates in search of food and to find a place to sleep.

### DAY 5

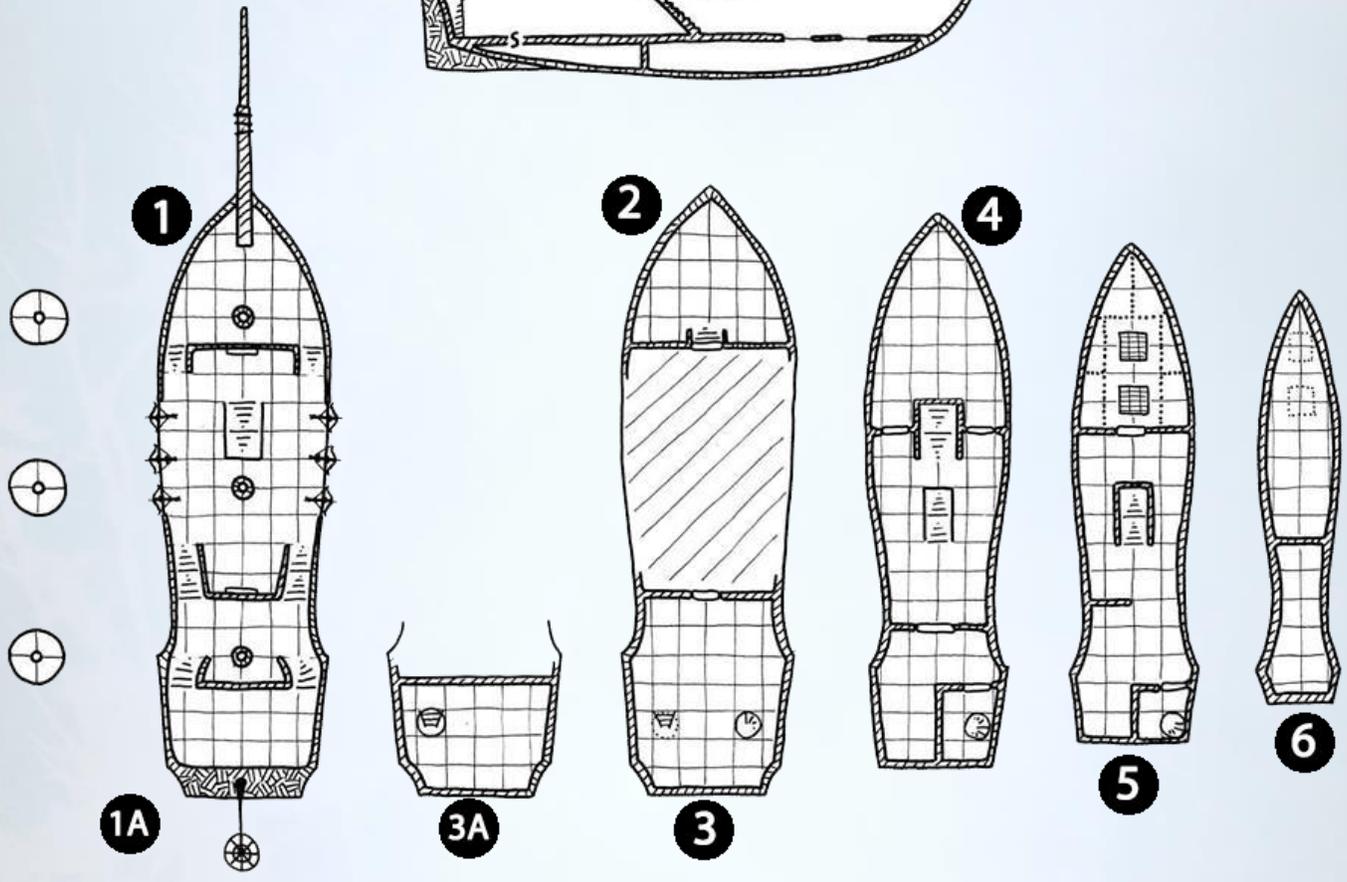
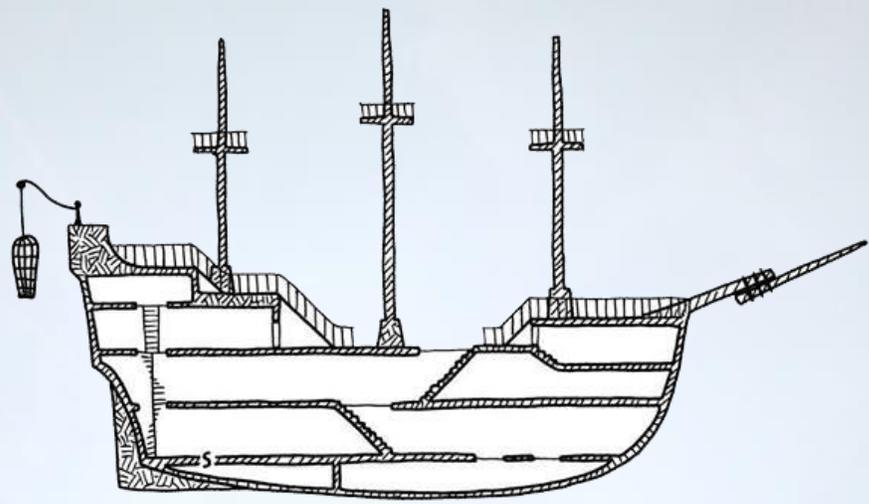
- In the morning, Mixlit goes to sub deck 2 and steals some of the crew's food and drink. He wastes a fair amount by spilling it on the floor. Karbek accuses the characters of taking more than their share of rations and stealing from crew members.
- In the evening, the ship is caught in a fierce storm. Mixlit takes advantage of the conditions to cause as much destruction as he can with the goal of sinking the ship. The ship's deck is lightly obscured by the heavy rain between lightning flashes. Mixlit begins his attack on the deck, shredding rigging and the sails. He can be seen when lightning flashes every third round. After doing 50 points of damage on the upper deck (armor

class 12), he tries to start fires on sub deck 2 and the upper cargo deck. The crew may be occupied with trying to keep the sails up. Left unchecked, the fires may destroy the ship.

### **CONCLUSION**

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If the characters stop Mixlit before he can destroy the ship, the crew is astonished and disturbed by their close call with death. If the ship sinks, everyone aboard either dies or may be shipwrecked at a location of the DM's choosing.



## NOSTALGIA FOR THE REEF

By *Elven Tower*

Map: *Elven Tower*

### BACKGROUND LORE

A hundred years ago, the crew of the *Nostalgia for the Reef* sacked a tomb they found on a deserted island. They carried back a strange sarcophagus decorated with emeralds and gold inlays. They could not open it, but the box was sure to be worth something. Captain Gadavo decided to place it in the cabin directly under his and ordered his crew to sail back to the coast.

The sarcophagus is the prison of an old, evil entity meant to remain undiscovered for eternity. The sliver of darkness within cannot abandon its prison but it can affect its surroundings with its power. That night, the dark spirit took over Captain Gadavo's body. The process killed him, but not entirely so. Captain Gadavo became an undead puppet for the dark being. He killed his crew that night with a dagger. No one could withstand his onslaught. At dawn, everyone aboard the *Nostalgia for the Reef* walked the decks not alive, nor dead. They remained loyal to Captain Gadavo, just as he was a slave to the sarcophagus. For decades they have roamed the seas, hijacking and destroying other vessels. They are the source of the many tales and stories about ghost ships in the region.

Recently, the entity from the sarcophagus devised a plan to escape his prison. It involved the sacrifice of a sea princess. Thus, it ordered the crew to kidnap Princess Seashell. The princess is still alive, but she will be sacrificed in

a dark ritual shortly, when the stars and planes align themselves during the equinox.

### GENERAL FEATURES

These are the general features of the vessel *Nostalgia for the Reef*. It is a three-deck longship powered by necrotic energy rather than wind. It can achieve maximum speed even with no wind and against the current. Thus, pursuing this vessel is a complicated task.

**Terrain.** The wooden floor is firm, but space is limited like in all ships. Any square which already contains an object or piece of furniture is considered difficult terrain for the purposes of tactical movement.

**Doors.** All cabins feature wooden doors with simple locks. The doors to Areas 3, 4, and 6 are locked. A successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves Tools)** check or a successful **DC 17 Strength (Athletics)** check allows a character to force their way in. The only exception is the door to Princess Seashell's room. (See Area 6)

**Light.** The *Nostalgia for the Reef* is always surrounded by a thick cloud of mist. Even with light sources, the main deck is considered to be in low-light condition. Below deck, some areas have ever-burning braziers. The rest of the ship is in total darkness.

**Rebellious Sea.** The *Nostalgia for the Reef* does not need a person by the rudder. Captain Gadavo or the sarcophagus can control the ship's direction mentally. They are prone to choose sudden adjustments of direction at any given time. The ship lunges one way or another frequently. In combat, each turn there is a 10% chance that the ship lunges suddenly as it changes direction. Each creature (except the undead) must make a successful **DC 14 Dexterity** saving throw to avoid falling prone.

### ADVENTURE HOOK

Local mariners and people at important docks talk about the disappearance of Princess Seashell, a mermaid (**triton**). Rumor has it that a pirate ship abducted her, and the vessel was last seen fifty miles north. The triton kingdom offers a hefty bounty of 4,000 gp and the favor of their house to whoever rescues her.

The party sails in search of the pirate vessel. During the night, the temperature decreases quickly as a curtain of deep mist engulfs the vessel the party is traveling in. The ghost ship emerges from the shadows silently and follows the party's ship side by side. The ship appears to be in good condition, except for the sails which are torn or missing.

The undead drop planks and try to storm the party's ship as a series of battles begin. If the party loses this first engagement, survivors are brought to the cells (**Area 7**).

## LOCATION DESCRIPTIONS

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### AREA 1. MAIN DECK

There are a few rotting crates and empty chests on the main deck but nothing else of value. When the *Nostalgia for the Reef* is close enough to the party's ship, the first mate and other undead drop planks and attack. The attackers are 7 crew members: 5 **skeletons** (CR ¼; MM, p 272) and 2 **shadows** (CR ½; MM, p 269). The first mate is a **wight** (CR 3; MM, p 300).

Should the party lose this engagement, the undead do not kill them outright. They are bound, gagged, and taken to the cells in **Area 7**. Their possessions end up in the first mate's cabin (**Area 4**).

### AREA 2. FORECASTLE CABIN

This cabin is seldom used anymore. There are three wooden crates and six wine barrels. Two of the barrels are in good condition. The wine is a refined select reserve which is rare these days. They can be sold for 50 gp each. Collectively, the party finds 220 gp in the crates and 2 *potions of healing*.

### AREA 3. CAPTAIN'S CABIN

A bed, a desk, a bookcase, and a chest are the furniture in this room. There is a fine silk carpet on the floor in good condition; it can be sold for 200 gp. A leather bag with 84 gp is on the desk.

There are papers, documents, and the captain's journal on the desk. All documents in this chamber are well preserved, despite the passage of time. These documents reveal the following information:

- The name of the ship and the captain.
- The ship was not originally a pirate ship but rather a merchant/mercenary vessel.
- The last journal entry describes the raid to the tomb and the acquisition of a strangely decorated sarcophagus almost a hundred years ago.
- A scroll reveals the intention to sacrifice Princess Seashell during the equinox.

### AREA 4. SECOND DECK

The large cargo chamber is mostly empty. A magical wall brazier provides low light. There are six doors; three of them lead to unused chambers. 4 **skeletons** guard the door to **Area 7**. If the first mate is still alive, it comes out of **Area 5** and joins the fight in round 2. Should the battle last more than 4 rounds, the captain (**wraith**; CR 5; MM, p 302) and 2 **shadows** emerge from **Area 7** and join the fight.

### AREA 5. CHIEF MATE'S CABIN

The chief mate is here unless it was killed during the first engagement. Despite his undead nature, the chief mate still craves gold and riches. Since the captain has no interest in such things anymore, the first mate collects trinkets and coins in his cabin. Two **shadows** emerge

from under the chest to protect it. The chest in the room contains 600 gp in several denominations. 10 objects of art worth 1,200 gp, and a +2 *dagger*.

#### AREA 6. PRINCESS SEASHELL CABIN

The princess was imprisoned here a week ago. She is a non-combatant. The door to this chamber is magically sealed, as per the *arcane lock* spell. A spellcaster can bypass this measure with a *knock* or a *dispel magic* spell. While affected by this spell, a successful **DC 25 Dexterity check using thieves' tools** check, or a successful **DC 27 Strength** check opens the door. The DC reduces by 10 for each of these options if the *arcane lock* spell is dispelled.

The princess is grateful to be rescued and promises a reward if she is returned safely to her kingdom. She follows the party and does her best to follow their commands. **Princess Seashell** has the statistics of a **noble** (CR 1/8; MM, p 348).

#### AREA 7. THE VENGEFUL CASKET

Captain Gadavo is in this room communing with the sarcophagus. The undead cannot be reasoned with as their wills are slaves to the sarcophagus. Once encountered, Captain Gadavo (**wraith**; CR 5; MM, p 302) and two **shadows** attack. They use their incorporeal form to their advantage to slip out of reach whenever possible. If Princess Seashell is with the party, the shadows will target her.

The sarcophagus is an evil artifact from a forgotten era. There is no way to open it or damage it with anything the party can do. After destroying Captain Gadavo, the sarcophagus must wait a day before attempting to possess anyone else. If the party are still within 30 ft. of

it, a random character must make a successful **DC 20 Wisdom saving throw**, to avoid becoming a thrall of the sarcophagus. This saving throw is rolled once per day, after three failed saves, the person becomes an undead. The best the party can do is drop the sarcophagus to the bottom of the sea.

#### AREA 8. SHIP CELLS

The bottom deck was a mix of cargo and quarters for the crew, but they do not need them anymore. There are 19 individual cells. The cells are barred cages and feature simple locks similar to those on cabin doors. Four of them are occupied by a group of fishermen captured a few days ago. There are old bones of previous inmates who died in their cells. The fishermen are malnourished and dehydrated; the undead care not for their prisoners. If released, the fishermen cannot help in combat as they are severely weak from dehydration.

If the party is brought here after losing the first engagement, they may try to escape their binds with a successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check. Roll with advantage if the PC has access to a hidden tool or weapon.

#### CONCLUSION

If Princess Seashell is returned to the triton kingdom, her father rewards the party with the promised bounty and offers them an unlimited stay in his castle. Additionally, he offers them the possibility to work and buy a house in his realm.

If Princess Seashell dies but her remains are returned to her father, the characters are invited to the funeral. The king still pays them the bounty.

# Nostalgia for the Reef



## THE POTSTICKER

By Jennifer Adcock

Expected Duration: 30-60 minutes

*The Potsticker is a series of short skill-based and social interactions designed for parties of any level and composition.*

### BACKGROUND

Rations while at sea can get quite stale, both figuratively and literally. Hardtack, jerky, and fish, fish, more fish. The *Potsticker* is a sailing ship whose crew has one purpose - to provide other sailors with delicious and unique rations, making excellent use of the rare and exotic ingredients that come from the sea.

This encounter is ideal to add to any extended ocean travel, as the *Potsticker* comes to ships who've been at sea for a good length of time.

### THE POTSTICKER

The ship itself is a galleon, finely constructed and maintained. Its sails are stark white, and its decks are polished to the point of gleaming. The ship flies a red flag with a crossed knife and fork in white.

The ship carries a crew of about 75 individuals, including the notable crewmembers listed below.

### NOTABLE CREWMEMBERS

- **Captain Elias Kinns**, (human veteran - CR 3; MM, p 350) - exuberant, a consummate showman and salesman.
- **First Mate Reena Magpie**, (halfling veteran - CR 3; MM, p 350) - gruff at first, but has a heart of gold.
- **Head Chef and Second Mate Catrila Cloudskimmer**, (elf bandit captain - CR 2; MM, p 344) - a true artisan, dedicated to her cooking craft above all else, to the point of distraction.

- **Sous Chef Brigg Tormsyn**, (dwarf bandit captain - CR 2; MM, p 344) - runs the kitchen with an iron fist, but has a soft spot for aspiring chefs.

Use the **bandit** (CR 1/8; MM, p 343) stat block for all other crew members.

The crew of the *Potsticker* aren't pirates, but they have learned a lot about defending themselves in their years of peaceful foodmongering.

### MENU

Item	Cost
Sea-salted bread	1 sp
Fried squid tentacle	4 sp
Raw fish and seaweed rolls	2 gp
Caviar	5 gp
Shark meat chunk	5 sp
Fresh sea urchin	3 sp
Potstickers (their famed dish)	5 sp
Fish and chips	3 sp
Barracuda tartare	2 gp
Dwarven ale (barrel)	35 gp
Elvish wine (barrel)	40 gp
Feast for the whole crew	250 gp

### SEARCH FOR INGREDIENTS

The crew of the *Potsticker* are in constant need of ingredients and are often looking to experiment with new items. The player characters may be asked to help find any or all of the below. In exchange, the characters will receive high quality rations that will stay fresh for an extended time and taste excellent.

- **Sea urchins** - spiny, purplish creatures, usually found on the seabed. Handling them wrong or carelessly will deal 1d4 piercing damage. Characters harvesting sea urchins must also make a **DC 14 Constitution** saving throw against becoming poisoned for one hour.
- **Red algae** - a vibrant red sea plant, rich in everything one needs to keep healthy. Takes a long time to find but can remove a level of exhaustion when eaten.
- **Giant squid** - elusive, but very profitable due to its size. Requires a series of successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Survival)** checks to track. Initiate a combat encounter with giant squid (**giant octopus**, CR 1; MM, p 326) when found. The difficulty is that the players must keep the squid fully intact and edible (not poisoned, fireballed, etc.) to receive the reward.
- **Deep sea fish** – finding this requires going into the deep ocean, where the light doesn't reach. Searching in the deeps will also require **DC 16 Constitution** saving throws the longer the characters stay in the depths.
- **Sea grapes** - a round, green sea plant that can be eaten raw or distilled into sea wine. Difficult to identify correctly, due to a number of lookalike plants that taste foul. Requires a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature)** check to discern the real sea grapes.

## COOKING COMPETITION

If the player characters start to get chummy with the crew of the *Potsticker*, one of the two chefs - Catrila or Brigg - will challenge the player characters to a friendly cooking competition. There are no real stakes to the competition, merely pride and bragging rights. If suggested, Elias eagerly agrees to the role of host and announcer for the competition.

The format of the competition is to combine strange and bizarre ingredients into a dish that is not only edible, but delicious. Roll three times

on the table below for the ingredients that the player characters and the *Potsticker* chefs must include in their dish:

1d12	Ingredient
1	Squid ink
2	Dried fermented scallops
3	Stinkfruit
4	Stinging nettles
5	Anglerfish
6	Duck feet
7	Pineapple
8	Kelp
9	Smoked herring
10	Jellyfish
11	Taro root
12	Pufferfish

Both groups must make a series of successful **DC 18 Intelligence** or **Wisdom** checks in the preparation of their dish. The first group to succeed on five checks wins the competition. They may also make **DC 13 Charisma** checks or **DC 13 Dexterity** checks to taunt or trick the other team to give them disadvantage on their next roll.

If the characters win the competition, they are given a barrel of elvish wine and a fine set of cooking utensils.

## DINNER AND A SHOW

If the player characters or anyone else in their entourage purchases a feast for the whole crew, the crew of the *Potsticker* offers to host and entertain them for the evening.

They offer various amusements, including music and dancing, short plays, and ghost stories. Any player character who wishes can join in with their own performances and stories.

If they do join in with tales of their previous adventures, they can get into a boasting contest with the crew of the *Potsticker*, who have plenty of their own adventures to tell of. The *Potsticker* crew will try and escalate their storytelling, in both content and form - more thrilling, dangerous tales, reenacted aboard the ship with the help of their crewmen. Both groups can make **Charisma** tests to try to impress the other crew.

This is all in good fun, of course, and the crews part ways in the morning as friends and allies. The next time the player characters find themselves facing a naval challenge that looks hopeless, the *Potsticker* and its crew may be summoned to fight alongside them. The crew isn't exactly hugely helpful combatants, but there are clever ways for them to help.

# THE SHATTERED TOWER

By Catherine Evans

Map: Courtesy Dyson Logos

Estimated run-time: 60 to 90 minutes

The Shattered Tower is a short adventure designed for five characters of 5<sup>th</sup> level. Scaling instructions are included to run the adventure for characters from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> level.

## BACKGROUND

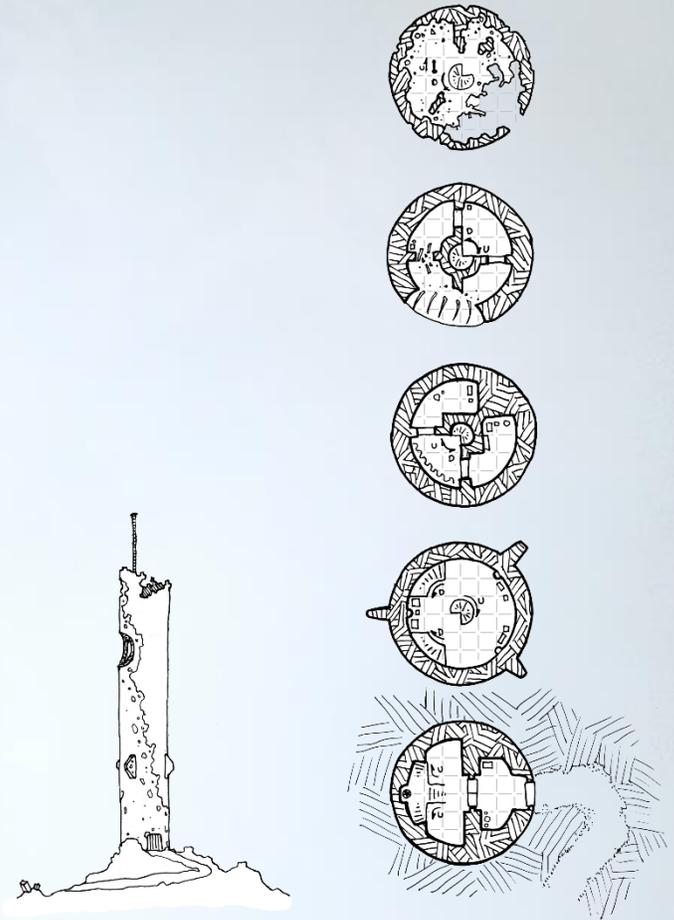
A mile or so from land and a few miles along the coast from the nearest town, **Shatterspine Tower** has always been a place of ill repute. It has long been known as the lair of a gang of wreckers who use the light atop the tower to lure ships onto the nearby rocks.

A year ago, a battle between a juvenile **kraken** and another deep-sea beast caused tremors that collapsed the top levels of the tower. The kraken slunk into the rubble to hide and heal. It gradually exerted its influence over the wreckers, turning them into mutated **cult fanatics** and **kraken priests**. Their criminal operation has mutated along with their bodies, becoming a source of sacrifices to the beast beneath the tower.

## PLOT HOOK

Adventurers may be hired by Brandis Dyern, head of the Dyern-Nunic shipping company which has lost several ships (including lucrative cargoes and entire crews) to the gang. She knows nothing of the kraken or its cult, and believes she is simply hiring a group of adventurers to deal with some normal, human brigands. She will promise a reward of 3,000 gold pieces – high for the task, but low compared to the amount of business she has lost.

Alternatively, adventurers may be passengers or crew on a ship lured onto the rocks near Shatterspine.



Either way, the party should arrive by rowboat in the midst of a fierce storm from a larger vessel anchored some distance away.

## APPROACHING THE TOWER

As the party approaches the tower, read or summarize:

The jagged black rocks around the tower are littered with debris from wrecked ships. One small, intact, rowboat is sheltered by a craggy outcropping.

There are no signs of life. Any sounds from inside are covered by the noise of the raging storm.

A path weaves between the rocks to a wooden door coated in barnacles and swollen shut from the damp.

Call for a **DC 15 Dexterity (Vehicles, Water)** check to steer the characters' boat to a safe landing. Failure means the boat is no longer seaworthy and that characters take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from washing up on the rocks.

### IT'S COLD OUTSIDE

The door is locked, and the lock is poorly tended and prone to jam. Picking the lock requires a successful **DC 16 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools)** check. Failure means that picking the lock takes ten minutes, and characters who fail a **DC 11 Constitution** saving throw take a level of exhaustion from standing outside in the storm. The door can be smashed open with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check.

#### GENERAL FEATURES

**Terrain.** Slick stone – both outside the tower and inside; thick, orange lichen.

**Weather.** Rain lashes the outside of the tower and seeps inside through cracks in the stonework.

**Light.** The storm makes the area overcast; driftwood torches inside the tower cast most areas in dim light.

**Smells and Sounds.** Salt water and wood rotting in the damp; the lapping of water in the submerged levels and the rumbling of the storm outside.

**Stairs.** All staircases in the tower are five feet wide.

### AREA 1A

As the party enter Area 1, read or summarize:

This room is roughly half of the tower. It is empty except for waxed cloaks hanging on the walls and a rack containing axes, crowbars, and billhooks; in short, everything one would need to efficiently access and empty a half sunken cargo hold.

On the back of the door is a twisting pattern of seaweed, bone, and the beaks of vast squid strung together in a design that strongly suggests curling tentacles. As the door moves, they almost seem to stir.

There's nothing to find here except for the unlocked double doors leading to Area 1B. If the adventurers inspect the tools on the rack, they find traces of blood and flesh on them (no ability check needed).

### AREA 1B

As the party enter Area 1B, read or summarize:

There is little for the flickering driftwood torches on the walls to illuminate: two curved sets of stairs lead up and another leads downwards. Otherwise, it's just a dimly lit room full of barrels, boxes, and sacks rotting in the damp atmosphere.

#### TREASURE

The containers hold cargo taken from wrecked ships. It would normally have been sold by now but the cult is no longer interested in such matters. Most of the goods – fabric, spices, and the like – have rotted away but a successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation)** check turns up a bag of pearls worth **1250 gp**.

Characters *could* go deeper into the tower: there are stairs down from this area. The lower floors are completely submerged, and shrouded in inky darkness that no light, normal or magical, can penetrate.

Descending further would lead to an encounter with the kraken – which the adventurers would be wise to avoid.

## AREA 2

As the party enters Area 2, read or summarize:

The stairs end in a circular room. The soft clink of chains alert you to the presence of other creatures and a deep voice calls out softly, “Stop. Don’t come any closer.”

### PRISONERS

There are three human prisoners shackled to the floor of this room, shivering in thin clothing. Their chains give them enough room to walk around, but not to reach the stairs.

Two (**Neela** and **Bern**) are sailors. Their ship was wrecked ten days ago, and they regained consciousness here, along with eight others. The others have been taken away, one every couple of days.

The third prisoner is **Govan**, a weathered man in his fifties. He was part of **Saveus’** gang of wreckers but he’s refused to join in the cult’s activities. He’s still ‘one of them’ which has so far kept them from feeding him to the kraken.

Govan is incoherent, raving about “the great beast below” and warning the characters to “Get out! Flee before you’re found.” Once calmed with a successful **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Intimidation)** check he knows that:

- The tower partially collapsed about a year ago, and *something* moved into the rubble in the tower’s sunken levels.
- Something started to speak to **Saveus** and the rest of the gang.
- The gang started visiting it... and started to change: their bodies are twisted and misshapen and they serve the beast faithfully.
- They still use the light at the top of the tower to lure ships but now most of the cargo sinks to the bottom of the sea: the crew are the prize, and they’re used to feed the beast.

- There are about a dozen members of the gang in the tower

### SCALING THE BATTLE

- **Levels 3-4:** 8 gang members are in the tower
- **Levels 6-7:** 18 gang members are in the tower

### FREING THE PRISONERS

The shackles and chains holding the prisoners have AC 19 and have 12 hit points. Attempts to break them with a weapon are made at disadvantage unless the attacker is willing to also hurt the wearer. A successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves’ Tools)** check will unlock one shackle.

The key to these locks is in **Saveus’** quarters (Area 4B).

**DMS NOTE.** The gang expects noise from the prisoners, so are unlikely to investigate any shouting. A particularly loud disturbance could draw the four **cult fanatics** (CR 2; MM p 345) from Area 3.

### DEVELOPMENT

If the cult fanatics come to investigate a disturbance, fewer are left in Area 4 and they cannot be surprised.

### SCALING THE BATTLE

- **Levels 3-4:** Remove two **cult fanatics**.
- **Levels 6-7:** Add two **cult fanatics**.

If the prisoners are freed they wait in Area 1B for the adventurers.

## AREA 3

As the party enter Area 3, read or summarize:

The stairs open onto a room that smells of unwashed bodies. There are four beds in here, but the spaces between them sport more bedrolls and tangled blankets.

Open doors on either side of the room reveal similar setups in neighboring rooms.

Some of the bedding is occupied, human forms betrayed by the flicking of a tentacle or the opening of a mouth where no mouth should be. Between two of the beds is a large, greenish crustacean, idly cracking human sized bones between its pincers.

This area contains six **cult fanatics** (CR 2; MM, p 345) and their pet **chuul** (CR 4; MM, p 40).

The cultists fight to subdue the adventurers, aiming to capture them and imprison them in Area 3 as an extra source of food for the kraken.

The last cultist standing will flee to Area 5 to warn Saveus. Even if that fails, Saveus will be alerted by the general commotion.

### TALKING IT OUT

The cultists are much more inclined to fight than talk. If the party can convince them to talk they have little new information except:

- The beast beneath the tower is a kraken – young for its kind, but still immeasurably old by human standards.
- They serve it loyally: it is wise, noble, and awe-inspiring.
- They are not permitted to know its name. They call it The Deep Lord.

### TREASURE

A thorough search turns up 4 scrimshaw octopus statues worth 50 gp each, and a total of 132 gp, mostly in silver. Searching requires 10

minutes with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check or 20 minutes with a failed check.

Searching also uncovers a water-stained leather notebook containing poorly written attempts at scripture and hymns in praise of the Deep Lord.

### SCALING THE BATTLE

- **Levels 3-4:** Remove 2 **cult fanatics**.
- **Levels 6-7:** Two more **cult fanatics** arrive in round 2 (from one of the adjoining rooms) to join the fight.

### DEVELOPMENT

If the adventurers spend more than 10 minutes searching the area, the cult have time to set a trap on the stairs leading up to Area 5.

## AREA 4A

Coiled ropes of seaweed, braided with bones and beaks, fill most of this storeroom. Sheets and blankets crudely painted with twisting tentacles and huge, black eyes are haphazardly scattered around the room.

Doors to either side of the room lead to Areas 4B and 4C.

The door to 4C has a dark, wet stain under it, forming a path through 4A and onwards, up the stairs (the mark of Orfeo's passage up to Area 5).

### TREASURE

An open wooden box in one corner of the room holds 20gp worth of incense.

## AREA 4B

This was once a fine room—velvet hangings cover a four-poster bed; the wardrobe, chair, and table are well-made; a table is set with a gleaming pewter jug and jeweled goblet. Wind howls through the room from a hole in some other part of the tower. Between the rain and an inch of stagnant, standing water on the floor, most of the contents are waterlogged and rotten.

This is Saveus' bedroom.

### TREASURE

The party can salvage a fine, jeweled pewter goblet worth 75 gp and an **alchemy jug** (DMG, p 150) from the nightstand (no check needed); with a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check, they also find a purse containing 45 gp from underneath the mattress. A hook on the wall near the bed holds the key to the chains of the prisoners in Area 2.

## AREA 4C

When the characters enter Area 4C, read or summarize:

The wall is shattered, leaving this half of the tower open to the wind and rain. The floor level is lower here and the room is flooded with inches of water. It smells of fish and seaweed and is empty apart from a few gnawed bones abandoned in the water.

### Call of the Deep

If characters look through the shattered hole in the wall, read or summarize:

The waters are dark and choppy below, churned up by crashing waves and by thick, rubbery tentacles that break the surface and thrash against the rocks. You count... maybe six? It's hard to tell.

After watching for a short time, characters realize that either the monster is stuck under

the tower or it doesn't wish to leave its hiding place. If the party take a rowboat and sail away, it couldn't – wouldn't? - pursue them.

## AREA 5

If the adventurers were slow climbing the tower, Saveus has set a trap on the stairs up to Area 5.

If so...

### A SLIPPERY CUSTOMER

- A character actively searching for hazards who succeeds at a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check notices the top few steps are shiny with a thick layer of grease.
- Characters can either remove/counteract the grease, or make a **DC 14 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check to leap over it
- If the character at the front of the party has a passive Perception of 13 or higher, they notice the grease, giving them advantage on the **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw to avoid slipping on it.
- If the leading character does not notice the grease in advance, they make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw as they attempt to walk over it.
- A failed saving throw or ability check means the character loses their balance, stumbling into the character behind them (who must succeed on a **DC 12 Strength** saving throw or stumble into the character behind *them...* and so on).

The trap is there to slow the adventurers down and warn Saveus when they arrive.

It also provides a perfect opportunity for Saveus' three **cult fanatics** at the top of the stairs to fire **heavy crossbows** at the first two characters in line. They have +4 to hit and deal 5 (1d10) damage. They have advantage on attack rolls against characters who are off-balance.

As the party enters Area 5, read or summarize:

A smell like the freshest fish joins the salt scent as you near the top of the stairs. The top of the tower is open to the elements and the storm rages around you, thunder cracking the sky overhead.

Saveus, leader of the cult and a **kraken priest** (CR 5; VGtM, p 215) is here with three more **cult fanatics** (plus any who retreated from Area 3).

They are accompanied by **Orfeo** (or as the others call him, “The Most Devout”), whose mutations have made him half man, half tentacled beast.

Read or summarize:

The top half of this creature was once a man, pallid and now blessed with a dozen black, blinking eyes on his bare arms and torso. The rest of him is nothing but writhing, glistening, black tentacles that carry him forward at rapid speed.

### **To Arms!**

Saveus and the cultists trade their crossbows for melee weapons and attack.

- Saveus uses his *voice of the kraken* ability to frighten at least one adventurer, and casts *call lightning*.
- Orfeo is dangerous but not intelligent. He attacks the most obviously threatening target.

**Cover.** Rubble from the destroyed upper layers, and the large (occupying roughly five feet of floorspace) lamp that the wreckers use to lure in ships can provide half cover.

### **SCALING THE BATTLE**

- **Levels 3-4:** Replace the **cult fanatics** with **cultists**. Reduce Orfeo’s AC to 16 and his hit points to 95.
- **Levels 6-7:** Add 3 more **cult fanatics**.

### **DESTROYING THE LAMP**

If the party decides to attempt to destroy the lamp, it has AC 15 and 18 hp.

## **LEAVING THE TOWER**

When the party exits the tower, read or summarize:

As you set foot on the rocks, a thick, sucker-covered tentacle breaks the water and slams down mere inches in front of you.

### **ESCAPE**

The adventurers are 30 feet from a rowboat (either the one they arrived in or the one sheltered behind some of the rocks).

**Hazard.** Tentacles flail and grab at the party as they make their way to the boat. A successful **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw means they pass unharmed; those who fail take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage; those who fail by 5 or more are grappled (escape **DC 16**).

On initiative count 20, the kraken flings one grappled character against the wall of the tower or at another character for 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage.

Once the adventurers get to the boat, they are outside the kraken’s reach.

### **KRAKEN TENTACLES**

The kraken is an environmental hazard, not a monster that can be defeated.

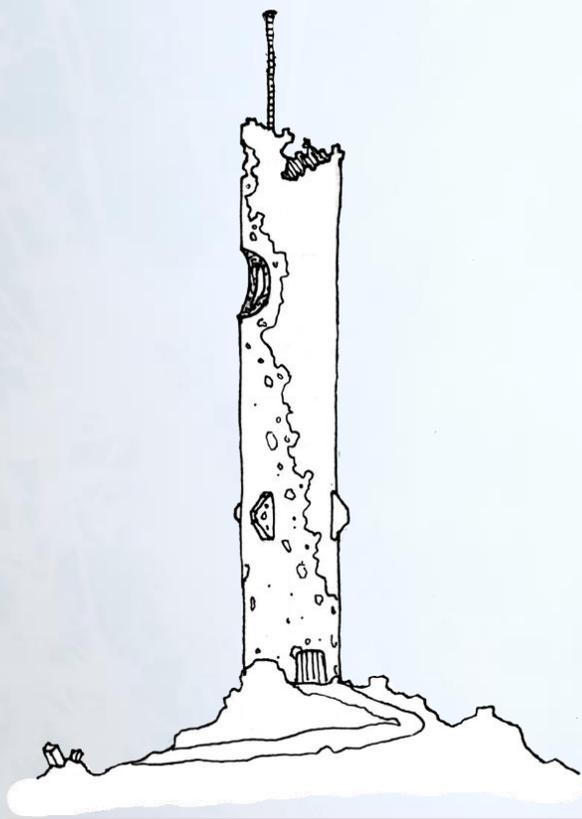
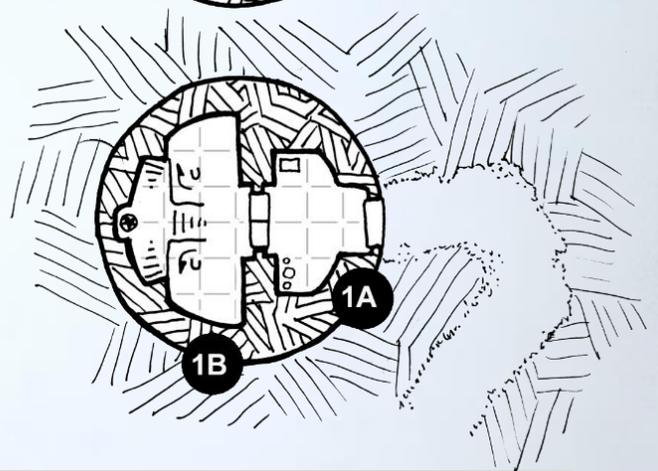
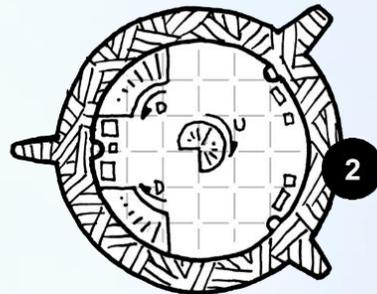
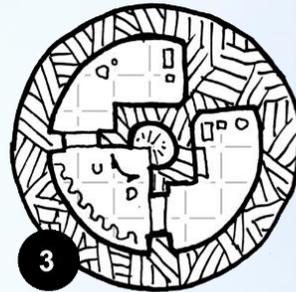
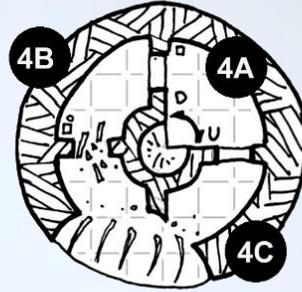
Treat the tentacles as independent creatures for the purposes of spell/attack targeting.

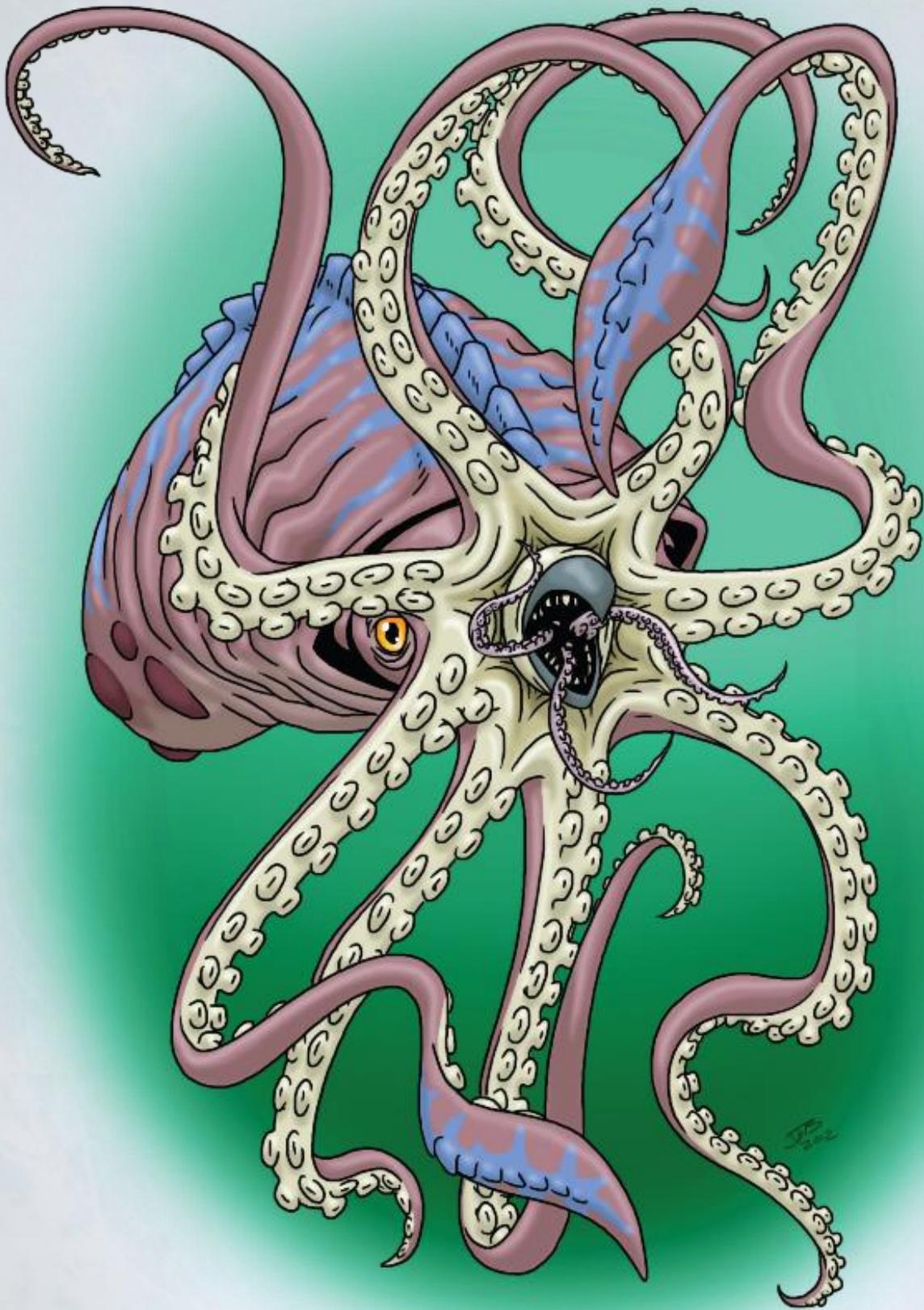
There are 6 tentacles that can reach this area. Each has an AC of 17 and 40 hit points. They are immune to lightning and non-magical bludgeoning damage.

## **CONCLUSION**

With its pet cult destroyed, the kraken has little interest in staying in these waters. It will leave within a week or two.

If the party was hired by Brandis Dyern, she will pay them as promised.





## SHUZA'S CURSE

By Joe Raso

Art: Courtesy Wizards of the Coast

Map: Joe Raso

Estimate run-time: 60 minutes

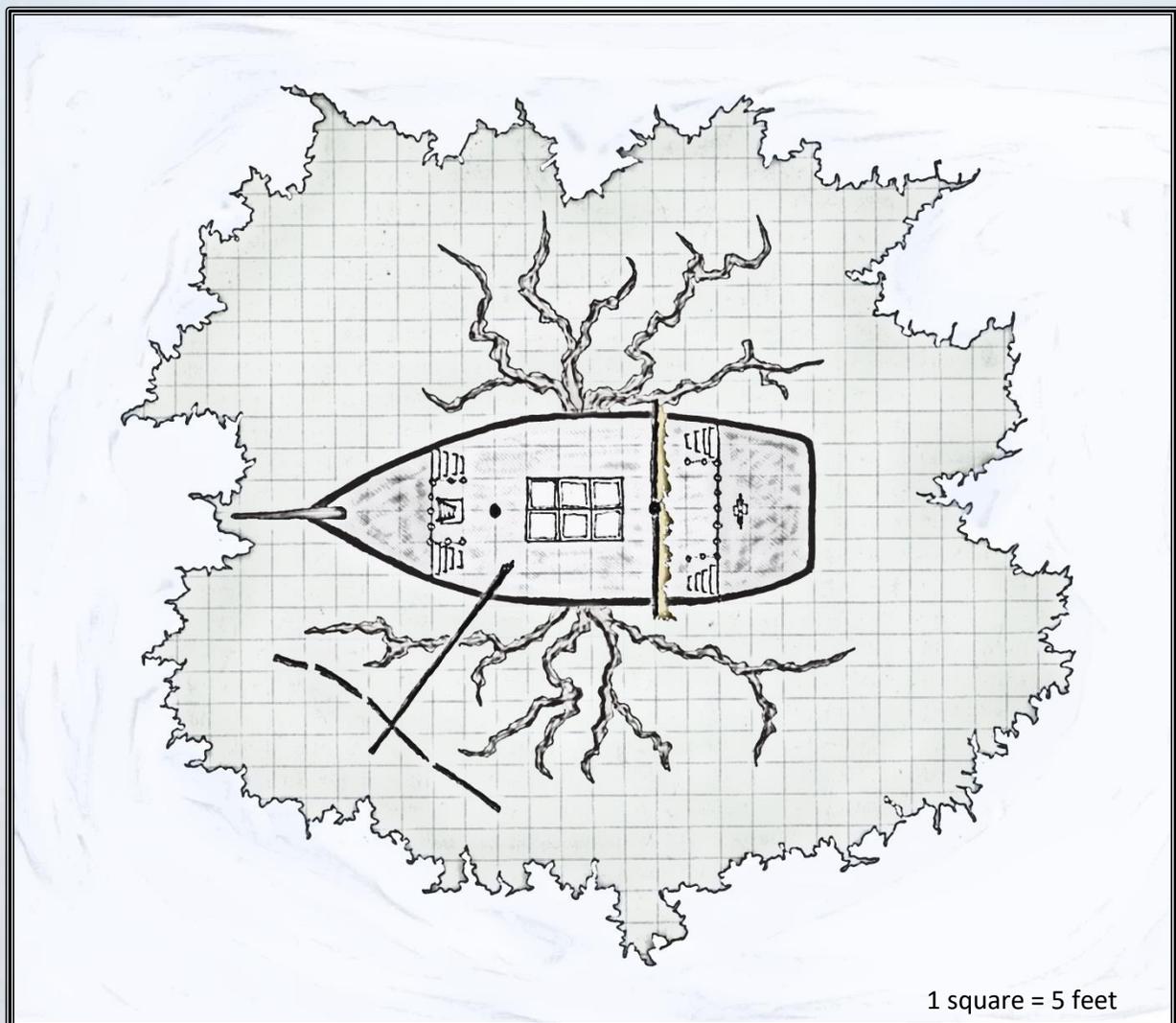
*Shuza's Curse is a short, combat focused adventure designed to challenge five characters of 8th level.*

### BACKGROUND

Six weeks ago, the *StorMoon*, a ship laden with spoils from an expedition into the jungles of Chult left Port Nyanzaru bound for Baldur's Gate. The treasures loaded onto the ship came

from a ruin hidden beneath a lizardfolk village. The explorers pillaged the ruins, killing most of the lizardfolk in the process. The tribe's shaman escaped and followed the explorers back to their ship, where he stowed away with the cargo.

Once at sea, the shaman used the stolen artifacts to perform an ancient ritual to create an evil monstrosity. The monster crippled the ship and killed the crew. The vessel now drifts at sea, trapped in an unnaturally growing mass of roots and vines. The ancient treasures stolen from Chult remain hidden within the ship's broken hull, protected by the shaman and his summoned plant horrors.



## PLOT HOOK

**Recovery Mission** – Sponsors of the original expedition to Chult hire the heroes to recover their missing vessel. They are provided with a small sailing ship and an experienced sailor, if required. They are given the last reported location of the *StorMoon* as sighted by passing ships.

## SHIP IN AN ISLAND OF ROOTS

Following the directions provided, the heroes have little difficulty finding the vessel adrift on the ocean. Read or paraphrase the following:

Between ocean swells a ship comes into view. It matches the description of the vessel you seek. Tattered sails flap ineffectually in the breeze. The ship is surrounded by an island of twisted roots and vines growing from a large breach in the hull. The tangled vegetation spreads in all directions over the water.

This mass of vegetation erupted from the ship's hold when Shuza, the lizardfolk shaman, completed the ancient ritual, unleashing an evil monstrosity that slaughtered the unsuspecting crew. In the weeks since, Shuza consumed the crew's remains and scattered their bones across the growing island. The island continues to grow, driven by the tainted magic of the shaman's ritual.

## ENVIRONS OF THE ISLAND

### GENERAL FEATURES

**Terrain.** Bumpy carpet of roots and vines.

**Weather.** Hot and humid, with a slight breeze.

**Light.** Unless otherwise noted, normal outdoor lighting. The interior of the ship is dark and devoid of light.

**Smells and Sounds.** The smell of seaweed and rotten fish. The sounds of lapping water and the occasional groan of the ship as it rises and falls with the island upon the sea.

## SURROUNDING WATERS

The surrounding waters swarm with **Hunter Sharks** (CR 2; MM, p 330). Any creature falling into the water attracts 1d4 + 1 sharks that arrive within 1d4 rounds.

## CROSSING THE ISLAND

Traversing the island is difficult, as the plant growth is hard to walk on and is considered difficult terrain. Additionally, the roots near the water's edge are very unstable. Any character moving within 10 feet of the water's edge must make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw to avoid falling through the roots into the ocean waters. Characters weighing less than 100 lbs. have advantage on these saving throws, while characters weighing over 200 lbs. have disadvantage on them.

## THE BROKEN SHIP

The *StorMoon* lies trapped within the island's roots. The hull is cracked with thick roots bursting through its shattered timbers.

## BOARDING THE SHIP

The ship is trapped within the growing island. The deck stands eight feet above the surrounding roots. The ship's wooden sides are slick and require a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** check to climb.

One of the ship's two masts is snapped in half, with the top portion leaning against the hull. This creates a 10-foot long ramp allowing characters to scramble up with a successful **DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check.

## CRACKED HULL

Massive roots spill from large cracks in the ship's hull. Small-sized characters may squeeze through the roots to enter the ship's hold.

The hold's floor lies two feet below the outside roots and is covered with one foot of water. The hold is considered difficult terrain because of the water and floating cargo within.

The stolen Chultan treasures are still here (see Conclusion).

The hold is dimly lit from an open hatch overhead. A wooden ladder ascends 10 feet through the hatch to the ship's deck above.

## ISLAND'S PROTECTORS

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### NEEDLE BLIGHTS

Standing on the rooted ground beside the ship are **Needle Blights** (CR 1/4; MM, p 32). Two needle blights for each character are equally spaced around the hull. They remain motionless until a character comes within 10 feet, which causes all blights to relentlessly assault all creatures on the island other than Shuza and the Root Horror who they ignore. The blights easily cross the island, ignoring the island's difficult terrain and automatically succeeding on saving throws to avoid falling through the roots.

### SHUZA THE SHAMAN

Ten feet above the deck, hidden within the rigging of the remaining mast is **Shuza** a **Lizardfolk Shaman** (CR 2; MM, p 205), with the following adjustments:

- Shuza may use its Change Shape ability to also change into the form of a lizard.
- Shuza may use Change Shape twice between short rests.
- While in crocodile or lizard form, Shuza can use a bonus action to expend one spell slot to regain 1d8 hit points per level of spell slot expended.

### ROOT HORROR

Resting on the ship's deck is a **Root Horror** (see appendix) the evil monster created by Shuza's ritual. The monstrosity waits motionless until a character approaches within 10 feet, or until directed to attack by Shuza.

## SHUZA'S MOTIVATIONS

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- Shuza believes it avenged its village by destroying the explorers.
- Shuza will forever distrust all non-lizardfolk because of the explorer's assault of its village.
- The Root Horror that Shuza unleashed is tainted with evil and is slowly corrupting the shaman through visions showing nature violently consuming cities of the Sword Coast.
- Shuza obsessively protects the village's treasures stored in the ship.
- Shuza believes the growing island is a new and sacred place to store the village treasures and will protect them with its life.

## CONCLUSION

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Assuming the heroes survive the encounter, the stolen treasures await within the ship. The hold's contents are left to the DM's discretion. This is a perfect location to leave mysterious artifacts which can lead to further adventures in Chult or elsewhere. Perhaps an ancient curse still protects these treasures?

Alternatively, the DM can use the Dungeon Masters Guide's random Treasure Horde table to determine the contents of the ship's hold. (DMG, p137)

## THE ROOT HORROR

*Huge monstrosity, chaotic evil*

*This monstrosity is a mass of writhing roots and vines, filled with the bones of its past victims. It is a twisted abomination of plant life, infused with the taint of evil. An ancient ritual transforms a specially prepared seed into this deadly horror.*

*Rumors suggest the secret to creating these horrors came from a forgotten demon lord in ages past. Knowledgeable scholars have suggested the names Chernovog, Ereshkigal and Malgarius as possible sources of the ritual used to create this evil.*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 172 (15d12+75)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +6

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** blinded, deafened

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive perception 16

**Languages** – cannot speak but can follow simple mental commands received from the creature that summoned it, if it is within 120 feet.

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**False Appearance.** *While the root horror remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a large mass of thick roots.*

**Grasping Tendrils.** The Root Horror can have any number of opponents grappled by its tendrils. Each tendril can be attacked (AC 15, 10 hit points; immunity to poison and psychic damage, vulnerability to fire damage). Destroying a tendril deals no damage to the Root Horror. A tendril can also be broken if a creature takes an action and succeeds on a DC 14 Strength check against it.

**Limited Telepathy.** The Root Horror can magically communicate simple ideas, emotions, and images telepathically with the creature who summoned it, if they are within 100 feet of one another.



**Savage Spirit.** The Root Horror has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, frightened, stunned and knocked unconscious.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The Root Horror makes up to three vine strike attacks.

**Vine strike.** *Melee weapon attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft, one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4), piercing damage. The target is grappled by a tendril (escape DC 14). If the target is medium or smaller, that target is also restrained. There is no limit to the number of creatures that can be grappled.

**Crush.** All creatures grappled by the Root Horror must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw. A failed save results in 2d6 bludgeoning damage, while a successful save reduces this amount in half.

### REACTIONS

**Splintered Form.** Whenever the Root Horror takes 10 or more damage from a single attack, portions of its form fall to the ground to become a Twig Blight in the nearest empty space adjacent to the Root Horror.

# THE SKULL OF OSSEOUS VEX

By Oliver Clegg

Map: Dyson Logos

Estimated run-time: 90 to 120 minutes

*The Skull of Osseous Vex* is a short lair adventure designed for five characters of 10<sup>th</sup> level.

## BACKGROUND

Magic can be unpredictable. This was clearer to no one more than it became to the storm giant Osseous Vex when he cast an *enlarge* spell on himself, hoping to achieve some long-forgotten feat of strength. Alas, the spell went awry and succeeded only in vastly engorging his own head, the weight of which ripped it from the giant's neck and tumbled it off a cliff into the sea.

The gigantic skull rolled a considerable distance and lay on the seafloor for some time, until fishes had picked away the flesh from the bones. In time, a **morkoth** (VGtM; CR 11, p 178) from the outer planes chanced across it, and took up residence inside it. The spirit of the giant, enraged by the intrusion, has raged against it ever since, turning the nearby sea into choppy, dangerous waters. In the confusion, the sea witch **Nanny Frogbatter** has occupied the lower portion of the skull.

The ghost of Osseous Vex hates the Morkoth. The Morkoth hates the witch Nanny Frogbatter. Nanny Frogbatter hates the ghost of Osseous Vex. The situation is on a knife edge – enter our adventurers.

## PLOT HOOK

The spirit of Osseous Vex has heightened localized storms in the area and causes frequent shipwrecks. The adventurers are hired to investigate the area below the water and find a way to calm the supernaturally treacherous seas.

If the adventurers investigate the skull and find a way to free Osseous Vex from his predicament, the seas calm and the crisis is abated. Characters who achieve this can expect a full reimbursement of their expenses from their employer, as well as whatever fee they manage to negotiate.

## LURE

Any creature within 30 feet of an entrance to the Skull and able to see it must make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature feels an intense urge to use its movement on each of its turns to enter the lair and to move toward the morkoth's location (the target doesn't realize it's heading toward a creature). The target moves toward the morkoth by the most direct route. As soon as it can see the morkoth, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. It can also repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns and every time it takes damage.

## GENERAL FEATURES

**Terrain.** The Skull of Osseous Vex is underwater, and all standard rules apply, aside from underwater visibility. The water for 50 feet around the skull is breathable except where noted otherwise.

**Light.** Unless otherwise noted, the skull is dimly lit throughout by a faint luminescence.

**Sounds.** A faint humming sound thrums around the skull, attracting schools of brightly colored fish. Listening to it closely reveals a hidden melody that speaks of better days.

**Pearlescent Walls.** The morkoth has coated the walls of the skull with a pearly wax in preparation for moving it through the planes. The wax has a peculiar property – 1lb of it can be used as the material component for a *plane shift* spell, regardless of the destination, though this destroys the wax.

**Ghostly Ambience.** The spirit of Osseous Vex wails constantly, causing the waters to churn and burble. The waters inside the skull are difficult terrain.

**Witching Hour.** The dark magic of Nanny Frogbatter disturbs natural creatures, causing beasts of CR 1 or lower inside the skull to go berserk and attack the nearest creature until slain or subdued.

## APPROACHING THE SKULL

The skull lies at roughly 100 feet below the surface of the waves. As the party approaches the skull, read or summarize:

The water blurs, suddenly becoming not only breathable, but transparent as the air above. Ahead of you, until now masked by the roiling waves, a gigantic skull lurks on the seabed. The sockets sing secret songs to your ears, tempting you near.

## AREA 1 – THE LEFT EYE

As the party approach Area 1 from the outside, read or summarize:

The left eye socket resonates with a grim certainty, and is coated internally in a pearly, waxy substance. The water swirls here, reflecting light from the surface in myriad dazzling patterns.

## MORKOTHIAN DREAMING

The Morkoth makes his lair within the left eye socket, plotting how best to rid himself of the troublesome witch who lives in the lower jaw of the skull. Nanny Frogbatter keeps sneaking around the skull and stealing the pearly goo the morkoth is using to colonize the skull, which is frustrating its progress and (more to the point) proving something of a bother.

When the adventurers arrive, the morkoth is deep in meditation. If the characters enter the left eye socket, read the following:

The entire inside of this chamber is covered in a pearl-like goo that, in some places, has hardened into a shell-like carapace. Floating in the midst of the chamber, a squid-like creature with seventeen eyes rests on the current, brows furrowed as if deep in thought.

If the morkoth becomes aware of the characters, it is delighted, bubbling and burbling excitedly. It asks for their help in dispensing of the witch living in the jaw. If the situation turns violent, it turns the water unbreathable and flees deeper into the skull. It promises a choice reward from its hoard if the characters are successful. The morkoth does not have a name, it finds the tradition a peculiar one. If the characters approach the morkoth in a suitably friendly manner, it attempts to reciprocate this manner by touching them with its noodle-like appendages.

**DM'S NOTE.** The morkoth is an alien creature with little understanding of how to win over strangers to its cause. Characterize it with frequent long periods of prolonged eye contact, uncomfortable silences, and tentacled caresses.

## AREA 2 – THE RIGHT EYE

As the party approach Area 2, read or summarize:

The right eye socket emanates a tremulous wail that ripples the water around it with sad, melancholy gurgles. Inside, something vast and ethereal is flickering in and out of existence – likely the source of the caterwauling.

## OSSEOUS VEX

The ghost of Osseous Vex lingers inside his skull, lamenting his poor fortune and sulking at the mistreatment of his remains by the morkoth. If the characters enter the eye socket, read:

A ponderous, ghostly bulk is flitting about this chamber, which is half covered in a strange pearlescent goop. The ghost is many times larger than the average human, and most notably is missing a head. A plaintive wailing is coming from the neck.

The headless spirit has the statistics of a **storm giant** (CR 13; MM, p 156), with the following changes:

- It has the *etherealness* feature of a ghost
- It is permanently blinded, and cannot speak
- It has the undead creature type

Osseous Vex is angry at the morkoth's attempt to commandeer his skull, and desires the characters to deal with the interplanar interloper. He doesn't have any material possessions to offer, and indeed is incapable of doing more than making a plaintive whistling sound through his throat. A *speak with dead* spell or similar magic allows a character to communicate with the ghost, revealing the source of his discontent.

The ghost of Osseous Vex is the cause of the weather and current disturbances in the area. The undead creature frequently displays fits of watery rage, shedding bubbles and surrounding itself with tempestuous waves.

**DM's NOTE.** Depending on the party composition and their access to communication spells, they have a greater or lesser chance of successfully communing with the spirit of Osseous Vex to find out what his problem is. Consider roleplaying the beheaded ghost as a plaintive, sympathetic figure rather than simply another rampaging undead in order to get the most out of this module.

### AREA 3 – THE MAW

As the party approach Area 3, read or summarize:

This huge cavern is bounded by bony arches and a vaulted palate. The entrance to the cavern lies between a wall of huge teeth, one of which has been lost to time, neglect or theft. The room has been turned into a rather ugly workshop, with benches, tables and occult looking apparatus scattered all over the place.

### NANNY'S GIGANTIC JAW

The **sea hag** (CR 2; MM, P 179) Nanny Frogbatter took up residence inside the skull shortly after the morkoth invaded the upper eye socket. She's looking for a permanent lair after a paladin rudely destroyed her last home, and thinks this makes the perfect spot. She's brought as much of her apparatus as she could carry, and occasionally sneaks into the morkoth's room to steal some pearlescent goo. She dislikes the ghost of Osseous Vex immensely, as the localized storms scare away the rare marine life she likes to use as spell components.

If the party enter Area 3, read the following:

The water swirls, and something rather ugly manifests from behind a rogue eddy. A wizened, hunched old crone with blue skin and gills where her eyes should be unfolds herself into something almost but not entirely quite unlike a human. "Ah, my precious fishies," she croons. "Are you here to help old Nanny Frogbatter with her problem?"

Nanny Frogbatter is a wily and shrewd negotiator. She offers the characters her help in disposing of the ghost of Osseous Vex, which will in turn stop the seas raging above. She has no real opinions about the morkoth, who she sees as a necessary evil.

Nanny Frogbatter is a **sea hag** with access to the following weird magic:

- She can pull a squid from her dress as an action and squeeze it to release a cloud of jet-black ink that functions as a *maddening darkness* spell, requiring no concentration.
- She can grab a nearby bone shard as an action and crush it to cast a version of *bones of the earth* that conjures spikes of bone instead of stone.

- She can use 1lb of pearlescent goo to cast a *legend lore* spell by peering into the opaline surface.

**DM's NOTE.** Nanny Frogbatter has little chance of standing up to a party of the assumed level in a fair fight. For this reason, it's important she is presented as a smooth-talking, nigh-Machiavellian diplomat. If attacked, she uses her magic to cover her escape if possible at the first opportunity.

### TREASURE

Nanny Frogbatter keeps an assortment of deep-sea flavored spell components and other bric-a-brac in her lair, including a pearl (100 gp), a pair of seashells bound by weeds, a crusty iron key, a rather ugly set of knucklebones inscribed with arcane sigils (25 gp), a recipe book containing an array of methods with which to create *potions of healing* (most of them involve dolphin spleen) and seventeen different kinds of mummified starfish (purpose unknown).

### DEVELOPMENT

As you might guess, disturbing the delicate equilibrium of the skull might have drastic consequences for the local ecosystem.

### WE KILL THE GHOST

Killing the ghost of Osseous Vex might seem the quickest way to solve the party's problems. If the ghost is dispatched, read or summarize the following:

The ghostly torso makes one last plaintive whistle as its ectoplasmic body waves and flicker in the throes of final death. The seas around the skull begin to churn faster and more violently, water surging down into the skull.

### RAGING WATERS

*Complex trap (Levels 11-16, deadly threat)*

**Trigger.** This trap occurs when the ghost of Osseous Vex is released from its undead state and remains active for 1 minute.

**Initiative.** *Raging Waters acts on initiative count 20, 10 and 0 each round.*

**Active Elements.** Raging waters includes strong currents, churning waters and an opportunistic shark.

**Strong Currents.** Each creature within 100 feet of the skull of Osseous Vex must succeed on a **DC 15 Strength** saving throw or move 30 feet in a random direction and have their movement speed reduced to 0 until the end of their next turn.

**Churning Waters.** Each creature within 100 feet of the skull of Osseous Vex must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw or take 10d6 bludgeoning damage from the crushing pressure. Creatures take half damage on a successful saving throw.

**Opportunistic Shark.** A rather hungry shark lunges for the character farthest from the skull, as long as that character is outside the skull itself, with a +9 to hit, and dealing 22 (3d10) piercing damage.

**Dynamic Elements.** The shark gets hungrier as time goes on.

**Opportunistic Shark.** The shark enters a blood frenzy, gaining 1d10 damage each round.

**Constant Elements.** The environment affects all creatures caught in the trap.

**Strong Currents.** Any creature that ends its turn in the Strong Currents is pushed 20 feet down towards the sea floor.

**Churning Waters.** Any creature that ends its turn in the Churning Waters takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

**Countermeasures.** Each of the trap's active elements can be thwarted by countermeasures.

**Strong Currents.** A creature with a swimming speed is unaffected by this element, but instead treats the area as difficult terrain.

**Churning Waters.** Any spell that can move wind or water can grant creatures within its area of effect advantage on their saving throws against this effect for the duration, and affected creatures take no damage on a successful save.

**Opportunistic Shark.** The shark has AC13 and 126 hit points. Killing the shark ends its threat.

### WE KILL THE WITCH

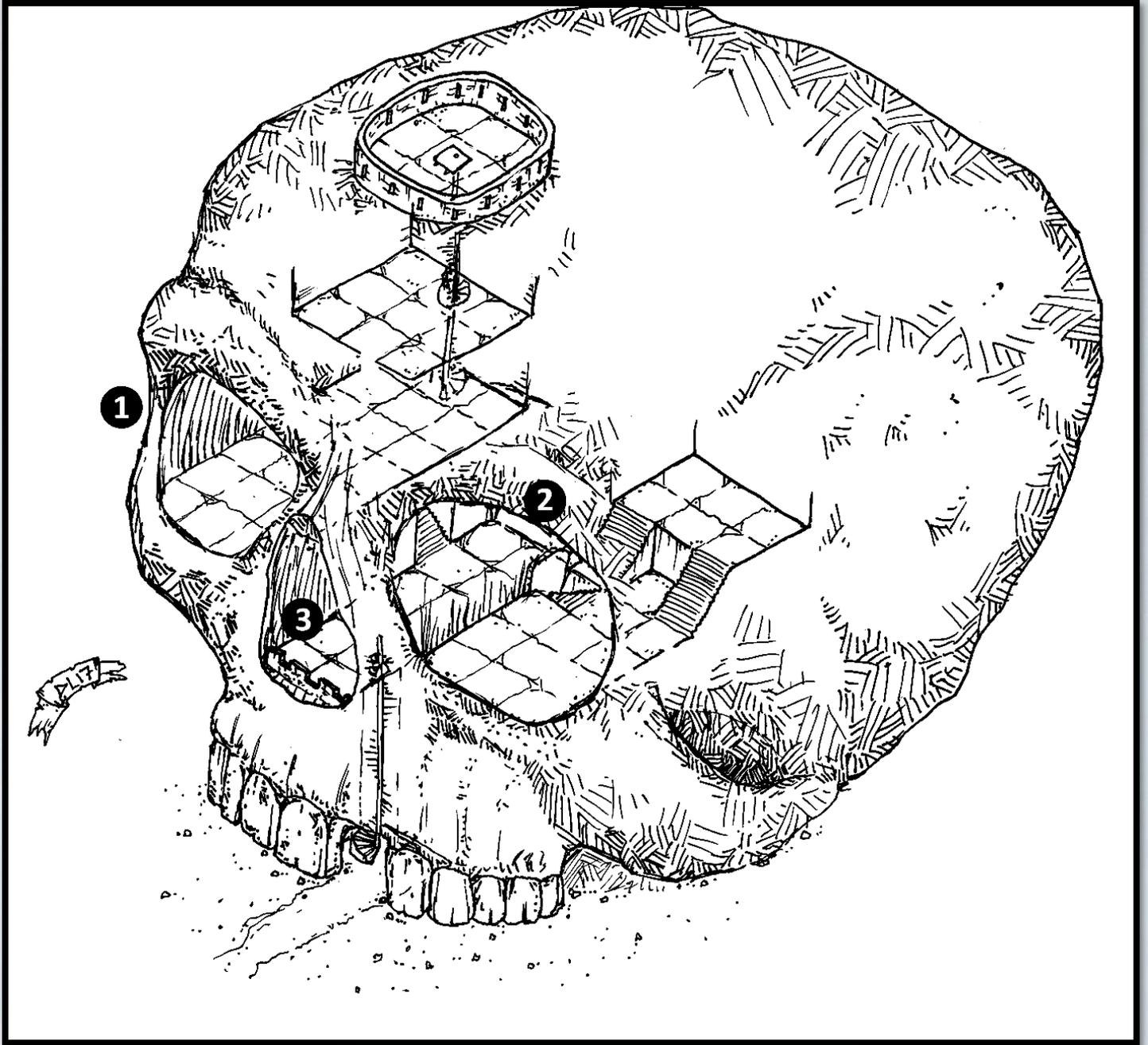
Killing the sea hag is unfortunate for the witch, but really only convinces the morkoth to turn its attention to the ghost of Osseous Vex. The hag's treasures are coveted by the morkoth, who demands them rather rudely.

### **WE KILL THE MORKOTH**

Killing the Morkoth allows the ghost of Osseous Vex to find rest...but only after the adventurers dispose of the witch. Osseous is fairly unreasonable about this part. The death of the Morkoth causes the water to become both unbreathable and to return to its normal reduced visibility after 1 minute, requiring the adventurers to find ways to mitigate both problems if they wish to return to the skull and deal with the witch or ghost.

### **AFTER THE STORM**

If the characters survive the maelstrom caused by Osseous Vex's departure, they might well reach the surface to find that the seas have quietened, and the storms abated. If the morkoth survived, it completes colonizing the skull in a matter of days, and vanishes with the cranial tomb to enjoy a long anticipated extraplanar sojourn. If Nanny Frogbatter survives, she does her best to foil the morkoth, and in the absence of the tentacled menace she sets up in the skull in perpetuity (which, of course, only causes yet more disturbances as evil wildlife congregates on the skull with screeching joy). It remains up to you to decide whether the adventurers get paid for exchanging one evil for another.





## SOARING HUNTSMAN

By Anne Gregersen

Art: Petar Penev

*If a ship's captain has been particularly vile and cruel, facets of their personality might remain in the material realm once the captain passes onto the next world. In these cases, the rage and hatred with which the captain ran his ship will be embedded within the vessel itself, creating a husk of what was once a traveller of the seas, now intent on nothing else than destroying any ships it may encounter.*

**Legendary Sightings.** Many claim to have seen the Soaring Huntsman while traveling the oceans, specifically near reefs or other locations where maneuvering a ship is slow and delicate. Sailors describe a crumbled wreck floating across the waves surrounded by a light mist. Some say that it was just a dark shape in the night, one that they noticed but which quickly vanished, while others claimed to have been attacked by the vessel, only barely escaping the encounter with their lives.

**Night Hunters.** The Soaring Huntsman has no want or need other than destruction. Targeting ships sailing the oceans at night, it lies beneath the waves, waiting for the opportune moment to strike at an oncoming ship or boat. It will try to wreck the ship in question by slamming into its hull and by killing its crew. If the crew tries to defend themselves, the spirits haunting the Huntsman will be quick to deter their uprising. The crew's painful howls emitting from inside the cursed vessel can spark fear into even the hardest sailor, making them abandon ship and leave their vessel to be destroyed by the Huntsman.

## THE SOARING HUNTSMAN'S LAIR

The lair of The Soaring Huntsman is found in shallow waters with rocks and broken ships resting close to the water's surface. Traveling in these waters is dangerous for any vessel, as is evident by the shipwrecks piercing the water's surface. These ships are all splintered and broken, made victims to the Huntsman's deadly ambush.

The Soaring Huntsman encountered in its lair has a challenge rating of 15 (13,000 XP).

### LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Huntsman takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- The Huntsman spawns 1d4+1 **specters** (CR 1; MM, p. 279) within 5 feet of it. The specters roll their own initiative and act on their own turn.
- A large wave crests over the battlefield, knocking into the fighting adventurers. Each creature in an area chosen by the Huntsman must make a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw. A creature takes 4d8 bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone on a failed save. On a success, the creature takes half damage and isn't knocked prone. The area the Huntsman targets can be up to 30 feet long, 10 feet wide, and 10 feet tall.
- A chill wind whirls up around the Huntsman. Each creature within 60 feet of the Huntsman must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw or take 6 (2d6) cold damage and have their speed halved until the end of their next turn.

## SOARING HUNTSMAN

*Gargantuan construct, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 248 (16d20 + 80)

**Speed** 0 ft., swim 80 ft.

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STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	2 (-5)

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**Saves** Str +11, Con +10

**Skills** Athletics +11

**Damage Resistances** fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite

**Damage Immunities** poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** tremorsense 300 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10

**Languages** none

**Challenge** 14 (11,500 XP)

**Immutable Form.** The Huntsman is immune to any spell or spell effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance.** The Huntsman has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Ram.** If the Huntsman moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a slam attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pushed back 20 feet and knocked prone.

**Legendary Resistances (3/Day).** If the Huntsman fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

### ACTIONS

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**Multiattack.** The Huntsman uses its Howls of Agony. It then makes three attacks. If available, the Huntsman can substitute one of the attacks with its Wind in the Sails ability.

**Rope.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 20 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage, and the creature is grappled (escape DC 15) if it is size Medium or smaller. Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained. The Huntsman has five ropes, each of which can grapple one creature.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8+6) bludgeoning damage.

**Howls of Agony.** Each creature of the Huntsman's choice that is within 60 feet of the Huntsman and can hear it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the Huntsman's Howls of Agony for the next 24 hours.

**Wind in the Sails (Recharge 5-6).** Each creature in a 60 ft. cone originating from the Huntsman must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be pushed back 60 feet and knocked prone. If a pushed target strikes an object, such as a wall or floor, the target takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it was thrown. If the target is thrown at another creature that creature must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take the same damage and be knocked prone.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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The Huntsman can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Huntsman regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Detect.** The Huntsman makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

**Rope Attack.** The Huntsman makes a Rope attack.

**Strangle (Costs 2 Actions).** The Huntsman tightens its grip on the creatures that it is grappling. A creature that is grappled by the Huntsman must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage and begin suffocating. On a success, the creature takes half as much damage on a successful one and does not begin suffocating.

## THE STOWAWAY

By Casey Machado

Artist: Purple Duck Games: Gary Dupuis

The Stowaway is a versatile encounter for a seagoing party with 5 characters between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> level. The encounter assumes the party is traveling aboard a seafaring vessel.

### BACKGROUND

The Triton people who reside in the underwater city of Benthica are prideful warriors, living largely in isolation from the world above. Most seafarers sail over their city unaware of its existence. The constancy of peril from a host of dangerous underwater creatures which lurk in the depths makes city safety and combat readiness utmost priorities for the tritons. As such, the best trainers are coveted community members and assigned the ongoing burden of readying a continual supply of new warriors.

**Arynan** (CN Female Triton), an exceptional warrior and instructor, has grown weary of conflict being the driving motivator in her life. As a result, she has abandoned her position and stowed herself away aboard the party's vessel with the intent to pursue a life away from the sea, focused on peaceful pursuits. The city officials, however, are not amused by the potential danger that Arynan's shirking of responsibility brings, and have set out to bring her back home.

**DM's NOTE.** Arynan has found a way aboard the party's vessel without their knowledge through use of her ability to take the form of a sea bird. This will seem more believable if foreshadowed inconsequentially.

### THE SETUP

The encounter begins as a strange and sudden calm befalls the vessel, bringing it to a stop. The calming effect is caused by the Benthican Scout Leader's Circllet of Doldrums which can be activated once per day to remove any naturally occurring wind, waves, and weather within a half mile radius of the circllet for one hour. The effect can be dispelled earlier by the caster or by destroying the circllet itself.

To begin the encounter, read or summarize the following to the players:

The wind abruptly quiets to an unexpected calm as the sails flap, then slouch motionless. Like wrinkles from a newly pressed tunic, the surrounding waves subside leaving a placid stillness. The clouds overhead appear mirrored on the water's surface with such clarity that it seems the ship has come to rest within the sky itself. The unexpected serenity is interrupted by fast approaching blurred shapes just below the surface.

The approaching shapes are those of the scout party sent by Benthica to return Arynan home, by force if necessary. The party consists of five **Benthican Scouts** and one **Scout Leader, Khovos Lonorath** (LG Male Triton). All Benthicans travel atop **Giant Seahorse** mounts (CR ½; MM, p 328).

Khovos, the scout leader, uses the same stat block as the scouts but with the following modifications:

- He is also equipped with the Circllet of Doldrums and a Wind Fan (DMG 213).
- He is proficient with the Wisdom (Insight) skill and has a +5 bonus to rolls.

Arynan also uses the Benthican Scout stat block, but with the following modifications:

- Her alignment is Chaotic Good
- She is equipped with an Elemental Gem (Emerald) (DMG 213).
- She is unarmed.
- Add the following feature:  
**Vigilant:** Gain a +5 bonus to initiative rolls.

With the ship motionless and surrounded, Khovos and two Benthican scouts climb aboard the deck and request to search the vessel in hopes of finding a runaway who abandoned her post.

A search of the vessel with a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals Arynan hidden among barrels and crates in the hold. Once found, Arynan comes to the main deck and vocally pleads her case to any that will listen.

## THE DEBATE

---

With all characters on the vessel, both sides can elaborate on their goals. Follow the roleplaying notes below for each character to guide the discussion.

If discussions drag on, Khovos grows impatient and presses the party for a decision, threatening force if necessary.

### ROLEPLAYING ARYNAN

Despite being an adept combatant, Arynan speaks emotionally and refuses to fight even if attacked claiming: “That chapter of my life is now over. To begin anew, I must not rely on the ease of violent solutions.”

Arynan believes she is missing out on much of the beauty life offers and argues that Benthica will be fine without her. She insists all should be free to pursue lives of their own choosing but if pressed acknowledges her immense value to their society. She is cautiously trusting of the party in hopes that they will sympathize and aide her escape.

### ROLEPLAYING KHOVOS

Khovos is superficially apologetic for becalming and boarding the ship, however his concern for his mission vastly outweighs what he views as any trivial concerns the adventuring party may express. He seeks a quick resolution as every moment spent arguing invites danger upon Benthica.

Khovos believes Benthicans to be superior to outsiders and does little to hide that attitude. He is dismissive of any offers to aid the city itself claiming “Benthica has all the resources it needs internally to ensure its safety... provided its citizens honor their duties.”

His request appeals to the heroes’ sense of honor and duty and is quick to categorize Arynan’s actions as selfish and immature. He promises that once Arynan is in custody, his team will leave immediately. At which time the calm which has befallen the ship will cease. If the party seems to lean in favor of Arynan, he will also threaten, though idly, that they risk making an enemy of the Benthican people. In reality their isolationist ways would never pursue such a matter.

**DMS NOTE.** It is likely certain party members will be more sympathetic to one side or the other, both Arynan and Khovos should pick up on this and try to rally those player characters to their side. This can be a great opportunity for individual roleplay moments.

## THE DECISION

Once both Arynan and Khovos reveal their intents, the adventuring party will be faced with a decision of whom to support each with their own consequences and possible rewards. Outlined below are the three most likely outcomes:

### *The party chooses to aide Arynan:*

- If the party sides with Arynan, they must convince Khovos that the Benthicans will be safe even without her. This can be done with a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check. The check is made with advantage if they appeal to his sense of superiority for his people. On a success, Khovos begrudgingly accepts and returns with his group to Benthica.
- On a failure, the Benthicans attempt to take Arynan back by force and attack the party. If the party successfully defeats the Benthicans, the stowaway disembarks when next the ship makes landfall to begin her new life. She effusively expresses her gratitude and repays the party by giving them an Emerald elemental gem (DMG 167).

### *The party sides with the Benthicans to turn over Arynan:*

- If the party sides with the Benthicans, they can attempt to convince Arynan she needs to return. This can be done with a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check. The check is made with

advantage if they appeal to her sensibility that her service enables her people to pursue lives of their choosing. On a success, Arynan declares her realization that it is her role to protect and encourage the freedoms of her people just as she wanted for herself and willingly returns to Benthica

- On a failure, Arynan seizes her first opportunity to attempt to flee the ship. She immediately uses her Emerald (Water) Elemental Gem worn as part of a necklace to summon a water elemental to cover her escape. The Benthicans pursue her immediately, leaving the party to handle the elemental. Khovos remains long enough to thank them for their honorable service and gives them a Wind Fan to offset any lost time they may have experienced.

### *The party decides to let both sides sort it out themselves:*

- If the party decides to remain neutral, Arynan releases her elemental and attempts to flee. The Benthicans, angry about the party's lack of cooperation, only send two scouts to pursue Arynan while the rest attack the party and elemental if needed.

**DMS NOTE.** Don't hesitate to reward exceptional roleplay or creativity by reducing the Charisma (Persuasion) DC, substituting another more relevant skill, or waiving the check entirely if it seems appropriate.

## BENTHICAN SCOUT

Medium humanoid (triton), lawful good

**Armor Class** 14 (hide armor)

**Hit Points** 49 (9d8 + 9)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

**Skills** Nature +4, Perception +6, Survival +5

**Damage Resistances** cold

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** – Common, Primordial

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Amphibious:** The scout can breathe air and water

**Innate Spellcasting.** The Benthican scout's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13). The scout can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *shape water*

1/day: *fog cloud, gust of wind, wall of water*

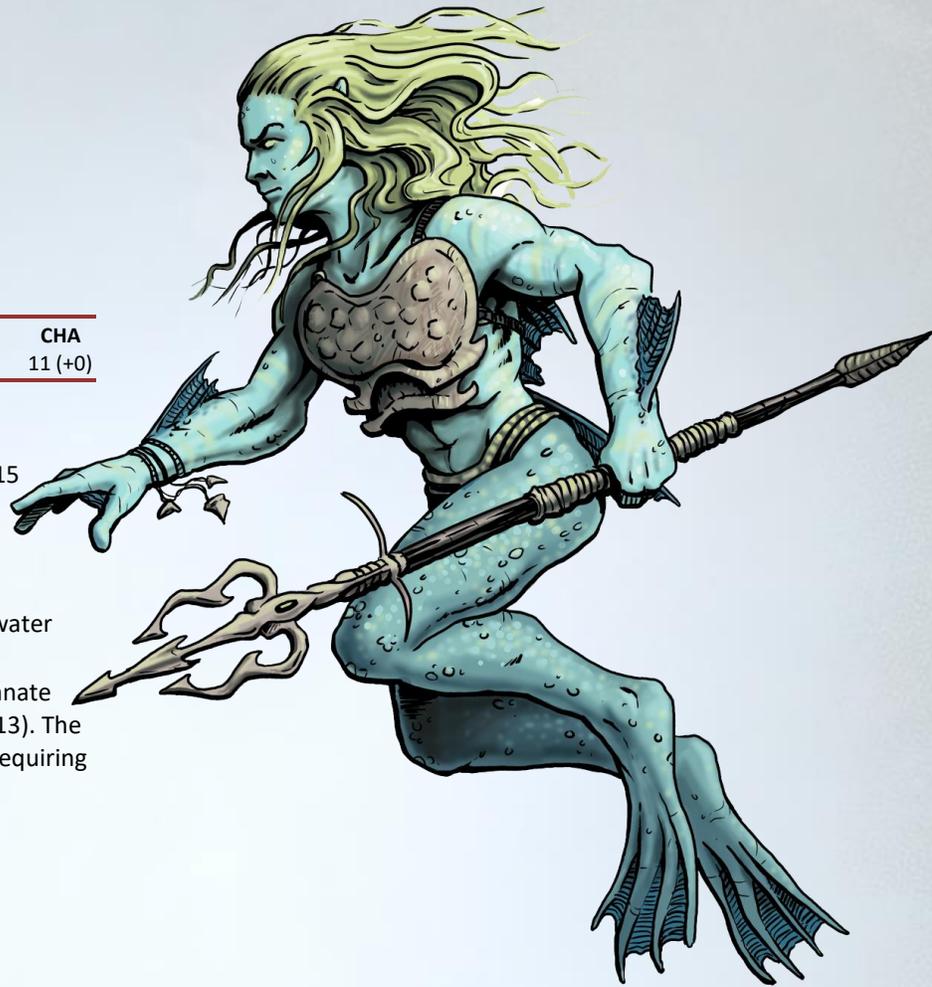
### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The scout makes two attacks with its trident or dagger, or makes a Retrieving Net attack.

**Retrieving Net.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target is restrained within the net and must succeed on a DC 13 Strength check or be pulled 15 ft towards the scout. The target or adjacent creature may use their action to remove the net, freeing the target.

**Trident.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage, or 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.



## NEW CREATURES

By Jeff C. Stevens

Artists: Lluís Abadías & Luiz Prado

### FLYING RAZOR FISH

*Tiny beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 5 (2d4)

**Speed** fly 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Stealth +4

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed

**Senses** darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Flyby.** The razor fish doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

**Water Breathing.** The razor fish can breathe only underwater.

#### ACTIONS

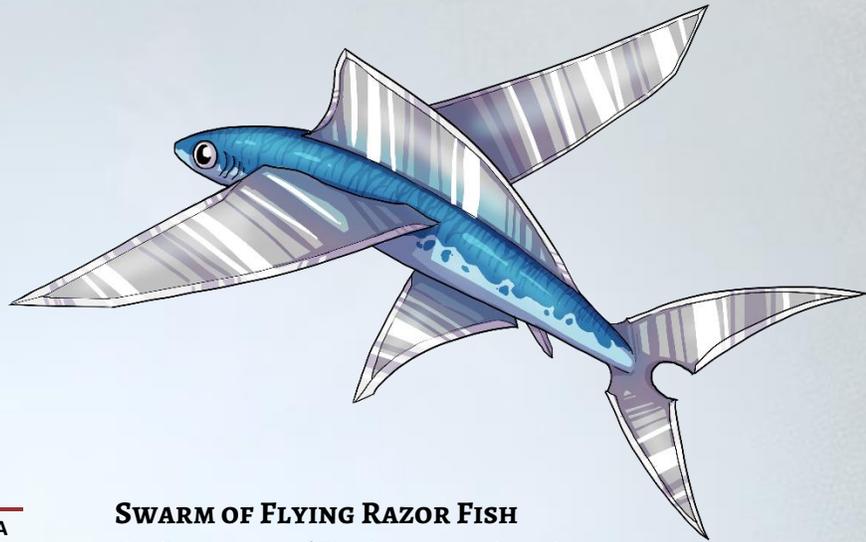
**Wings.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 slashing damage.

**Razor Fish** are small fish roughly 9 inches in length. Their pectoral fins are long, about half the length of the fish's body. These fish can leap out of the water, extend their pectoral fins, and sail in the air for 45 feet.

The pectoral and dorsal fins are also very sharp, like the finely-honed edge of a rogue's dagger.

The fish typically travel in swarms but are often encountered alone, having been trapped in a very sturdy net or caught on someone's fishing line.

Safely handling the fish requires a character to make a DC 15 Dexterity check. On a success, the character places their hand safely around the fish, covering the dangerous fins. On a failure, the fish wiggles and the handler suffers 1d6 slashing damage.



### SWARM OF FLYING RAZOR FISH

*Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 36 (8d8)

**Speed** fly 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.

**Condition Immunities** Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned

**Senses** darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Flyby.** The swarm doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

**Swarm.** The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a single razor fish. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

**Water Breathing.** The swarm can breathe only underwater.

#### ACTIONS

**Wings.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) slashing damage, or 3 (1d6) slashing damage if the swarm has half its hit points or fewer.

## HYPNO FISH

*Tiny beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 1 (1d4 - 1)

**Speed** 0 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	15 (+3)

**Skills** Stealth +4

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Blood Frenzy.** The hypno fish has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

**Hypnotic Charm:** At night, the fish emits hypnotic patterns of light from its body. Any creature viewing the fish must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the lights compel the creature to approach, entering the water by any means possible. A compelled creature must use its movement to move closer to the fish. On a successful save, the creature is immune to the hypnotic charm for 24 hours.

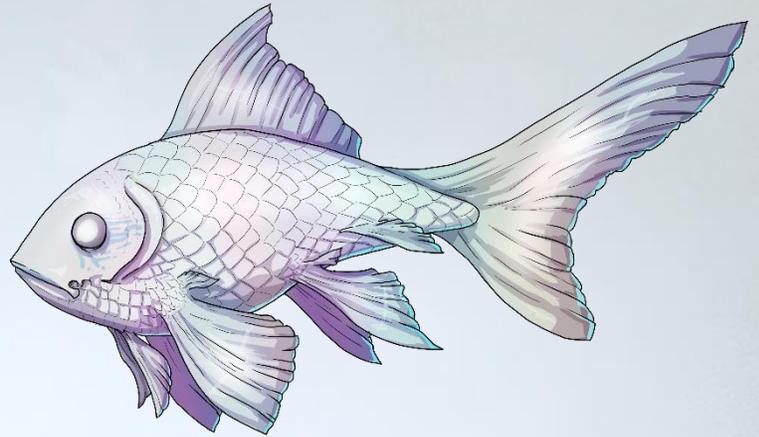
The compelled creature may attempt a DC 15 Wisdom save at the end of each of its turns. The effect ends if the compelled creature takes damage.

**Water Breathing.** The hypno fish can breathe only underwater.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

By day, the **Hypno Fish** are harmless. Their flesh is very tasty, with a sweet, white meat. The scales on the fish are extremely opalescent, making them very beautiful when the sunlight hits them. These fish travel in schools, swimming just below the surface of



the water allowing their bodies to soak up the radiant energy of the sun.

At night, they hunt. Their beautiful scales sparkle as they release the stored radiant energy. In addition, they hunt in swarms, attacking in unison and feeding in a frenzy once blood is in the water.

The colorful light emitted from their scales acts as a lure to the creatures of the water. Though, to creatures above the water, the light is hypnotic, causing sailors and merchants to leap from their ships into the beautiful swarm.

## SWARM OF HYPNO FISH

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 28 (8d8 - 8)

**Speed** 0 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	15 (+3)

**Skills** Stealth +4

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Blood Frenzy.** The hypno fish has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

**Hypnotic Charm:** At night, the fish emits hypnotic patterns of light from its body. Any creature viewing the fish must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the lights compel the creature to approach, entering the water by any means possible. A compelled creature must use its movement to move closer to the fish. On a successful save, the creature is immune to the hypnotic charm for 24 hours.

The compelled creature may attempt a DC 15 Wisdom save at the end of each of its turns. The effect ends if the compelled creature takes damage.

**Swarm.** The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a single hypno fish. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

**Water Breathing.** The swarm can breathe only underwater.

## ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) piercing damage, or 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

## HUGE GIANT ANGLER CRAB

*Huge beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 161 (14d12 + 70)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)	1 (-5)	9 (-1)	3 (-4)

**Skills** Stealth +4

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Amphibious.** The crab can breathe air and water.

**False Appearance.** While the crab remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from the natural seafloor.

**Lures.** Two prehensile stalks grow from the crab's head, which it can extend up to a length of 30 feet. The crab can manipulate the ends of the stalks to mimic other creatures (a drowning or flailing humanoid, an injured seal, a paddling dog) to lure its prey within striking distance. If a creature uses its action to examine the lure it can determine that it is fake with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Otherwise, the creature believes the lure is real.

### ACTIONS

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (4d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). The crab has two claws, each of which can grapple only one target.



## NEW MAGIC ITEMS

By Jeff C. Stevens

Artist: Lotta Ignatius

### TEETH OF THE DEEP

*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)*

Once per day you may activate this necklace by uttering a command word, which you choose when you attune to the item.

Your head changes into that of a shark and you gain the following abilities:

**Darkvision.** You gain darkvision 60 ft.

**Bite.** As an action, you may make a bite attack. This attack deals 1d8 damage and uses your Strength modifier.

**Breathe Underwater.** You gain the ability to breathe underwater.

**Keen Smell.** You gain the *keen smell* trait.

The effect lasts until you finish a short or long rest.



### EYE OF THE SEA

*Wondrous item, rare*

*Crafted by sea elves as a talisman for their land-walking allies, the eye of the sea has many beneficial properties.*

This item has 8 charges. While wearing it, you can use a bonus action to expend 1 of its charges to cast *water breathing* on one creature only. If you expend 2 charges, the target also gains a swim speed equal to its walking speed. In addition, you can use your action to expend 1 charge to cast the *animal friendship* spell on a beast with a swim speed.

The eye regains 1d6 + 2 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the necklace's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the amulet dissolves into water and is destroyed.



### PURIFICATION BOTTLE

*Wondrous item, rare*

*A small, corked, blue glass potion bottle.*

When uncorked and placed in water, the bottle fills with up to 1 gallon of water. In addition, all foreign substances are removed from the bottled water, including poison, leaving you with drinkable water.

### SEAFARER'S WHISTLE

*Wondrous item, rare*

*A small brass whistle with a pearl inside.*

When blown above water, the whistle acts normally. When blown below water, the whistle summons a random creature determined by a d8:

- 1) One **giant seahorse**
- 2) 1d4 **reef sharks**
- 3) A **swarm of quippers**
- 4) 2d4 **octopuses**
- 5) A **giant crocodile**
- 6) 12 **sea horses**
- 7) 1d4 **hunter sharks**
- 8) 1 **killer whale**

The summoned creature appears in two rounds, swimming to its summoner. When it does, roll a d6. On a result of 1-5, the creature is friendly and obeys the summoner's verbal commands. On a result of 6, the creature is unfriendly and attacks its summoner.

The summoned creature remains for 1 hour, after which time it swims away.

The whistle may not be used again in this way until you finish a long rest.

### BOOTS OF THE SEA DEVILS

*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)*

*These boots are fashioned from the skin of sahuagin.*

While in water and attuned to these boots, you gain the following features.

**Swim Speed.** You gain a swim speed of 40 ft. If you already have a swim speed of 40 ft. you gain +10 ft. to your normal rate.

**Breathe Underwater.** You gain the ability to breathe underwater.

**Blood Frenzy.** You have advantage on melee attack rolls made against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

**Curse.** These boots are cursed. Attuning to them curses you until you are targeted by the *remove curse* spell or similar magic. Removing the boots fails to end the curse on you. Whenever you are engaged in combat, you lose control of your actions and attack the nearest creature within 60 feet of you that does not have all its hit points.

This effect lasts for one minute, after which time you may select your targets as you wish, but you cannot recall the events that occurred during that minute.

### RUSTY OLD SHIELD

*Armor (shield), rare*

*This round, metal shield is rusty, pitted, and has several small, open holes. No matter how much time is spent polishing the shield, or how much magic is used, the shield always reverts to its rusty old appearance within 1 hour.*

While holding this shield, you have a +2 bonus to AC. This bonus is in addition to the shield's normal bonus.

In addition, while holding the shield you may cast the *shield* spell once. Once you use this feature, it may not be used again until you finish a long rest.

### SHIELD OF THE DEEP

Armor (shield), rare

The face of this blue, metal shield has the image of a kraken with an open maw.

While holding this shield, and while submerged in water, you are encircled by a magical atmosphere. While encircled, you can breathe normally.

In addition, you may utter a command word to cause the kraken's maw to release a cone of water. Each creature in a 60-foot cone must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 3d6 bludgeoning damage and is pushed 10-feet on a failed save, or half as much damage and is not pushed on a successful one.

Once you use this feature, it may not be used again until you finish a long rest.

### FISHERMAN'S TRIDENT

Weapon (trident), uncommon (requires attunement)

While attuned to this magic weapon you gain the following benefits:

**Swim.** You have a swim speed equal to your base walking speed.

**Breathe Underwater.** You gain the ability to breathe underwater.

### HUNTER'S TRIDENT

Weapon (trident), very rare (requires attunement)

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon. In addition, the weapon ignores resistance to piercing damage.

When you roll a 19 or 20 on your attack roll with this magic weapon, the target takes an extra 5 piercing damage.





### UMBERLEE'S KISS

*Weapon (trident), very rare (requires attunement)*

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. In addition, the weapon ignores resistance to fire damage.

The weapon deals an extra 2d6 fire damage to any target it hits.

### DEAD MEN'S REVENGE

*Weapon (trident), very rare (requires attunement)*

This magic weapon has 3 charges. While holding it, you can use an action and expend 1 charge to perform one of the following actions.

Each time you expend a charge, the trident deals 7 (2d6) necrotic damage to you. This damage cannot be reduced in any way.

**Finger of Death.** The trident releases a 60-foot line of black, crackling energy. Each creature in this line must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. A creature suffers 10 (3d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Phantom Speed.** You gain the effects of *haste* for 1 minute.

**Shockwave.** You release a 60-foot radius shockwave centered on you. Each creature in this radius must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Once used, this property can't be used again until you finish a long rest.

**Terror.** You release a 30-foot cone of terror. Each creature in this area must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of you for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Once used, this property can't be used again until you finish a long rest.

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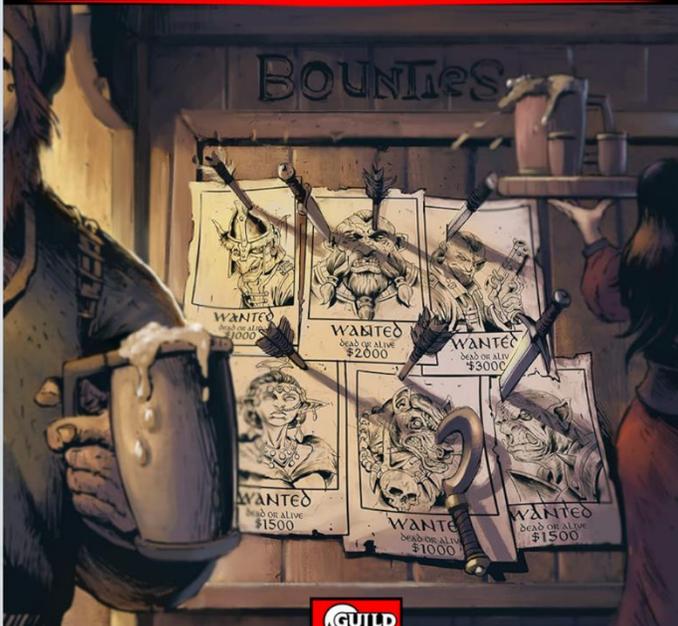
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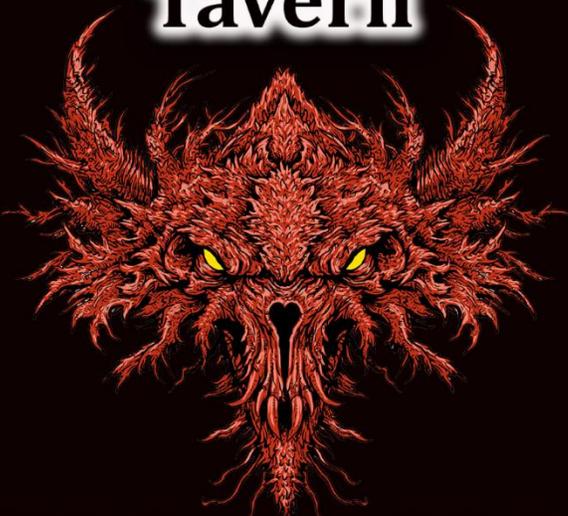
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