

RETURN TO FREEPORT

PART FOUR: THE FREEBOOTER'S CITY

Pathfinder
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE





PART FOUR

THE FREEBOOTER'S CITY

THE FLEET IS ASSEMBLED

Freeport has accrued a number of colorful aliases in its time. Some call it the Crossroads of the World, while others know it as the City of Adventure, the City of Cults, or even “the city where you don’t insult halflings in public unless you want to float away on the tide.” Above all of these monikers, however, it is always the Freebooter’s City.

It is true that many of Freeport’s most exceptional pirates have died or retired, while others have decided to relocate to Hangnail or Libertyville for reasons of greed or idealism. Even so, their names still echo in the songs of the dockside taverns, and their influence lingers in every shadowed alleyway. Though the city has recently acquired a thin veneer of respectability, its customs and traditions reflect the old code of its pirate founders.

After the events of *Return to Freeport* Parts 1, 2, and 3, the PCs return in triumph to the Freebooter’s City, fresh from their victory at the Razor Caves. But a danger still threatens Freeport, and the PCs are well-placed to wake the wrath of the city’s major factions. Having saved Hangnail from destruction, they are free to sail back aboard their own magical Mazin ship, the *Eth Abaddon*. They may also call upon their friend Captain Flynx, assuming they are still on speaking terms with him following the incident in the Razor Caves. If they haven’t decided to slit his throat, he puts his ship

Precocious Imp at their disposal. They surely know or are about to discover that the Mazin slave-takers have powerful allies both within Freeport and without, and that a fleet of Mazin ships is on the way to Hangnail, tasked with transforming it into a base of operations capable of threatening Freeport itself.

This adventure provides a break from battling the Mazin and their div overlords directly, and instead shines a light on the Freebooter’s City. It allows the PCs a chance to enter Freeport’s piratical underground and attempt to negotiate its choppy waters.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

After navigating the changed conditions within Midnight’s Ichor and having their ship confiscated by Nathan Grymes, the party returns to Freeport just in time for hurricane season to set in. Failing to convince the Captains’ Council that the approaching Mazin fleet is a threat worthy of deploying the city’s navy, they are approached by Captain Jacob Lydon and convinced to assemble a new fleet themselves—a pirate fleet.

With help from their contact at the *Shipping News*, they win over as many buccaneers as they can and eventually have their ship returned to them. Before they can set sail, however, a leadership crisis breaks out and one

of the captains they have recruited challenges Lydon for the admiralty of the fleet. The PCs, filling in for Lydon's officers, must help defeat the challenger and prove that Lydon is the best commander for the job. After all, the bond that they have forged with Lydon grants them important influence over the new pirate fleet, so his loss is their loss as well.

PART ONE

LOOSE ENDS SINK SHIPS

Depending on how things shake out at the climax of the previous chapter, *The Razor Caves*, the PCs may be in possession of the elemental-powered magic ship *Eth Abaddon* or Captain Flynn's smaller craft the *Precocious Imp*. It is also possible that they may have access to both vessels, or to neither of them, though obviously they need a way to get off Hangnail Island.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

This adventure assumes that the PCs begin at level 8. Using the fast experience advancement rules they should reach level 9 once they recruit the third captain to their fleet, and level 10 at the adventure's conclusion. Because this chapter is less focused on combat than previous chapters, you should feel free to be generous in handing out story rewards and experience bonuses for good roleplaying. Any encounter listed as "CR 5" is mostly a roleplaying encounter. Though brawls and challenges may come along none of these have a significant risk of major loss or death for the PCs. You should still reward experience for these encounters, and keep track of the treasure value that could be earned for each. Since most of these encounters don't have monsters to kill and receive loot from, you can instead use the value of such encounter's treasure to add interesting rewards throughout this adventure. PCs might be offered gifts and bribes by those wishing to curry favor, or even establish gangs and businesses that can pay them a monthly stipend. As long as the character's total wealth by level isn't significantly off from the values listed for PC Wealth in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*, it doesn't matter where their loot comes from.

- **If the PCs don't have access to either ship:** On returning to Hangnail from the Razor Caves they find Klinx Thickskull waiting for them on the docks. She's prepared to return her father's ship to him, but not out of the goodness of her heart. She reveals that while attempting to depart through Midnight's Ichor, her vessel encountered some new and powerful threat stalking the mist. It killed the handful of crew she'd brought with her, forcing her to flee alone. Though Klinx is willing to let her father and the PCs have the *Precocious Imp* back, she demands to be taken with them to Freeport and is prepared to fight them if they refuse.
- **If the PCs don't have access to the *Eth Abaddon*:** The *Precocious Imp* is a fast ship, but she shouldn't be able to catch up to the supernaturally speedy *Eth Abaddon*. However, unprepared for the changed conditions in Midnight's Ichor (and sabotaged slightly by their own rebellious air elemental), the Ameers of Abaddon have met their doom within the mist. Their ship is now adrift, an eerily quiet ghost ship which the PCs may encounter and salvage.
- **If the PCs don't have access to the *Precocious Imp*:** Despite the *Imp*'s head start, the *Eth Abaddon* is able to catch up to her with ease thanks to its magical air sails. The ship is adrift just within the boundary of Midnight's Ichor, having lost her crew to a draugr attack. When the PCs investigate, they discover Klinx hiding in the hold, the sole survivor of the incident and none too pleased at this turn of events.
- **If the PCs possess both ships:** Apparently, fortune is ally to the brave (or foolish). Presumably most of them are on the *Eth Abaddon*, which Black Jules targets once they sail into Midnight's Ichor.

SAILING THE ETH ABBADON

Whichever of the PCs placed the elemental heart within the ship's plinth is now in mental contact with Diamanda, the air elemental that powers the *Eth Abaddon* (a large air elemental; see the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*). Whether they captured the ship in the Razor Caves or Midnight's Ichor, Diamanda speaks to her new liaison as soon as they sail into open sea, her gale-force voice echoing in the appropriate character's mind. She is curious about her new masters, wondering how they compare to the previous captain Yusynaat and the Ameers of Abaddon, who treated her like another of their slaves.

Unlike many elementals Diamanda does not resent being taken from her home plane, however she does chafe

at being unable to push the ship to its fastest. Yusynaat was a cautious captain who kept her on a tight leash, and the elemental's first requests are for a heading and permission to deploy her full power. If the request is denied she grumbles but acquiesces. If given permission, she joyously screams into the waves, accelerating so suddenly that all aboard need to grab hold of something (DC 8 Reflex save) or fall to the deck.

Future interactions with Diamanda should be informed by this initial reaction. Think of her as a teenager chafing at parental restrictions but unwilling to leave home: she is more likely to sigh, roll her eyes, and say something sarcastic than actually defy an order. Given free reign, she is a friend for life, though still capricious and likely to push for further indulgences.

DECK PLANS

The *Eth Abaddon* is a 100-foot baghlah, a deep-sea variety of dhow. It has two masts and full rigging even though it needs no sails. A crow's nest sits atop of the main mast. There are staterooms for officers in the quarter galleries and a hold beneath, but by Freeport standards it would not seem like a particularly large ship. However, its extra-dimensional storage spaces mean it is able to carry much more than any would suspect, making it a perfect smuggling vessel.

The *Eth Abaddon* is armed with ballistae rather than cannon; a slightly old fashioned arrangement, though not uncommon. Even in Freeport, cannon are expensive and their popularity is a recent phenomenon. The ship's mysterious, rune-inlaid dark wood gives the *Eth Abaddon's* doors (both standing and trapdoors) hardness 7, a Break DC of 22, and 22 hit points.

MAIN DECK

The mainmast rises out of the main deck, 50 feet high. Rigging connects it to the foremast, and a DC 10 Climb check is required to cross the rigging from one mast to the other without touching the deck. There are also overhead lines between six and seven feet off the deck for crew to grab when the seas are rough, though only medium-sized creatures are able to make use of them. Belaying pins to secure the lines are attached to the gunwales, and may be used as clubs sized for Medium creatures in case of an emergency. Six ballistae face outwards from each side of the main deck, with a store of 50 bolts kept in racks on each side. A rowboat is attached to the starboard side, and has room for eight medium-sized creatures in it.



THE ETH ABBADON



POOP DECK

The rear of the deck is raised unusually high, standing 20 feet above of the main deck and creating an excellent platform for firing down on other craft with spells or archery. There is no wheel here, only a plinth which is capable of receiving the jade *elemental heart*. Placing the heart atop the plinth and contacting Diamanda is a full-round action.

FORE DECK

The fore deck is raised 10 feet above the main deck and the foremast rises out of it a further 30 feet. Though it has no figurehead, the *Eth Abaddon* does more usefully have a swivel-mounted ballista placed here above a sealed rack containing 10 bolts.

OFFICER'S QUARTERS

Under the poop deck are two luxurious rooms covered in cushions. One of them has a desk and chair, made of the same dark wood as the ship, and contains the ship's

AREA 1. MAIN DECK

AREA 2. POOP DECK

AREA 3. FORE DECK

AREA 4. OFFICER'S QUARTERS

AREA 5. CREW QUARTERS

AREA 6. ARMORY

AREA 7. BRIG

AREA 8. MAIN HOLD

AREA 9. GALLEY

AREA 10. BILGE

logs and a chest. If the Ameers managed to escape from the Razor Caves with their treasure, the chest contains 1,000 gold pieces. The second room is designed to be shared by the other officers, and has a glass hookah at its center as well as a set of kahve cups on a low table surrounded by yet more cushions. Both rooms have windows large enough for a medium-sized creature to climb through them, and hanging lanterns attached to the rafters.

CREW QUARTERS

Simple hammocks hang between the beams of the crew quarters. There is enough room to sleep 40, though the magical nature of the ship allows the *Eth Abaddon* to operate with minimal crew. There are also numerous small

portholes here. Squeezing through them requires a DC 30 Escape Artist test.

ARMORY

This door is locked and requires a DC 20 Disable Device check to open, though the key can be found in the brig. If the Ameers escaped from the Razor Caves, then the armory contains their scimitars and chain shirts, otherwise it is empty.

BRIG

Prisoners can be kept within these two cages, which have bars with hardness 10, 50 hp, and a break DC of 26. The locks require a DC 40 Disable Device check to unlock. The keys hang on a nail outside, but there is an extra key hidden among the others. If this special key is placed in any cage lock and turned anti-clockwise, the cage door opens to reveal a lightless, extra-dimensional space of equal size to the cage. Both of these hidden spaces are currently empty and dark, and they smell of stale straw and old blood and sweat. Treat these as type IV *bags of holding* when determining how they interact with other magics and effects.

MAIN HOLD

There is room for 40 slaves within this hold, which is obviously used for human cargo more frequently than any other kind. A series of silver runes on the trapdoor leading down into the hold can be activated to open to an extra-dimensional space of equivalent size instead, a dark place that smells faintly of blood and palm trees. Treat this as a *portable hole* when determining how it interacts with other magics and effects.

GALLEY

The ship's kitchen contains a stove and two worktables as well as wooden cupboards that are well-stocked with a variety of unlabeled spices. The variety on offer is sure to baffle anyone but a Mazin chef, though an azhar may recognize some of seasonings, including a spice blend called baharat. If the entire spice collection was sold, it's worth 500 gp.

BILGE

The very bottom of the ship is filled with stale, stinking water and a hand pump that can be used to clear it out. There is also a daggerboard: a secondary keel that can be unpinning to drop into the water providing extra stability

and lifting the ship's nose for additional speed. The daggerboard must be winched back up in shallow waters or at port to prevent it from being damaged. A DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) or a DC 10 Profession (sailor) test is required to recognize the device for what it is and make use of it.

EVENT A

CR 9

BLACK JULES

LOCATION: Anywhere in Midnight's Ichor

Paraphrase or read the following.

The sea darkens as suddenly as it did on your last voyage through Midnight's Ichor, but everything else is different. The water is calm, and the moaning of the dead is so faint it could almost be mistaken for the gentle wind. Almost.

If the PCs have entered Midnight's Ichor in pursuit of a ship they see it sitting motionless ahead of them. Their own ship, no matter which it is, slows down as the wind is supernaturally reduced (Diamanda's voice becomes faint here, and she sounds confused and weakened).

If the party boards the other ship they find the bodies of its crew on the deck and hear sounds of movement below decks. On the *Eth Abbadon* the sound comes from the slaves sheltering in the hold, while on the *Precocious Imp* it is Klinx, who hid below once her crew were butchered. If the survivors are questioned, all they manage to say is "Black Jules!" before the spirit of Black Jules is upon them (see below). The hungry fog returns shortly after the PCs board the other ship, otherwise it finds them aboard their own vessel shortly after they enter Midnight's Ichor.

Fingers of green fog curl over the rails, and great gouts of the horrid mist boils up through the deck of the ship. The fog does not attack, however— instead it coagulates into the form of a tall man in black, thick with the slime of a body decaying in ocean water, with strange green lights burning in his thick beard. He holds a sword before him, and speaks in a voice that smolders with threat and accusation: "Slave-takers, prepare to die at the hands of Black Jules!"

Development: A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Knowledge (History or Local) check recalls the name as that of a legendary pirate captain who died in the Freeport-Mazin war. Once a Freeport freebooter himself, Black Jules was the first pirate to place lit matches in his hair as a way of frightening his victims. Later pirates perfected

an alchemical version called devil wicks (see *Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 444), but when he created the practice, Jules was able to terrify his enemies so thoroughly that most surrendered without putting up a fight.

The PCs have only a moment to parley, but if they deny being slavers before taking any other noticeable actions then the Black Jules listens to them. If not, he attacks. As he does so, three other dead sailors (draugr) leap over the railings to join him.

If the PCs attempt to negotiate, they have the opportunity to both escape combat and gain an ally. Though Jules is suspicious of them, especially if they are sailing on the Mazin ship, he is willing to listen.

When the original pirates of Freeport sailed against Mazin with their own fleet, Black Jules was one of the first to answer the call to battle. Unfortunately, he was the first to fall in that conflict. Having drowned at sea, he has haunted Midnight's Ichor ever since. Now the reappearance of the Mazin has stirred him to anger. As a festering spirit he is empowered by many of the souls of his crew, and treats the entire sea his burial place (preventing him from ever getting more than a mile from the sea's waters). Only his officers, in the form of draugr, have their own existence as undead.

If the PCs manage to convince Jules that they aren't his enemy (requiring a DC 30 Diplomacy check, though you may lower this to DC 23 if the players make excellent arguments or roleplay the effort well), he proposes a bargain, speaking an outdated piratical dialect centuries out of fashion. "*Take me with ye and I'll help ye 'gainst the slavers when the time comes. Do we have an accord?*" If the PCs assent, he puts away his sword and returns his allies to the formless mist with a wave of his hand. Jules himself then gives an evil wink and similarly dissolves into the planks of the ship. If no agreement can be reached, he raises his blade once more and cackles madly. "*If that be yer answer, I'll be taking yer ship and yer worthless lives as well!*" The fires in his beard flare as his allies leap over the railings to attack.

Should the PCs get into a fight with Black Jules, the sea instantly roughens and the moaning of the dead rises to a din. If they make a deal with him the same thing happens as soon as he melts into their ship, relinquishing his control of the wind and waves. Either way, they have to deal with the waters as they did in Chapter 3, though the *Eth Abaddon* can hold twice the water of the *Precocious Imp*. Rounding Pride's Perch three times with the sea heaving won't be easy, but if they manage it, then any remaining undead on the ship dissipate.

The journey back to Freeport only takes three days rather than four if Diamanda is let off her leash. During that time, the PCs can investigate *Eth Abaddon's* logs. If

they did not obtain them from the Ameer priest in the Razor Caves, then these three small books are aboard the ship. Written in Ignan, they detail the slave cargoes collected from Hangnail, and corroborate what was learnt in *The Abyssinial Chain*. While the logs don't name names, they do mention "agents" within Freeport, including an individual referred to as "our ally." The logs imply that this person is someone in a position of great power. They also describe the Mazin's goal: Upon delivery of this final shipment, their fleet will travel to Hangnail and from there launch an attack on Freeport. They aim to bring the city under their rule, with the assistance of their "ally" in placating the populace.

Creatures: Unless the PCs manage to convince the spirit of Black Jules they aren't Mazin slavers before anyone attacks him or takes any other noteworthy action (even defensive ones), he and his undead crew fight until their destruction.

BLACK JULES: hp 58, (see festering spirit, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4*)

DRAUGR (3): hp 19 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*)

EVENT B

CR 5

A WARM FREEPORT WELCOME

LOCATION: Freeport Harbor

As the heroes approach Freeport, the city's lookouts identify their ship as belonging to Freeport's enemies. The watchers may also mark the *Precious Imp* as a stolen vessel if the party did not previously pay for its release. When the little flotilla enters the harbor, they are intercepted by a ship under the command of Nathan Grymes of the Captains' Council. Grymes is secretly in league with the Mazin, and he pulls the necessary strings to ensure that this encounter happens.

As you sail into Freeport Harbor you are greeted by a large warship covered in cannon, looking more like a siege castle with sails than a ship. Her markings identify her as the Fell Thrust. She sails alongside you and an amplified voice from her deck commands, "Prepared to be boarded for inspection by the Freeport navy!"

Flynx and any other NPCs aboard counsel against fleeing or fighting. Assuming the PCs are not foolish enough to try anyway, the *Fell Thrust* (*Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 73) approaches and lays down gangplanks.

A detachment of marines in shining armor marches on board, escorting two men well-known to all of Freeport



as members of the Captains' Council: Nathan Grymes (*Freeport: The City of Adventure* 331), a middle-aged merchant who represents the city's financial interests, and the elderly High Wizard Tarmon (*Freeport: The City of Adventure*, pp. 327–328) in his red robes. "Who is the captain of this vessel?" Grymes asks.

Grymes is furious that the PCs have hampered his business and survived the assassination attempts of *The Abyssinian Chain*, but he is careful not to show it. He can't afford to reveal himself to Tarmon, who came along upon realizing the nature of the *Eth Abbadon*. Under no circumstances does either Grymes or Tarmon want this encounter to become a fight, though obviously they also don't allow the PCs to do them harm.

Grymes presents a facade of civic duty purely driven by the interests of the city. At this point, the PCs have a chance to negotiate with Grymes over the disposition of their vessels. You may either roleplay the entire encounter or resolve it via a series of Diplomacy checks. (Each issue shows the result of various levels of Diplomacy checks, some of which aren't very high as Grymes feels the need to appear reasonable in front of Tarmon.) If the PCs demonstrate that they have rescued citizens of Freeport who were sold into slavery, apply a +5 bonus to these checks.

ISSUE 1

Grymes wishes to confiscate the *Eth Abbadon*, saying:

"We appreciate private citizens moving against our enemies, but this magical ship from a foreign power represents a danger to the city and must be confiscated."

A character with Knowledge (Local) may add a +2 bonus to the following check by pointing out that Freeport's salvage laws make them the rightful owners:

DIPLOMACY RESULTS

DC 8	Grymes admits <i>"But it will be returned to you once a quarantine period passes."</i>
DC 15	Tarmon adds, <i>"And I promise no harm will come to her while my wizards study this fascinating ship."</i>
DC 20	Grymes grudgingly adds <i>"And in the meantime, you'll be compensated."</i> (The PCs may have loan of a small ship similar to <i>The Precocious Imp</i> or they can take payment in cash of 200 gold lords.)

ISSUE 2

Grymes brings up the *Precocious Imp*.

"The Precocious Imp was taken from dock without her fees being paid, and Captain Flynn will have to stand trial for that."

Skip this check if the fees were paid in full. Apply a -10 penalty to the check if any guards were killed when the ship was taken:

DIPLOMACY RESULTS

DC 10	Grymes adds "Although punishment will be waived if the fees are paid."
DC 15	Tarmon overrides him, saying "As and when you are able."

ISSUE 3

Grymes wants the PCs to give a formal, full accounting.

"You will all have to report to the Captains' Council in person to explain this matter in full."

DIPLOMACY RESULTS

DC 15	"Though you may have the rest of the day to settle your affairs in town. Report to the Council this evening."
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At the close of negotiations Tarmon takes possession of the elemental heart. There's no point hiding it from him, as the High Wizard is perfectly aware that an elemental ship requires some kind of control artifact. Everyone on board is brought to the docks aboard the *Fell Thrust*. Rain begins to fall as the passengers disembark: the first rains of the hurricane season.

The freed slaves thank the PCs one last time before rushing off to be with their families. Unless the PCs successfully negotiated some free time in port (anytime their Diplomacy check exceeds the highest DC by 10, feel free to accede to some minor request that won't derail the adventure), they are met by a detachment of the Sea Lord's Guard and put on a carriage to the palace. (Grymes and Tarmon make their way to the palace separately, arriving first.)

Otherwise, they have until nightfall to deal with any business and report to the Old City.

PART TWO

MANY MEETINGS

This portion of the adventure involves a good deal of negotiation and parlay. If the PCs begin to grow bored of all this talk, or if their enthusiasm for it threatens to grind the proceedings to a halt, you may wish to roll up a random encounter from the table in *The Curse of the Brine Witch* or else skip ahead to Part Three's **Event H: A Dream of Dark Sands**. This encounter is designed to liven things up any time there's a lull.

EVENT C

CR 5

THE CAPTAINS' COUNCIL

LOCATION: Sea Lord's Palace

Whether arriving under escort or reporting on their own, the PCs acquire a guard detail as soon as they reach the palace.

*You enter the gates, passing tall walls topped with inelegant shards of broken glass and a garden full of topiary krakens and sea serpents. Upon entering the palace itself, you are kept waiting for several minutes in an antechamber before being admitted into the Grand Ballroom. At the far end of room sit those members of the Captains' Council who could be bothered showing up (see *Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 34, for more information on the Captains' Council). —Grymes and Tarmon are present, who the PCs already met upon coming into port. Also present are the gnome Dirwin "Nimblefingers" Arnig, Marcus Roberts, Garth Varelion, Sister Gwendolyn of the Sea God's temple, and Captain Jacob Lydon. Empty chairs attest to the fact that more councilors are absent than present, and most notably Sea Lord Maeorgan isn't here.*

See *Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 34, for more information on the Captains' Council. You can find more information on Dirwin "Nimblefingers" Arnig (*Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 222), Marcus Roberts (p. 334), Garth Varelion (p. 336), Sister Gwendolyn of the Sea God's temple (p. 190), and Captain Jacob Lydon (p. 34) if you need it, but for the most part this is an opportunity for the PCs to see some important folks of Freeport without it turning into a fight.

Maeorgan is away for diplomatic reasons—she is avoiding a Continental diplomat who is in the city to present her with a marriage offer.

Tarmon begins the meeting by thanking the PCs for their recent achievements, whatever they are—defeating

the Brine Witch, rescuing slaves, etc.—and asks what they know of the Mazin kidnappers. What are their plans? If the PCs present the logs of the *Eth Abaddon*, Tarmon casts *comprehend languages* and flicks through them, summarizing the information they contain.

Roberts is skeptical of any claim that the Mazin have a high-ranking agent within Freeport.

"I would know if they did. It's more likely they simply think that they do."

On the topic of a fleet approaching the city, Lydon seems concerned. "We defeated the bastards at sea once and we could do it again," he slurs, clearly drunk.

"Oh, have another drink, Jacob," Grymes replies. "There's no use sailing against a fleet that may not even be there. For all we know, the actions of our friends here have put them off entirely."

"I'd like time to study their ship and find any weaknesses we can exploit," says Tarmon.

"Let's put it to a vote," Grymes suggests. "All those in favor of sending the navy out?"

Lydon, Arnig, and Sister Gwendolyn raise their hands.

"And those in favor of waiting for more intelligence, and the return of the Sea Lord?"

Varellion, Tarmon, Roberts, and Grymes himself cast their votes. *"Then we wait. The guards will see you out."*

The PCs are ushered quickly but politely out of the palace into the rainy streets of the Old City, where rushing water washes all the filth down into Scurvytown, and that's that.

EVENT D

CR 5

MAKING PLANS WITH LYDON

LOCATION: Anywhere

Either that night or the next, while the PCs pass the time eating or drinking in their favorite spot (maybe Kafe Ilkin or the Torchlight Academy from previous chapters), Captain Lydon approaches them. He may be a councilor, but Lydon is still a pretty common sight in the bars of the city and his shabby sea coat is not so out of place. *"I apologize for interrupting,"* he says, *"but can I buy a round for you lot?"*

Before they have a chance to respond he waves over a round of drinks and pulls up a chair at their table. Lydon wants to talk to them about the evidence they presented to the Council. While the other councilors have made up their minds to "twiddle their arses" as he puts it, he's not happy ignoring a potential invasion. Before he settled into a life of business and politics, Lydon was a man of action. He dreams of being so again, and he drops easily into tales

about the old days when Freeport was run by a confederation of scoundrels instead of a bunch of bureaucrats.

The PCs may be bristling at being ignored and having their ship confiscated, and Lydon is bristling at being ignored and feeling like his best days are behind him. You may let the PCs lead themselves to the obvious solution, or simply have Lydon voice it: What needs to be done is that the scoundrels have to look out for Freeport once again. The last time the Mazin were a problem, it was a fleet of pirates that saw them off. Such a thing could happen again! Someone needs to inspire and organize those pirates, however, for the sleeping kraken that is Freeport that has sunk into rum-sodden laziness and excess. Who better than the heroes who broke the curse of the Brine Witch, who defeated the slaver networks, who just sailed into harbor in a captured Mazin ship?

Hopefully, the PCs buy into the idea. If not, Lydon simply spreads the rumor that the PCs are gathering forces secretly, in hopes of pushing them to do "the right thing," at least as he sees it. Lydon's last piece of advice to the PCs before stumbling home is to get in touch with Maldemer Drum from the *Shipping News* (NG male human expert 4). The party should already be familiar with him: he interviewed them in *The Abyssinian Chain* and they may also have spoken to him while hunting for clues in *The Curse of the Brine Witch*. If the PCs don't seem interested, Lydon ends up sending drum to speak with them after dropping a long list of scandalous-sounding rumors.

EVENT E

CR5

THE HELPFUL DRUM

LOCATION: The Shipping News

Maldemer Drum works the scoundrel beat, reporting on Freeport's pirates even though their glory days are behind them. It's a passion project for him, as he never grew out of a boyish love for stories of treasure and glory. There may be more pleasant jobs than interviewing dangerous, well-armed drunks as they shuttle between dock and tavern, but Drum can't bring himself to give it up. He can be found covering the "dead man's shuffle", the daily parade of suspects being taken through the streets on their way to court. He covers his receding hair with an ostentatious three-cornered hat that doesn't quite go with his nervy demeanor and ready smile. Lydon, who he idolizes beyond all reason, has briefed him on the PCs' situation, so he is ready to answer their questions.

The reporter knows which pirate captains are currently in the city for the duration of hurricane season, and can guide the PCs to them in turn. It's up to you to determine the

order you present them in. Each pirate represents a mini-adventure of their own, which can be run in whichever order is appropriate. Some may even be left out entirely. By the end of this chapter the PCs have assembled their own unique fleet of ships captained by these characters.

If the PCs don't go to Drum on their own, he seeks them out to tell them he's heard rumors that the PCs are trying to raise an armor either to save Freeport, or to destroy it. These are spread by Lydon in an effort to spur the PCs into action. Lydon's rumors specifically mention these captains, who are going to want the PCs to explain themselves if the rumors reach their ears before the PCs do.

Katsper Zee: *"She's retired, but not as retired as she thinks. She works at the Irate Pirate in the Old City, where the fancy-pants and tourists go to have an authentic Freeport experience. The sign says they have 'strong grog and loose women,' but I promise you won't find either there. Those people wouldn't know authentic Freeport if it gutted them and sent them out with the tide."*

Mean Wallace: *"That half-orc lives up to all the worst stereotypes. He's a murderous bastard, but he'll be your murderous bastard if you can talk him around. He's in port right now, and he spends his nights at Krom's Throat in Bloodsalt."*

Edward Cooper: *"He's a privateer and a mercenary who is in it purely for the money. I mean, most of them are in it for the money but with Cooper that's literally all he cares about. He's in town to find some treasure map, part of his latest get-rich-quick scheme."*

Christopher Bailey: *"There aren't many good men in Freeport and Christopher Bailey is one of the few. He's retired and settled down with a family in Cabbage Crack, but if you can bring him around I'm sure he's still one of the best of them. If you recruit him, you'll be doing yourself a favor."*

Sabiha Carrington: *"She's a respected captain, and her ship the Dirty Swan is as fine a vessel as you'll see. I happen to know she's been looking for an excuse to raid the Ivory Ports, but the Admiralty doesn't hand out letters of marque against them these days. That doesn't mean they don't exist, though. I suspect you could probably dig one up at the Office of Public Records."*

Sarinda Rogers: *"She was a legend, a proper legend like Sigurd Trolldottir or Black Jules. According to the history books she's long dead, but I don't believe that. I've heard stories that she's still kicking around here in Freeport, keeping her head down. Not sure how you'd find her."*

Black Jules: *"Now he is dead. Fell during the Freeport-Mazin War. Not many know it but he was the first to light devil wicks in his beard, the mad bastard. By all accounts he was a proper villain, not like the kind of more reasoned, rational captains we have now."*

PART THREE

BRINGING THE BAND TOGETHER

Each captain has a unique set of associated encounters which the party must pass in order to recruit them (or to placate them, if Lydon is spreading rumors... which ends up with the captains wanting to run a raid with the PCs in any case). These encounters can overlap, as the PCs pursue multiple leads to find and win over several captains at once. They may even split the party so that those with better social skills and those with better combat skills follow different paths own paths. Only the coral dungeon found in the Sarinda Rogers path truly requires full party participation.

These mini-adventures may be expanded further if you wish. The PCs could be attacked by sand-blighted creatures roaming the streets. A great storm may force them to take shelter and perhaps help others caught out by the severe weather. Popular or entertaining NPCs from earlier chapters may reappear to help or hinder the party as well.

This is also a good opportunity for PCs to get some downtime. Spellcasters can explore researching new spells or creating magic items. Everyone can sell treasure from previous adventures they don't need, and buy (or custom order) specific things they'd like to have. Anything the players have shown an interest in, from maintaining relationships with patrons and contacts to perhaps taking over a gang, becoming major players for various factions, or even buying a guildhall for themselves can all be added into this series of encounters, and spread out over weeks. This is the time for players to get to explore life in Freeport outside the specific events of the *Return to Freeport* adventure.

EVENT F

CR 5

KATSPER ZEE

LOCATION: The Irate Pirate (Old City)

The Irate Pirate is an Old City tavern that really does advertise "strong grog and loose women" on a gaudy sign underneath the likeness of a cranky, eyepatch-wearing pirate. It's located in a recent building shaped like a squat sailing ship complete with a mast, and inside there are barrels instead of chairs and the latrines have a dusting of sand on the floor as if you're on a beach. The patrons

include Old City merchants and well-beeled visitors to Freeport, all of them having a howling good time pretending to be pirates for the night. Sadly, the "Strong Grog" on offer seems to consist chiefly of over-priced rum cocktails served in coconuts.

The manager, Mikhael Skeebid (NE male human expert 3), roams around between the tables harassing his staff to ensure everything is exactly the way he likes it. Katsper Zee doesn't so much work here as she lounges here, acting as local color and giving Skeebid bragging rights for having a "famous, blooded pirate" as a patron. In return she eats and drinks for free, and receives a small percentage of each night's tips, though in truth she makes more money by insisting on having her (free) drinks paid for in return for telling stories of her glory days. Since she owes the manager money (see below) this is her best bet for eventually earning her way clear.

If the players pursue the obvious lines of questioning, they may get any of the following responses:

We're looking for Katsper Zee.

"That's me. You a fan? Here to listen to another story of the glory days?"

You used to be a pirate captain?

"I was captain of the Noise. She was the terror of the seas from the Ivory Ports to Narajan. There are still traders in Silverus who shiver at that name."

Why are you stuck here?

"It's the manager, Skeebid. I owe him money. Over a thousand gp. Can't get the Noise back without paying him off, and at the rate he charges me on the debt it'll be decades."

How did you get into debt?

"My ship got damaged in a scrap with Jawbone Jack, the ghoul pirate. Every time we patched her up after that she was a little less sea-worthy, and each new voyage seemed to take a little more out of her. Eventually it was costing more to keep her afloat than we could earn, so I had to borrow money from the leach that owns this place. When he came to collect I didn't have the funds."

Do you enjoy staying here?

"Are you serious? Of course I don't."

There are several ways to get Zee to join the party's venture. If the PCs are so inclined, they may simply front

KATSPER ZEE

CR 7 XP 3,200

Female human freebooter 8

CN Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception -1

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15

hp 56 (8d10+2) **IP** 0

Fort +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +1

Special Defenses defensive roll (1/day), defensive style (canny fighting)

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 short sword +12/7 (d6+2/19-20)

Special Attacks ambush, death attack, dirty fighting +2d4

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +8/+3

Feats combat expertise, improved disarm, greater disarm, step up, weapon finesse

Skills Appraise +7, Bluff +7, Climb +7, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +7, Profession (sailor) +8, Swim +7 (armor check penalty -2)

Languages Common, Aquan

SQ diversion

Combat Gear potions of cure light wounds (2), potion of cat's grace; **Other Gear** +1 studded leather armor, +1 short sword, buckler

the money to pay off her debts. Otherwise, they need to convince Skeebid to let her postpone her repayments and join them, which requires a DC 20 Diplomacy check or a DC 15 Intimidate check. A success means that she still owes him the money, but they have access to her ship and should be able to scrape together her old crew.

Talking Zee around to going out and risking her life in a battle against the Mazin requires more than just a Diplomacy check. The PCs must earn her trust, which is most easily done by spending the entire night (and a good deal of gold on drinks) at the Irate Pirate, talking to Zee whenever she's not busy. They must explain why the Mazin threat is so important and why they need her help. During this time she is harassed by drunk merchants who want to hear her tell dramatized stories of battle and glory, and at least one spills a drink on her. Unscrupulous PCs can make her night less pleasant by bribing drunks to annoy her, secretly tripping her up, or using magic.

If the PCs have made a decent argument for joining up, or driven home how far she has fallen from her previous glories, when the tavern closes at dawn Zee tells Skeebid off in spectacular fashion and declares she will

never darken the establishment's door again. Alternately, if the PCs manage to pick a fight with her and win, she laughs uproariously about having the most fun she's had in years, and throws her lot in with them. Either way, as she storms off the staff applauds. Several of them later quit in sympathy and join her crew, becoming the actual pirates they'd only pretended to be until now.

Whether Zee has to take the *Noise* back by legal or illegal means, she stills need to expand its crew and get additional repair work done. PCs who have a spare ship, like *The Precocious Imp*, may wish to offer it to her instead.

EVENT G

CR 5

MEAN WALLACE

LOCATION: Krom's Throat (Bloodsalt)

If, during *The Abyssinian Chain*, the PCs went to Krom's Throat in search of Jakob Wynt, then they are familiar with this tavern and its clientele. The patrons may have a score to settle with them, depending how things played out on their last visit to the orc bar.

Mean Wallace has just returned from a successful voyage aboard his ship the *Gangrenous*, and he and few favored

crew members—all of them either orcs or orc-blooded—elbowing their way to a spot at the communal food trough from which patrons eat. Wallace is a big eater, and the half-orc has a particular fondness for the food at Krom's Throat. He spends the entire night here consuming prodigious amounts, even as his crew drifts over to the drink spigots. PCs have to pay their coins and shove their way past the other patrons (DC 10 Strength or Acrobatics check) to get a spot next to Wallace.

A bearded half-orc of prodigious girth occupies a central spot at the food trough, savoring the pig's feet he digs out of the congealing mass to gnaw on. He fends off all questions by holding up a wriggling eel. "Here, eat this squiggly feller. Then we'll talk."

It takes a DC 15 Fortitude save to keep the eel down, but Wallace respects anyone who makes the attempt. His response is to laugh and clap them on the back, urging them to "Go on then, say yer piece." Once they've explained the situation he only has one question. "Will there be blood? Are we gonner get ta fight?" If the answer is yes, Wallace and his ship join their fleet.

A complication may arise if Wallace finds out that the PCs are looking for the Pinchgut Island map (see **Event H: Edward Cooper**). He demands they turn the map over to him instead. If the PCs do so, then they lose the trust of Cooper. However, if they don't, Wallace grumbles instead. The only way to make both of them happy is to give a copy of the map to each and tell them that the other has received a forgery. If both eventually realize that they were tricked, they are furious. That's tomorrow's problem, however.

MEAN WALLACE

CR 7 XP 3,200

Male half-orc barbarian (sea reaver archetype, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*) 8

CE Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft., Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13

hp 78 (8d12+3) **IP** 0

Fort +9, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3

Special Defenses orc ferocity

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 greataxe +13/8 (d12+5/x3)

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 16, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +8/+3

Feats Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush

Skills Climb +12, Intimidate +9, Swim +12 Racial Modifiers +2 Intimidate, Class Modifiers +2 to Acrobatics, Climb, Profession (sailor), and Swim checks at sea (savage sailor)

Languages Common, Orc

SQ orc blood, marine terror, eyes of the storm, savage sailor, sure-footed

Combat Gear potions of cure light wounds (2), potion of bull's strength; **Other Gear** +1 leather armor, +1 greataxe

EVENT H

CR 5

EDWARD COOPER

LOCATION: Varies

As Maldemer Drum told the PCs, Captain Edward Cooper is in Freeport to find a treasure map—one that shows the location of the lost loot of Pinchgut Island. Cooper stays in Freeport until he has the map, so the PCs need to find it if they want to convince him to add his ship the *Laughing Saint* to their cause.

The PCs may attempt a DC 20 Diplomacy check to gather information about the map or have a conversation with a contact with relevant expertise to reveal the following information: a local consort had a map of the island tattooed on herself right here in Freeport, but she was cursed by the Brine Witch and died of boils



which ruined both her skin and the map. The woman in question was named Dolly Jasmine and she worked for Lady Jane (see *Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 82) out of the Torchlight Academy. Lady Jane is able to provide some more information, though she mentions that other treasure seekers have quizzed her about this recently, and none of them have turned up anything better.

Dolly had no family, but the PCs ask can find the artist who inked the tattoo in a small parlor on Dreaming Street. For a bribe of 100 gp Lady Jane can be convinced to sketch out what she remembers of the map. (If the PCs have maintained a good relationship with Lady Jane since the events of *The Curse of the Brine Witch*, she happily assists for free, assuming that the PCs are again dealing with some issue that might be bad for her business if it's not dealt with.) Lady Jane can also inform them that Dolly's most frequent client was Bryleth Hayes (*half-elf expert* 7) a scholar from the Freeport Institute with a specialty in cartography. If the PCs track Bryleth down, a DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check convinces the sage to draw the map from memory. Comparing both results in a slightly more accurate depiction of the original map, though neither of them has any major details wrong.

EDWARD COOPER

CR 7 XP 3,200

Male human Fighter (corsair archetype) 8

CN Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception -1

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+1 vs. melee for dodge feat)

hp 42 (8d10+2) **IP** 1

Fort +8, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1 (+2 bravery bonus to Will saves against fear)

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 boarding axe +12/7 (d6+2/19-20)

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +8/+3

Feats cleave, combat expertise, dodge, great cleave, improved unarmed strike, mobility

Skills Appraise +3, Climb +5, Intimidate +4, Profession (sailor) +3, Survival +3, Swim +5

Languages Common, Dwarf

Combat Gear potions of *cure light wounds* (3); Other Gear +1 chainmail armor, +1 boarding axe, buckler

WHAT'S IN THE BOOK?

This copy of *A True History of Freeporte Pyrates* has been updated by later, anonymous authors with additional entries about more recent "pyrates." Following write-ups of captains like Bedwyr the Black and Black Dog is the following entry on Black Jules:

"In his early days, Black Jules fought for money. It's easy for the high-born to disparage greed as a motivation, because those who have money do not understand why those without it desire it so. Born the son of a slave, Jules did not covet gold for its lustre and beauty, but because he had seen what life can be like without it. Anyone who has spent years picking the lice from his hair, never sleeping well enough to feel truly awake, and working hard enough to shave years off his life knows that comfort is worth dying for.

"In his youth, Black Jules found his path to both freedom and comfort by dreaming up a terrifying persona with a burning beard that he used to terrify merchant vessels far and wide. For many years, his life was a continual struggle to buy periods of ease and leisure in between voyages. However, like a surprising number of pirates, in his later years Black Jules took a stand for principle. He joined the Freeport-Mazin war to protect for the freedoms and comforts of others. Unfortunately, his crew were not so ready to die for a principle. They mutinied and threw him overboard, replacing him with their quartermaster LeQuins. The first casualty of the Freeport-Mazin war did not die to an enemy's blade, but to an act of treachery."

Here is the entry on Sarinda Rogers:

"Though she began as a simple smuggler operating out of the Ivory Port of Blackburn, Sarinda Rogers rose to become one of the most dangerous pirates on the sea. In particular, Rogers was famed for her treasure hunting ability, amassing a collection of artifacts from lost civilizations and far lands.

Unfortunately, little is known of her life beyond these basic facts, and what is suggested by other accounts is impossible to believe. Though some say that Rogers sailed alongside Drac in the Great Raid, other reports have her serving the nation of Tagmata as a privateer 50 years later and then taking part in the Freeport-Mazin War some 50 years after that. My own theory is that the name and the reputation that goes with it have been passed down through the years, perhaps from daughter to daughter, begetting a legion of Sarindas who may yet terrorize the seas for centuries to come."

If asked how or why Dolly got the tattoo, Lady Jane explains that she spent her spare time pursuing an education at the library of the Freeport Institute (*Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 171), and she probably found it there. She got the tattoo in hopes that someday she'd be able to go searching for the treasure herself. If the PCs ask the institute's staff about Dolly and make a DC 10 Diplomacy check, they can spend an entire day at the library to locate the original map, hidden inside a copy of *A True History of Freeporte Pyrates* by Captain Johanssen. The book details the golden age of piracy and tells the legends of such colorful figures as Three-Hands Chan, Sigurd Trolldottir, and Sarinda Rogers.

Cooper himself—gray-haired, with a well-trimmed goatee—can be found brooding onboard the *Laughing Saint*, having reached another dead end in his search for the map. He's been trying to find distant family members of Dolly Jasmine and the morgue attendants who dealt with her body, and has even tried to retrieve her corpse (burnt to ash unfortunately), though he won't be forthcoming with that information. He tries to hide his glee if the map is brought before him, but doesn't do a very good job of it. Rather than setting off to find the treasure of Pinchgut Island immediately, he locks the map away for his "retirement." When asked to join the pirate fleet, his only question is "Will there be loot?"

EVENT I

CR 5

CHRISTOPHER BAILEY

LOCATION: Cabbage Crack

Captain Bailey was once Edward Cooper's first mate. The warm-faced and friendly pirate parted from Cooper's crew under amicable conditions so that he could begin his own career on a ship called the *Bone Box*. That career has now ended and Bailey resides with his wife and two daughters on a farm in the small village of Cabbage Crack (*Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 272), living a modest and relatively comfortable life. The pistol and bandolier hanging on the wall is the only sign of who he used to be.

It's another rainy day when the PCs make the journey inland. The visitors are welcomed in by the family and offered a bowl of hot cabbage soup by one of Bailey's daughters, but Bailey himself soon shoos his family away and sits down with his guests.

"I know why you're here," he says. "I've been waiting for someone like you to turn up, though to be honest I thought you'd be here before now. I warn you, I'm happy living a peaceable life now and no amount of money's going to change my mind about that."

While it's true that money can't change Bailey's mind, an appeal to his honor does. The idea of the Mazin fleet sailing to Freeport and enslaving honest folk like his family is enough to tempt him away from his home. Bailey agrees to join the fleet if a convincing case is made that it's the right thing to do.

Once he agrees, his daughters burst in and grab hold of his shirt sleeves. "*Daddy, please don't go! We need you here, and so does Mummy!*" If the PCs are comfortable with taking Bailey from his family, he goes with them. After taking down his pistol, he promises his daughters to come back safe as soon as he can.

The *Bone Box* is still sitting at port where he left her, his sentimental first mate having spent her share of their final haul paying for the ship's docking fees and upkeep. The core of her crew is still in Freeport as well, having done well enough on their last job to be provided for. That doesn't mean they won't sign up again, though—every sailor who served under Bailey is fond of the man and has profited from their time together.

EVENT J

CR 5

SABIHA CARRINGTON

LOCATION: Warehouse District

According to Maldemer Drum, Sabiha Carrington (see *Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 306) wants a letter of marque to pursue her vendetta against the Ivory Ports. While that's true, and collecting such a letter from the Office of Public Records wins her to their cause, she's also looking for something more than revenge. Once she joins their fleet, she is determined to bring the Mazin to battle, and may believe that Lydon isn't tough enough to do the job. Carrington could be a contender for the confrontation with Lydon at the climax of this adventure, especially if the PCs manage to placate both Mean Wallace and Edward Cooper with some masterful deception work.

It's raining heavily on the day the PCs choose to visit the Office of Public Records (see *Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 532) in the Warehouse District. Inside they find its curator, Old Reed (*male human commoner 6*), along with several visiting clerks and one sailor who was just here to drop off a deed. All of them are hurrying to get documents upstairs before more water gets into the building. It's already an inch deep in the basement and water is seeping through the walls all the time. While the building's enchantments protect it against fire, there's no provision to protect it against flooding.

CHRISTOPHER BAILEY

CR 5 XP 1,600

Male human freebooter 6
CG Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12
hp 30 (6d10) **IP** 1
Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4
Special Defenses defensive roll (1/day), defensive style (flashy fighting)

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.
Melee cutlass +6/1 (d6/18-20)
Ranged pistol +8 (d8/x4)
Special Attacks dirty fighting +2d4

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15
Base Atk +6/+1
Feats exotic weapon proficiency (pistol), point-blank shot, precise shot
Skills Acrobatics +6, Appraise +6, Bluff +7, Climb +3, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (local) +2, Profession (farmer) +4, Profession (sailor) +5, Swim +2
Languages Common, Mercenary Tongue
SQ fast on your feet, freebooter's luck (1/day), nimble footwork
Combat Gear potion of *cure light wounds*, 12 rounds of pistol ammunition; **Other Gear** leather armor, pistol, cutlass

"*More hands, good!*" Old Reed shouts at the PCs. "*Make yourself useful, climb down there, grab those manifests and get them upstairs before they get soaked!*"

There are multiple basements underneath the Office of Public Records, some accessed via stairs and others by rickety ladders. Old Reed ignores any requests for help in finding documents until after he's satisfied that the most endangered paperwork is out of harm's way. Managing this takes 36 man-hours of tedious work, though the time can be shortened by clever use of magic or by blocking the leaks. For example, anyone with points in Profession (sailor) or Knowledge (engineering) knows how to create caulking by mixing rope and tar, as is done on ships. For every reasonable plan the PCs come up with the total number of hours of work needed is reduced by any relevant skill check's value above 10 (thus a DC 14 skill check reduces the amount of work left by 4 hours).

While they help out, any unscrupulous PCs may make a DC 10 Perception check to spot several sets of privateer's papers floating past. While Old Reed is distracted, shouting orders and coughing, a PC can make a DC 15 Sleight of Hand check to grab the documents unnoticed.

NEED MORE CAPTAINS?

If the PCs fail to recruit some of the available captains, their fleet can still be bolstered if you feel it necessary. Below are some additional ideas for mini-adventures that you can flesh out, with Drum providing the “point of contact” for the party:

Erik Gouldin (CG male dwarf freebooter 5): Erik the sea dwarf, captain of the *Traveling Lady*, narrowly survived a recent search for treasure on a volcanic island ruled by apes, though not all of his crew made it back alive. Inside a cave on the island Erik saw his friend Jobu the whaler carried bodily through a portal to hell. Erik wants his friend back, but mounting a raid into hell is no easy task and is certainly not something he wants to attempt alone.

Katarina Lubovich (N female human freebooter 6): Most of Libertyville would consider the news of a threat to Freeport as a positive development for them, and would laugh the PCs out of port if they travel there for help. However, Katarina Lubovich, captain of the *Sunshine Sail*, has family in Freeport including a beloved sister and is the one Libertyville captain willing to help.

Jezamine Finlay (NE female human corsair 6): The captain of the *Queen of the Underworld* has want of the services of a sylph (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*), believing that one of these spirits of the air would be invaluable on board her ship. She's been hunting down one such sylph in Freeport, hoping to make an offer he won't refuse, but has been unable to corner him. He's a bit pale but otherwise appears human, though his hair waves as if in a strong wind no matter the weather, forcing him to wear a hat. The sylph keeps to public spaces, mingling with crowds in Freeport's markets and bars. The easiest way to reveal him would be to find one of his regular haunts and move among the crowd, knocking men's hats from their heads.

Samlea (see *Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 78): This ex-slave and his ship the *Storm Angel*, crewed by sailors who were also formerly slaves, is easy to recruit once the situation is explained. Samlea is a headstrong elf, however. His hatred for slavers and his willingness to magic himself up into the air mid-battle may make him a liability in a fight.

Otherwise, the party can simply ask Old Reed about letters of marque after they've finished helping him out. If they decide to lie about why they need the papers, they need to attempt a Bluff check versus his +6 Sense Motive bonus. However, if they're honest then they may attempt to use Diplomacy instead. Either way, the check is made with a +2 bonus if the player characters successfully aided in saving the water-threatened documents.

EVENT K

CR 5

SARINDA ROGERS

LOCATION: Varies

Drum's theory that Rogers still exists is based on rumors of someone matching her description being seen among the Dregs (see *Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 257), defending them from recent attacks by gangs and slavers. Only an obsessive cataloguer of Freeport's pirate history like Drum would recognize Rogers from the stories that have filtered back to the offices of the *Shipping News*, but those stories are correct. Anyone making the journey to Underside can hear tales about an old woman who lives among the Dregs and defended them during the recent attacks. With any inquiries at all, it won't be long until the PCs are pointed in her direction, most likely somewhere in the sewers.

Rogers won't respond to her name, replying with “*Never heard of her, leave me alone.*” Getting her to talk requires either a DC 15 Diplomacy check, or recounting the story of how the PCs defeated the slaver gangs who were harassing the Dregs.

Rogers was a legendary captain during the original golden age of piracy, before Drac betrayed Francisco. During her voyages she stole an artifact called the *amulet eternal*, which grants immortality to those who possess it. Unfortunately, she lost it during a cargo dump in Freeport Harbor along with a variety of illicit goods that were thrown overboard prior to inspection. She may divulge any or all of the following information when questioned:

Why are you living here?

“*I just want to be left alone to die. These people are happy to let me.*”

Why do you want to die?

“*I've lived too long. Nobody should be immortal. Watching the people you love die, watching history forget everything you fought for, watching ungrateful new generations grow up to make the same mistakes—I wish I could just let it end.*”

How did you become immortal? “

I stole a trinket called the amulet eternal. At the time I thought immortality was a reward it gave me, but now I see it was more of a curse.”

Will you join our fleet?

“Didn’t you hear me? All I want is to die. If you can grant me that I’ll do whatever you want, ha!”

How can you die?

“I’ve tried everything. Drowning, gunshot, burning, slit wrists, overdose. Survived it all, got nothing worse than a headache to show for it. Age is catching up to me, slower than it should, but still. Someday soon maybe that will finish me off. Damn that amulet.”

What happened to the amulet?

“Got thrown overboard in Freeport Harbor by mistake when we were ditching contraband. Never found it in all the junk down there.”

Can the curse be lifted if the amulet is destroyed?

“No idea. Moot point since I lost it.”

The *amulet eternal* is indeed in Freeport Harbor and it can be found, although simply searching the seabed won’t be enough as Rogers has learned. However, Maldemer Drum or a contact in the Freeport Institute (or similar sagely contact) can point the PCs to “Unkie” Al Crowley (use the apprentice commoner, *Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 340), a correspondent for the *Shipping News* who works the “gods and monsters” beat. From somewhere in his desk covered in holy symbols and empty beakers he retrieves a compass inside a glass bubble that looks like a snowglobe.

“It points towards the nearest cursed artifact. Never works in the city for some reason, seems to get overloaded and confused. Which is probably something we should be worried about. It should work away from here, though. Yours for 50 gold.”

He can be bargained down to 40 with a DC 15 Appraise check or DC 20 Diplomacy or Intimidate check.

If the PCs take a boat out on Freeport Harbor the *curse compass* switches from dangling loosely as it did in the city to spinning in a complete circle and then pointing unchangingly towards the mouth of the bay and the coral reef that protects the city. This is where the *amulet eternal* lies, having been swallowed up by a growing mass of coral

SARINDA ROGERS CR 17**XP 102,400**

Female human Rogue (swashbuckler archetype, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player’s Guide*) 18
CN Medium humanoid
Init +3; **Senses** Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+1 vs. melee for dodge feat)
hp 52 (8d8+2) **IP** 7
Fort +8, **Ref** +12, **Will** +4
Special Defenses evasion, uncanny dodge, improved uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.
Melee dagger +13/+8/+3 (d4+1/19-20)
Special Attacks sneak attack +9d6, entanglement of blades, redirect attack

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +13/+8/+3
Feats acrobatic, agile maneuvers, blind-fight, catch off-guard, combat reflexes, stand still, deadly aim, deft hands, dodge, mobility, spring attack, two-weapon fighting
Skills Acrobatics +23, Appraise +13, Bluff +12, Climb +13, Disable Device +17, Escape Artist +15, Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (history) +13, Perception +12, Profession (sailor) +12, Sleight of Hand +17, Stealth +15, Swim +13, Use Magic Device +12
Languages Common, Thieves’ Cant
SQ ledge walker, offensive defense, positioning attack, powerful sneak, resiliency, stand up
Combat Gear none; **Other Gear** dagger

which has over the years been twisted by its curse. The amulet can now be found in a chamber within the coral, which can only be reached with either magic spells like *water breathing* or help from the Society of Lobstermen. Recovering it requires the PCs to risk the Coral Dungeon, **Event L**.

EVENT L**THE CORAL DUNGEON****LOCATION:**

Having dealt with the Mollycoddle gang in *The Abyssinian Chain*, the PCs are probably experienced with underwater adventuring. The best way to gain access to the coral dungeon is with the *water breathing* spell. A party of level 8 or 9 characters may have access to the spell already, but if they don’t then let them hire a spellcaster from the Wizards’ Guild to provide it for them. Alternatively, anyone with contacts at the Society of Lobstermen can



AREA L1. ENTRY
 AREA L2. TUNNEL
 AREA L3. EEL NEST
 AREA L4. MERMEDUSA LAIR

THE CORAL DUNGEON

buy a cockleshell suit if they have a spare 800 gp lying around, or hire one for substantially less.

AREA L1. ENTRY

CR 7

The curse compass points down toward the coral, indicating a strange formation within it where the coral's polyps grow sharp and twisted. There is a hole in the side of this section of coral reef that leads into a large chamber with two exits: one door-sized opening on the left and a narrow tunnel on the right. This empty space is covered in multi-colored polyps, some of which glow with a strange light, and between them are dozens of dark holes as round as a fist. The atmosphere is different in here, as if there is something tangibly wrong about the water. The curse compass points to a space between the two exits, but there's nothing here—it must be pointing at something further in.

If anyone tries to examine the holes, six dire prawns burst out and attack. Otherwise they wait until the PCs swim toward either exit to surprise them.

DIRE PRAWN (6): hp 17 each

AREA L2. TUNNEL

CR 5

This narrow tunnel, only a few feet across, is surrounded by sharp coral. The water rushes through it, pulsing in strange patterns that are hard to predict.

Three Swim checks at DC 10, 12, and 15 are required to pass through this tunnel without being thrown against the coral. The first time a character fails they are buffeted against the walls and struck by blunt polyps for d4 damage. After that they are hit by sharper polyps for d6 damage. If they are wearing cockleshell suits roll

PRAWN, DIRE**CR 2 XP 600**

N Small monstrous animal (aquatic)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +4**DEFENSE****AC** 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +1 size)**hp** 17 (2d8+8)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +0**OFFENSE****Speed** swim 30 ft., jet 50 ft.**Melee** claw +3 (1d6+1) and bite -2 (1d6)**STATISTICS****Str** 13, **Dex** 14, **Con** 19, **Int** 1, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 6**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13 (can't be tripped)**Feats** Improved Initiative**Skills** Perception +14, Stealth +10, Swim +17, Racial Modifiers +8 Swim**ECOLOGY****Environment** any saltwater**Organization** gang (3-9)**Treasure** none**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Sudden Strike (Ex)** A dire prawn is particularly adept at moving quickly when its foes are surprised. During a surprise round, a dire prawn may act as if it had a full round to act, rather than just one standard action.**MERMEDUSA****CR 7 XP 3,200**

CE Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic)

Init +6; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60ft.; Perception +16**DEFENSE****AC** 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +3 natural)**hp** 76 (6d10+32)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7**OFFENSE****Speed** 5 ft., swim 50 ft.**Melee** claw +10/+5 (1d4/9-20), eel bite +5 (d4)**Special Attacks** petrifying gaze**STATISTICS****Str** 10, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20**Feats** Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse, Dodge, Mobility**Skills** Intimidate +10, Perception +16, Stealth +13, Swim +13
Racial Modifiers +4 Perception**Languages** Aquan**SQ** amphibious**ECOLOGY****Environment** ocean (cold)**Organization** Solitary**Treasure** double (jewels looted from sunken ships)**SPECIAL ABILITIES****All-Around Vision (Ex)** A mermedusa's eel-like hair allows it to see in all directions. Mermedusas gain a +4 racial bonus to Perception checks and cannot be flanked.**Petrifying Gaze (Su)** Turn to coral (effect ends when the mermedusa dies), Fortitude DC 16 negates. The Save DC is Charisma-based.

separately for damage to the hoses, which have hardness 2 and 5 hit points.

AREA L3. EEL NEST**CR 8**

This chamber is darker than the previous one, with fewer of the glowing polyps and a forest of ruined fishing nets and seaweed strewn across it. The tangled mess clings at your limbs as you attempt to navigate through it. There appears to be another exit at the far end of the chamber.

A DC 13 Perception check reveals 3 giant moray eels hiding in the seaweed near the chamber's exit. Anyone swimming through it must make a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid being tangled. This prevents them from moving until they pass the same Reflex save on a subsequent turn as a move-equivalent action. The giant moray eels emerge to attack as soon as they are spotted or when someone becomes tangled in the trap.

GIANT MORAY EELS (3): hp 53 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

AREA L4. MERMEDUSA LAIR**CR 8**

This long chamber feels like a hall of statues, but the figures here are made of coral rather than stone. The graven images look like sea devils, a cross between shark and man. In the middle of the hallway is a mound of jewelry, and atop it curls a creature like a blue-black mermaid with the tail of an eel. She stirs at your arrival and opens a hinged mouth full of fangs. Her hair curls of its own volition, each dark strand ending with the head of a gulper eel.

The mermedusa attacks immediately to protect her treasures, which include the *amulet eternal* as well as various non-magical baubles worth 2,000 gp. She wears some of these jewels on her fingers and around her neck and wrists, but has never put on the *amulet eternal*,

thinking it looks ugly. It would have no effect anyway, as its “gift” can only apply to one recipient.

Development: even after killing the mermedusa, looting her treasure trove may prove difficult. After her death the petrifying effect of her gaze ends, freeing the sea devils (and any petrified PCs) from their statue form. The sea devils (4 sahuagin, *Pathfinder Bestiary*) remain bewildered for two turns, but then attacks anyone who remains inside the coral dungeon.

SAHUAGIN (4): hp 15 (each) (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

EVENT M

CR 5

A DREAM OF DARK SAND

LOCATION: Varies

Choose a fitting member of the party to experience this event. This might be the character who bonded with Diamanda, or the one who received the prophetic vision from Gamey Rind in *Part 1: The Curse of the Brine Witch*, or the closest thing to a ship's captain among them. You could also grant it to a spellcaster with strong ties to prophecy, visions, or lore. If nothing else, you can use this to involve a character who doesn't seem to be as interested in interacting with the captains the group is recruiting.

When the party are gathered together in a cramped public place at night, perhaps at a tavern, a woman in a flame-red robe (*LE female human*, see the journeyman cultist in *Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 341) passes the PCs in the crowd and gestures as if blowing a kiss. The handful of *obsidian sand* in her palm flies into a PC's face, and unless they pass a DC 13 Reflex save they are

rendered immobile for a round. The mysterious woman then flees the building.

If the PCs give chase you can use official chase rules if you like, or the simplified system presented here.

- PCs make an Initiative roll every round. Anyone with a base speed over 30ft. gains a +2 bonus on this roll and anyone who uses flying or other relevant abilities like the Nimble Moves or Acrobatic Steps feats may gain additional +1 to +3 circumstance bonuses as you see fit. A PC with several ranks in Knowledge (local) may gain additional bonuses for knowing a shortcut. Characters with a speed under 30ft. take a -2 penalty. Roll for the cultist as well, who has a flat bonus of +5.
- Any PC who beats her roll can close the gap between them by one length, while those who fail fall back one length and ties maintain their current distance. She begins with a one length lead, meaning it takes at least two rolls before anyone can catch her. The dazed PC and anyone slow to respond have an extra one-length handicap.
- If a PC one length behind the cultist makes a successful ranged attack against AC 17 she falls, ending the chase. A missed shot imposes a -2 penalty to the PC's next Initiative test. At the end of each round, roll on the **Chasing the Cultist** table for the PC with the highest initiative. If more than one PC rolled the same initiative, apply the result to both.

If the cultist ever gains more than four lengths on the party, she escapes. If a PC is in the same zone they may make an attack roll against AC 17 to catch her (give a +2 bonus for each relevant feat, such as Improved Bull Rush), and if they overtake her she is caught automatically.

CHASING THE CULTIST

d20 Roll	Result
1-2	Your target runs through a bath house, and you have to dodge between or push past slippery bathers to keep up. Make either a DC 10 Strength or Acrobatics check or fall back one length.
2-3	This street has been flooded by the recent rains. As you slosh through the rushing knee-high water, a barrel floats toward you. Make an attack roll against AC 10 or a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid the barrel, or fall back a length.
4-5	A pack of wild dogs fighting over scraps blocks your path. You can calm them with a DC 10 Handle Animal check, or shove past them with an attack roll against AC 13. If you fail either roll you are bitten for 1d4+1 damage.
6-7	A fruit cart spills its cargo in the street. Mangos, bananas, and coconuts hurtle across your path. Pass a DC 10 Reflex save or slip and fall back a length.
8-9	Your target throws a dozen silver skulls behind her as she passes a group of beggars. They drop to the ground and crawl around picking up the coins. Either pass a DC 10 Acrobatics check to leap over them, or throw a larger sum of gold coins to one side so they get out of your way.
10-20	You sprint through Freeport's darkened streets, the woman in red always visible just ahead of you.

When the woman in the red robe is caught she breathes heavily, as if exhausted from the chase. As you watch, she coughs out black sand, looking at you in terror as more begins to pour from her mouth. Soon it is leaking from her eyes, her ears, and from under her fingernails as she clutches at you in desperation. Within moments she has been entirely reduced to sand, which falls to the rain-slick ground leaving only an empty robe.

That night either the PC who was hit by the *obsidian sand* or the one who caught the cultist experiences the following dream, a sending from Ad Avish the div.

In an endless desert of black sand beneath black skies, you see a fleet of elemental Mazin ships sailing as if on water. You sit on a canvas chair at a small table beside an oasis of clear water and watch them pass in the distance. Some of the ships race like the wind even though they lack sails, while others belch fire from molten guns, or are shielded by blocks of stone as if they were floating castle walls. Some ripple like waves before sinking and later rising again.

The chair and table remind you of Kafe Ilkin, and so does the smell of fresh kahve. Across from you at the table sits a shirtless man in a turban who does not seem to mind

the flickering flames that cover his skin. Golden bracelets around his wrists clank as he reaches across the table to pour the kahve. "Drink?" he asks.

Ad Avish is happy to reveal any of the following:

No.

"As you wish. I assure you it is not poisoned. Even such as I would not stoop so low as to poison the kahve."

Yes.

"Enjoy. It is best savored slowly, like torture." (The kahve tastes strong and bitter at first, but as you drink, the smell complements its flavor, making it taste earthy and almost like chocolate.)

Who are you?

"Captain Ad Avish, Lord of Divs and commander of the Mazin fleet. At your service."

Where am I?

"You are beside the Bleeding Oasis, beneath whose waters the Torture Sultans sleep, in the land of the Obsidian Desert."



Who are the Torture Sultans?

"When your world is sufficiently prepared they shall rise to make its transformation complete."

Is this a dream?

"If it makes you feel any better, then it most assuredly is."

Why have you brought me here?

"For a civilized conversation, as a prelude to an official declaration of war between our two cities."

Am I safe?

"Of course you are safe! Unless you choose to adulterate your kahve with sugar, in which case I will have no choice but to skin you and feed your face to the sharks. I kid! That is a little joke."

What do you want?

"Right now? To warn you what is coming. In the long term? To see your people and their works fall, to grind your city and your bones to black sand, and laugh at your ruination. More kahve?"

Why are you attacking us?

"We are the Outcast Ones. Once we were servants of a people very like yours. We built their homes, their temples, their monuments to the gods. But when the gods saw those monuments it was the people they praised, not us—not those who had slaved to create them. So we abandoned the gods and turned on our masters, rendering their world to naught but black sand. Yours will be next."

What about the Mazin?

"They have their own reasons to hate you and fear us. For their loyal service they will earn the privilege of being destroyed last."

We fight against slavery like that which you endured.

"It is not slavery we despise. It is your gods and your works, your attempt to rise above mortality. This is the truth: this grit is all you are and deserve to be. You will tumble through the hourglass and we will watch you fall."

(If the PCs attack Ad Avish, tell him he will not win, or deliberately anger him in any other way.)

"Enough!" Ad Avish hits the table with his fist, and the flames on his skin burn brighter. "Go back to your bed. When you wake, tell your world we are coming!"

What happens now?

"You arise with the sun and wonder for how many more days we will spare you."

The PC wakes from the dream, a small amount of the obsidian sand clinging to his or her hair.

EVENT N**CR 5****THE RETURN OF THE ETH ABADDON**

LOCATION: Varies

This event should occur after the PCs have begun assembling their fleet, but before they complete it. If they get antsy and begin preparing to steal the ship back, this event should occur sooner.

A messenger arrives from the Wizards' Guild, an apprentice with a rolled-up piece of paper. The paper is blank, but a *magic mouth* appears as soon as it's opened. *"Your ship is ready to be returned to you. You may find it at the Marina starting tomorrow morning."*

The ship is waiting exactly where the *magic mouth* says it is, and nothing is out of place. A bill for docking fees (see *Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 443) arrive if they leave the ship here for more than a day.

If the PCs befriended Diamanda she is happy to see them again and can be questioned about what happened in their absence.

Did they hurt you?

"Don't be silly! It tickled a little but that's all."

What did the wizards do?

"They said it was called a 'stress test.' They wandered up and down the ship, cast a lot of spells, said, 'Hmmm!' a lot."

Did they discover anything?

"Apparently I'm the ship's greatest weakness. Isn't that ridiculous? Without me the ship wouldn't even be able to move! Oh... Maybe that's what they meant?"

What happened to Black Jules?

"He vanished from the ship as soon as we arrived. Haven't seen him since."



PART FOUR

THE COMPETITION

Once the fleet has been assembled, the PCs may think that it's time to set sail, but there's one remaining issue to deal with. Lydon summons the captains to meet at The Broken Mug (*Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 64) to discuss the delicate matter of who is going to command this fleet. Sarinda Rogers declines to attend, as she has no interest in taking charge. Maldemer Drum is there to take notes for posterity, as he's planning to write a book about all this at some point.

Lydon nominates himself as admiral, since he has the most experience in matters of command. Despite this, one of the other captains challenges him. It's up to you to decide which captain should be the antagonist, but it is most likely to be either Mean Wallace or Edward Cooper, depending on the choices the heroes have made while recruiting them. (If one or more of the PCs strongly wishes to be in charge, you may have them toss their hat in the ring and have Lydon support their claim over his own (or even turn the contest into a three-way test and have Lydon turn to Katspur Zee, Christopher Bailey, or

Sabiha Carrington to act as his officers.) The final chapter of *Return to Freeport* will be more difficult for both the PCs and you if Lydon loses the contest.

Drum suggests a solution.

"In the old days, a challenge between two captains was settled by a competition. An impartial judge, often a priest, would set a series of tasks before the two captains and their officers, which they would have to perform side by side. Whoever performed the most admirably would be declared the admiral of their joint fleet."

Lydon and his rival both agree to this, as neither is willing to back down. The competition is scheduled to take place two days hence. Lydon confides in the PCs after the meeting is adjourned, however:

"I don't have any officers I can trust. My crew's a bit on the old side, see. Also, a bit on the shite side. But I think ye be a competent bunch. Will ye be my officers? And, ah ... can I borrow a ship?"

The morning of the competition is cold and damp, with a gloomy drizzle of rain and fog sitting over the docks. The rival's ship has been placed alongside the PC's,

and several of the other captains of the fleet have set themselves up with deck chairs and drinks on the dockside. Drum has recruited a hired-gun spellcaster from the Wizards' Guild (*LN female human wizard*, use the exiled necromancer from *Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 349 if she is somehow involved beyond the acts detailed below) and several of the urchins who normally sell copies of the *Shipping News* on street corners. While Drum and the spellcaster take positions on the docks the urchins come aboard, five of them per ship, carrying a sealed crate of implements with them. They place these near the prow on the forward deck of each ship, and then they lean against the railing with surly grins.

The number of officers on the rival's ship should equal the number of PCs. One has the characteristics of a pirate captain and the others of common pirates (see *Freeport: The City of Adventure*, p. 346).

Drum delivers the first challenge. "*Swab the decks! Even officers have to know how to keep a deck wet!*" Sailors typically swab the decks of their ships with saltwater so the boards expand and seal tight and the PCs must do the same. The urchins open their boxes and hand out mops and buckets full of seawater on both ships. Every round a character can make a DC 5 Profession (sailor) check or a DC 10 Wisdom check to successfully swab, and the first ship to 10 checks wins. Each ship's captain can attempt a DC 15 Profession (sailor) check to provide a +2 bonus to this and any of the following tests by shouting motivational orders. A clever plan to use magic (such as summoning a water elemental) counts as one success per two spell levels used, while other skills may apply at your discretion with an appropriate DC 20 skill check.

By the second round of swabbing things change. "*Sometimes you have to swab during a storm!*" The spellcaster casts a *gust of wind* that hits both ships. The blast of wind knocks any small characters prone and forces medium characters to make a DC15 Strength check to continue swabbing. Every second round this happens again.

Once the swabbing is complete, it's time for part two. "Is that a ship on the horizon? Better check! Whoever climbs the mainmast first wins this round!" Each crew sends their best climber up the rigging. It's a DC 10 Climb check, and the mainmast is 100 feet tall from the ship's deck. If someone flies rather than climbs, that character is declared to be disqualified for being "blown off-course by storm winds!"

"*Final round, worth double points. Repel the boarders!*" The urchins produce comical sackcloth dummies stuffed

with old copies of the *Shipping News*. They then rush around the deck with these attackers on their shoulders, shouting, "Yarr!" and, "Have at ye!" as the wobbling sack-men bob about. Each has AC 10, hardness 1, and can take a single hit point of damage before they bleed paper all over the deck. If any of the urchins are injured (such as by an area effect), the observing pirates cry out in anger, and disqualify whoever injured them.

After the first round of combat, whichever ship's crew is in the lead must also face the illusion of a tentacle reaching over the deck to attack them. "And now, a creature from the deep!" A similar *persistent image* assaults the other crew on the following round, and the caster ends either spell if it is hit with 15 points of damage. The illusion has an AC of 14.

The final round is worth two points, so there's the possibility of a tie. To resolve this, Drum has an additional challenge: "The true test of a captain is his ability to hold his drink!" Lydon and his rival descend to the dock and Drum breaks open a bottle of elvish absinthe, pouring a glass for each. This is a challenge Lydon was born for, and unless you wish to extend the challenge, he knocks back the glass with ease while his opponent swigs once and then collapses to the ground. Otherwise, have the two captains make opposed Fortitude saves instead.

AFTERMATH

As the final storm of hurricane season lifts, the pirate fleet sets sail for Hangnail and a confrontation with the Mazin fleet. Before they go, Drum wishes them well and shows them a copy of the latest *Shipping News*, in which there's a gushing write-up of their bravery. Sadly, it's not a long article and is sandwiched in a corner under a lurid piece about a family being murdered, but Drum is quite proud. (if the PCs made a deal with Black Jules, the murdered family are the LeQuins, descendants of the undead captain's mutinous quartermaster, and Black Jules silently returned to the *Eth Abaddon* after dealing with this loose end).

If the party recruited Sarinda Rogers, she is waiting for them at the mouth of the harbor, and as they approach they see that her ship is not an ordinary one. Her crew are the same damned souls she had with her when she first found the *amulet eternal*, undead pirates who are condemned to serve her until she finds a way to end her own immortality.

How this revelation affects the rest of the fleet, and how they deal with the sabotage that Nathan Grymes has performed to their ship in anticipation of the coming battle, will be dealt with in the next chapter of *Return To Freeport*.

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