ADVENTURE PATH PLUG-INS

Aslands of Plunder: SPICES FIESH

By Matt Goodall with James F. D. Graham



PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING BAME COMPATIBLE



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Legendary Games is an all star team of authors and designers, founded by Clark Peterson of Necromancer Games, Inc. Legendary Games uses a cooperative, team-based approach to bring you, the Paizo fan, the best expansion material for your game. We are gamers and storytellers first, and we believe that passion shows in our products. So check us out, and Make Your Game Legendary!

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What You Will Find Inside

Islands of Plunder: Spices and Flesh

A life spent at sea is a life of adventure even in the real world, and in a fantasy campaign a voyage beyond the horizon brings dangers and wonders undreamed of by those that never venture out of sight of land. Of course, "Here there be monsters" is more than just a scrawled note on a fragment of map when you sail the seven seas. However, the beauty of a nautical campaign is also the way that every island you visit and every stretch of open water in between can become its own unique location for adventure. You're not camping out in town and heading down to the local dungeon; you are setting sail on the lookout for long-buried riches, keeping a weather eye on the horizon for the danger you know is coming.

The *Islands of Plunder* series is designed to populate that ocean with adventure! Superstar author Matt Goodall brings you a succession of adventures that you can drop into any seagoing campaign to enliven the action in a way no random encounter ever could. These may serve as ideal side-treks during a longer campaign or can serve as standalone adventures on their own, with innovative encounters and exotic locales that will leave your players relishing the discovery of the next treasure map that might lead them onward toward the horizon. We hope they spice up your nautical campaign with the rich story and background, innovative layout, beautiful aesthetics, and excellence in design that is the hallmark of Legendary Games. We hope you enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed making it. Game on!

Spices and Flesh

Islands of Plunder: Spices and Flesh is an island-based adventure for 4th-level characters. For players using the official Pirate Adventure Path by Paizo Publishing (issues #55-60), it fits ideally with the second adventure in that series, when the PCs are sailing the seas gathering plunder and gaining infamy to establish themselves as prominent pirates. It can also be used as a part of any pirate themed campaign with PCs who command of a ship.

PART 1: EASY PICKINGS

Another vessel appears in the distance. A cargo ship which, from the look of her, has seen much better days. She moves sluggishly along, sitting low in the water, her hull scarred with old scuffs and scratches, her paint worn and faded, and her sails covered in patches. A tarnished nameplate labels her the "Tamarind".

At first glance, the *Tamarind* appears to be a cargo ship with a small crew, carrying a load of low to mediocre quality spices. Her captain, a man named Bartholomew Craw, seems an amiable fellow more interested in parley than battling pirates on the high seas. When the PCs board, they find him to be a cordial and gracious host who hopes to negotiate a peaceful solution over drinks and perhaps a fine meal.

The truth, however, is much different. Captain Craw is actually a vicious slaver and the *Tamarind* has a secret hold, hidden beneath the first, filled with shackled prisoners. While all of Craw's crew are slavers, it is Sito Ripplepott, the ship's gnomish cook, who serves as the captain's main accomplice. Sito is a poisons expert who uses his nefarious craft to keep the sentient cargo docile during the journey.

Ship Combat

Once the *Tamarind* becomes aware of the PCs' vessel and their intentions, she immediately attempts to flee. Only if the PCs bring their ship directly behind the *Tamarind* does Captain Craw order the crew to use the light ballista on board and only for a few shots to hopefully disable some of the PCs' ship's rigging before making escape the primary focus again. If the PCs are obviously gaining, the *Tamarind* brings out her oars to help keep her distance. If this isn't enough, she immediately strikes her sails and raises the white flag of surrender.

Should the PCs approach the *Tamarind* under the guise of friendship, truce, or other subterfuge, Captain Craw gives the order to heave to without delay, and invites the party aboard. Instead of the Surrender section, proceed straight to the Parley section.

Surrender

Upon boarding the *Tamarind*, the PCs find Captain Craw waiting for them on deck. He immediately offers his masterwork scimitar to the PCs as an official surrender. Likewise, his crew place their various weapons on the deck. Captain Bartholomew Craw introduces himself then apologizes for any attempt to flee, and any shots from the *Tamarind*'s ballista; he explains that this was just so he can appease his clients and insurers when he returns home. He then invites the PCs below deck in order to discuss terms over drinks.

The Truth: The surrendered weapons are a distraction. Each crew member of the Tamarind has a light melee weapon concealed somewhere on their person, ready to be drawn if they receive the signal to attack. Captain Craw also drank an extract of disguise self just before the PCs boarded, not to change his appearance, but to allow him to conceal his magical scimitar. If the PCs cast detect magic and notice an aura of magic around Craw, he smiles ingratiatingly and says that he knows a few minor magic tricks, including one that slightly improves his looks and makes him seem more personable. After identifying the auras of faint conjuration and illusion on Craw, suspicious PCs who attempt to figure out exactly what spell it is can make a DC 16 Knowledge (arcana) check to realize that spells similar to those Craw describes, such as cultural adaptation, honeyed tongue, or tap inner beauty, are either divination or transmutation spells and not illusions.

arley

Craw is most hospitable and once the PCs are below decks in the galley, Sito serves everyone a stiff drink of heavily spiced grog before returning to his kitchen duties. Craw begins by toasting the PCs before leading them to the hold and expressing his regrets for the low-quality of his cargo. If Craw surrendered to the PCs, he tries to persuade them that while they could take his cargo, it's barely worth the effort of transferring it to the PCs' ship, and will only take up space in their hold that they could fill with much more valuable plunder. Craw attempts to convince the PCs to release his ship instead. To help sway them, Craw offers to help the PCs by selling some of their existing ill-gotten plunder at the nearest legitimate port, using his mercantile contacts to obtain an excellent price. Craw also proposes that he could order and purchase expensive items needed by the PCs that are unavailable in the Pirate Isles, such as siege engines or exceptional magic items, when he makes one of his regular visits to a major port.

If the PCs boarded the *Tamarind* under false pretenses, Captain Craw still invites them below—only the conversation is one of friendly small talk, the swapping of the latest news and information, and perhaps an offer to sell some of the *Tamarind*'s spices.

The Truth: If the PCs came aboard under false pretenses then Sito's grog is poisoned and each PC who drinks is exposed to a dose of oil of taggit (Poison—ingested; *save* Fort DC 15; *onset* 1 minute; *effect* unconsciousness for 1d3 hours; *cure* 1 save). Before the PCs boarded the *Tamarind*, Craw drank one of Sito's *delay poison* infusions, so he can imbibe the poisoned brew without fear of suffering its effects immediately. Craw plans on riding out the poison's effects when the *delay poison* extract expires by drinking an antitoxin and remaining locked in his cabin. The rest of the conversation is simply Craw's way of stalling for time to let the poison do its work.

If the PCs boarded and captured the *Tamarind* then Craw expects that the wary PCs are unlikely to fall for the poisoned grog ruse. He still has Sito offer grog (that isn't poisoned) and watches to see if the PCs cast spells on their drinks before imbibing them. When in the cargo hold, Craw pretends to act slightly nervous and his eyes seem to repeatedly wander to a section of the hull on the port side next to the ladder, 10 feet round from the ship's bow. PCs who make a successful DC 15 Sense Motive check notice Captain Craw doing this, but PCs whose check result also beats Craw's opposed Bluff check realize that Craw is purposefully acting in this way, deliberately trying to draw their attention to that area rather than unintentionally revealing it. A successful DC 15 Perception check while searching that area reveals a small hidden compartment set against the hull. Resting in a nest of straw inside the compartment is a set of four oily clay vials. The vials contain a potion of comprehend languages, a potion of endure elements, a potion of expeditious retreat, and a small amount of saffron oil (worth 60 gp). Normally these potions are in Sito's possession and the valuable saffron oil secured away in Craw's sea chest. All the vials are covered in a contact poison version of oil of taggit; anyone who touches these vials is exposed to the poison. The lid of the vial of saffron oil is loose, making it appear as if it has leaked over the other vials. Craw feigns disappointed when the PCs discover this cache, but secretly hopes the PCs pass these treasures around as they try to identify them. A successful DC 20 Craft (alchemy) check reveals the toxic nature of the oily coating on the vials. Avoid having the PCs rolls saving throws as soon as they touch a poisoned vial. Secretly track which PCs have touched the vials, keeping note of how often each PC is in contact with a vial, as there may be multiple exposures. Have the PCs make saving throws retroactively when they become aware of the poison, or at the end of the 1 minute onset period when some of them may start succumbing to the poison. This curtails any metagaming, and increases the chances of the vials being passed to different party members.

Clues

The following suggestions are some ways that the PCs can start to learn that not all onboard the *Tamarind* is as it seems:

- A DC 20 Profession (sailor) check or a DC 15 Craft (ships) check, after seeing the cargo in the hold: the ship is sitting too low in the water for the amount of cargo in the hold. If the PCs mention this, Craw says that he has a large load of ballast to keep the *Tamarind* from capsizing in the frequent storms that strike this area of ocean and that the ship's hull has a multitude of small leaks, meaning the ship usually carries a lot of bilgewater.
- A DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) check or a DC 15 Craft (ships), after seeing the size of the cargo hold: the cargo hold is small for a ship this size. If questioned about this, Craw simply points out that while the *Tamarind* isn't the most efficiently or elegantly built ship on the ocean, she is very sturdy. Craw says that the ship's extra structural supports means he can't carry quite as much cargo but it does mean the *Tamarind* is a lot more likely to arrive in port in one piece.

- A DC 18 Perception check or a DC 12 Profession (cook) check after watching Sito preparing food in the galley: Ripplepott is making two separate meals. One is a regular ship's dinner while the other is a large pot of simple gruel. If the PCs draw attention to this, Craw mentions that he's a fair but firm captain and one of the more common punishments he metes out for disciplinary infractions is putting crewmembers on gruel rations for at least a week.
- A DC 18 Perception check or a DC 13 Profession (merchant) check while examining the spices in the hold: many of the containers of spice in the far corners of the cargo hold are old and dusty. Only those in the easiest to reach places show signs of being new or recently moved. If the PCs call Craw on this, he sighs and goes into a long discourse on his recent string of misfortunes in the spice trade. He confides that he's hoping to sell his cargo as a job lot and get rid of the older spices by mixing them in with his fresher stock.
- A DC 15 Craft (alchemy) check by a character with ranks in the skill after seeing the galley: many of Ripplepott's bottles and equipment in the galley are for crafting alchemical items rather than food. If the check result beats the DC by 10 or more, then the PC recognizes tools and materials for poison-making.
- A DC 20 Sense Motive check against crew members other than Captain Craw or Sito Ripplepott: gives the sense that they are very uncomfortable about the PCs being onboard.
- A DC 20 Perception check while in the hold: beneath the strong scent of spices in the cargo hold is the distinct smell of feces and sweat. Any PC within 5 feet of the trap door leading to the secret hold gets a +2 circumstance bonus on this check.
- A successful opposed Perception check by a PC against a crewmember's Sleight of Hand check while closely observing or searching a crew member: notices the presence of a hidden weapon on that crewmember.

Attack!

Captain Craw's plan of attack depends on how well the poison works against the party. If none of the PCs succumb and they remain unaware of the attempt, Craw keeps up the ruse, perhaps offering the PCs a fine meal if they look weak or divided and he believes a second attempt at poisoning might work. Otherwise, Craw simply lets the PCs take the spices and leave. He also chooses this option if the PCs and their crew obviously outnumber and outmatch his. Depending on their negotiations, the PCs may encounter Craw again and make use of his services before learning his true nature (if they ever do). If some of the PCs succumb, or if none do but the PCs become aware of the poisoning attempt, then Craw initiates combat. The Captain signals his crew to draw their hidden weapons and attack the PCs' crew. Sito Ripplepott appears and harasses the party at range while Craw himself wades into battle. If the PCs find the hidden trap door to the secret hold before Craw has a chance to spring his trap, he lets one or two PCs go down before attempting to separate the PCs by slamming the hatch shut and signaling the attack. If the party won't split, he signals the attack immediately.

If all the PCs fall unconscious from the poison, they later wake to find themselves stripped of gear and chained in the secret hold with the rest of the slaves. They learn the truth of the *Tamarind* from a visit by Sito, who brings gruel and water, and from Craw himself, who reveals his true colors. They can also learn the fate of their ship and crew. Perhaps a less trustworthy member of the PCs' crew saw the opportunity to become captain, or maybe Craw forced the PCs' crew to withdraw by threatening to kill the PCs, and their ship is still sailing nearby. Ultimately, how the party escapes from this predicament is up to the players' ingenuity and your discretion as GM.

The Tamarind

TAMARIND

Gargantuan ship (Keelboat) (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide*)

Squares 60 (25 ft. by 60 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 6; Hardness 5

hp 600 (oars 80, sails 80)

Base Save +4

OFFENSE

Maximum Speed 30 ft. (muscle), 30 ft. (wind), or 60 ft. (muscle and wind); Acceleration 30 ft.

Ranged light ballista (3d8/19-20)

CMB +4; CMD 14

Ramming Damage 4d8

STATISTICS

Propulsion muscle, wind, or current Sailing Check Diplomacy or Intimidate (when using





Above Decks

Below Decks

1 square = 5 ft

muscle); Profession (sailor) (when using wind or current)

Sailing Check Modifier +1

Control Device wheel

Means of Propulsion 8 oars, 20 squares of sails (one mast)

Crew 15

Decks 2

Cargo/Passengers 55 tons/100 passengers

Cargo 4 points of plunder. (Just 1 point of plunder comes from the spices and ship's equipment, the other 3 points are from the slaves. Whether the PCs free these slaves or choose to actively engage in the slave trade to sell them could present a moral quandary.)

EQUIPMENT

Weapons 1 light ballista with 20 bolts (aft)

Ship Improvements broad rudder, increased cargo capacity, smuggling compartment (15 squares)

ABOVE DECK

1. Upper Main Deck: This area rises just over 4 feet above the main deck. It holds the ship's steering wheel and its only armament—a light ballista mounted off the stern. Two ladders, one on either side, connect the platform with the main deck. On the main deck next to the port-side ladder is a small door that leads to a storage space under the platform that holds oars, spare planks, sails, tools, and other supplies.

2. Main Deck: The main deck of the *Tamarind* has a simple layout. The mast is at the center of the ship and forward of it are large loading doors that lead into the cargo hold below. A ladder near the mast and another near the cargo hold both lead below deck.

3. Crow's Nest: At the top of the mast is a simple, 5-foot square platform that serves as a lookout point for the ship.

BELOW DECK

4. Captain's Quarters: The private bunk of Captain Craw also serves as his chart room and office. A comfortable cot and nightstand are in one corner and maps, charts, and other navigational tools cover the walls. There is also a small writing desk containing numerous logs and record books detailing the captain's dealings—in both spices and slaves. A thorough search of the cabin finds a weathered piece of parchment that potentially leads to further adventure (see Part 2 below). Beside the bed is a sea chest that contains his personal belongings. The door to this room is always locked and Captain Craw carries the key with him at all times.

5. Cabin/Galley: This main cabin is both the eating and sleeping area for the rest of the crew. A large stained and dirty table with matching benches takes up the center of the space while old hammocks and personal effects are strung all around in a haphazard manner. On the starboard side, a narrow section holds a small galley. Foodstuffs and kitchen utensils mix seamlessly with Ripplepott's alchemical tools and belongings in a bizarre-looking mess.

6. Cargo Hold: Crates, barrels, and sacks of various spices partially fill the ship's hold. The dusty air is thick with the heavy odor of spices. One of the large crates in the southeast section rests on top of a secret trap door leading down into the secret hold below. Finding this trap door requires the searching character to make a successful DC 20 Perception check.

7. Secret Hold: This space is only tall enough for a Medium-sized creature to stand hunched over. Dozens of people lie chained to the floor and walls with thick, iron manacles. Most are unconscious and the few who are awake are torpid. They are all in poor health and show all the signs of being malnourished. The stench of sweat and human waste is overpowering, made all the worse by the stale air.

Captain of the Jamarind

Bartholomew Craw is a paunchy, heavy-set man wearing the dirty and threadbare outfit of a merchant sea captain. His shaved head is ruddily-sunburned and his squinting, deep-set eyes are dark brown. A scraggly, dull-red beard only serves to make his wide smile, full of yellowed teeth, all the more noticeable.

BARTHOLOMEW CRAW

XP 1,200

Male human ranger (skirmisher) 5

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2 (+4 in water terrain); Senses Perception +8 (+10 in water terrain) CR 4

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex) hp 47 (5d10+15)

Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 scimitar +10 (1d6+6/18-20)

Special Attacks favored enemy (elves +2, humans +4), hunter's tricks (2/day, upending strike)

TACTICS

Before Combat Captain Craw drinks Sito's *delay poison* and *disguise self* infusions before the PCs board the *Tamarind*.

- During Combat Craw uses his upending strike hunter's trick to trip opponents. Against tougher opponents who are mostly human or elven, he also uses his hunter's bond to boost his crew's abilities.
- **Morale** Bartholomew Craw surrenders if reduced to 10 hit points or less. However, if he believes he is fighting abolitionists, he fights to the death rather than be captured and hanged as a slaver.

STATISTICS

Str 18, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 13 Base Atk +5; CMB +9; CMD 21 Feats Cosmopolitan (Bluff, Diplomacy), Endurance,

- Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Bluff), Toughness
- Skills Bluff +14, Climb +7, Diplomacy +11, Knowledge (geography) +7 (+9 in water terrain), Perception +8 (+10 in water terrain), Profession (sailor) +6, Sense Motive +5, Swim +7

Languages Common, Gnoll, Infernal

- **SQ** favored terrain (water +2), track +2, hunter's bond (companions), silver tongued, wild empathy +6
- **Combat Gear** potion of cure moderate wounds; **Other Gear** mwk chain shirt, +1 scimitar, mwk scimitar, signal whistle, keys to captain's cabin and sea chest.

Ship's Cook

With a hunch that makes him seem shorter than he already is, this gnome dresses in simple clothes and a leather apron covered in grease and other stains. His slick hair is the color of moss and his beady eyes are a quiet gray. Slung around his waist is a bandoleer of flasks and cooking utensils.

SITO RIPPLEPOTT

CR 3

XP 800

Male gnome alchemist 4

CE Small humanoid (gnome)

Init +4; Senses low-light vision; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+3 armor, +4 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 33 (4d8+12)

Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +3; +2 vs. despair and fear, +4 vs. poison

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk punching dagger +4 (1d3–1/×3)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +9 (1d6/19–20/×2 plus poison) or

bomb +9 (2d6+3 acid/×2)

Special Attacks bomb 7/day (2d6+3 acid or fire, DC 15)

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 4th)

2nd-delay poison, invisibility

1st—cure light wounds, disguise self, shield, touch of the sea

TACTICS

- **Before Combat** Sito applies a dose of concentrated large scorpion venom (enhanced by his concentrated poison discovery) to a crossbow bolt and drinks his mutagen to increase his Dexterity.
- During Combat Sito drinks his *shield* extract and tries his best to stay out of melee combat. He prefers to stay back and pepper opponents with poisoned bolts, bombs, and other thrown weapons. He always uses his acid bomb discovery while fighting on board the *Tamarind* to minimize the risk of fire.
- Morale Sito flees if reduced to 6 hit points or less. He dives overboard, using his potions and extracts to survive and hide underwater until the PCs' ship leaves. He surrenders if his escape route is blocked or the PCs chase him down.

Designer's Note: Alchemist's AC too high?

With his *shield* extract, Sito the cook has an Armor Class that may be very difficult for 4th level characters to hit. As a GM, if you think this is likely to be too challenging for your PCs, or just plain frustrating for their players, then consider changing things so that Sito has given his *shield* extract to Captain Craw, who drinks the infusion during combat. This gives them both a more reasonable Armor Class of 20.

Base Statistics Without his mutagen, Sito's statistics are Init +2; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Ref +6, Will +4; Melee mwk light crossbow +7 (1d6/19– 20/×2) or bomb +7 (2d6+3 acid/×2); Dex 14, Wis 13; CMD 13; Skills Heal +8, Perception +10, Profession (cook) +8

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 11, Cha 10

Base Atk +3; CMB +1; CMD 15

- Feats Brew Potion, Extra Discovery, Iron Will, Throw Anything
- Skills Appraise +10, Craft (alchemy) +10 (+12 create poisons), Heal +7, Knowledge (nature) +10, Perception +9, Profession (cook) +7, Spellcraft +10; Racial



Modifiers +2 Craft (alchemy) to create poisons, +2 Perception

- Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnoll, Gnome, Sylvan
- **SQ** alchemy (alchemy crafting +4, identify potions), mutagen (+4/–2, +2 natural, 40 minutes), discoveries (acid bomb, concentrate poison, infusion), eternal hope (reroll a natural 1, 1/day), knack with poison, poison use, swift alchemy
- Combat Gear potion of comprehend languages, potion of cure light wounds, potion of endure elements, potion of expeditious retreat, potion of invisibility, potion of water breathing, antitoxin (2), concentrated blue whinnis (Poison-injury; save Fort DC 16; frequency 1/round for 3 rounds; initial effect 1 Con; secondary effect unconsciousness for 1d3 hours; cure 1 save), concentrated large scorpion venom (Poison-injury; save Fort DC 20; frequency 1/round for 9 rounds; effect 1d2 Str; cure 1 save), oil of taggit (4 doses), oil of taggit (contact poison*, 4 doses), smokesticks (3), tanglefoot bags (2); Other Gear mwk studded leather, mwk punching dagger, mwk light crossbow with 20 bolts, alchemy crafting kit, backpack, bandoleer, formula book (stored in a waterproof bag, contains all prepared extracts plus crafter's fortune and true strike), mess kit
- * Sito stole this unusual form of poison from a fellow alchemist who possessed the Poison Conversion alchemist discovery. It has the same statistics as normal oil of taggit, but is a contact poison instead of an ingested poison.

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee sap +3 (1d6+3)

Ranged dagger +2 (1d4+2/19-20)

TACTICS

- Before Combat The sailors have already concealed various weapons on their person. They also carry a selection of weapons openly, including longswords, morningstars, and scimitars, but surrender these weapons when the PCs board the *Tamarind*.
- **During Combat** The sailors gang up on lightly armored foes first, hoping to take them out of the fight quickly.
- Morale If reduced to 3 hit points or less, a sailor flees or surrenders.

STATISTICS

CR 1/2

Str 14, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +1; CMB +3; CMD 14

Feats Athletic, Power Attack

Skills Climb +9, Perception +4, Profession (sailor) +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Swim +9

Languages Common

Gear leather armor, sap, dagger, 4d10 gp



SAILORS (15)

XP 200 each Human expert 1/warrior 1 NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +1; Senses Perception +4 DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +1 Dex) hp 10 each (2 HD; 1d8+1d10+1) Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2

Part 2: Delivering the Cargo

Among the papers in Captain Craw's cabin, the PCs find a piece of weathered parchment containing a curious message and rough map. The message contains an order for a consignment of slaves and instructions for delivery of this shipment. The map marks the delivery location as a point in the open ocean, with the nearest island over 20 miles away. Scrawled on the parchment in Craw's handwriting is the following: "This be an odd trade run if ever there were one. I guess there'll be a ship waiting out there, but why not make the trade at an island instead? Would have been much easier. Still if the pay is as good as that down payment of pearls it'll make the trip well worthwhile, even if it means the risk of sailing through pirate-infested waters." The only other clue is in Craw's ledgers from over 2 months ago. A note next to an entry paying off a large debt reads, "Those pearls did the trick, that'll keep the legbreakers off me. It was good of old Jarkus the drunkard to put me onto this deal. I don't know why the ancient poxy lubber kept muttering about it being "Shayonna's debt". I don't give a damn about the name of whoever he gets any of these jobs from. Getting more of those lustrous pearls is what I care about."

The Legend of Shavonna

A successful DC 21 Knowledge (local) check reveals the name 'Shayonna' is part of a tragic ghost story told by sailors in many ports. The tale tells of an amoral charlatan called Bren Taylee who owned a local tavern. A charismatic and bald-faced liar, Taylee became rich swindling wealthy investors by selling off unseen parcels of land on a nearby island. He also fell madly in love with his barmaid and married her, an innocent redheaded beauty named Shayonna. When one of the more intrepid investors discovered the 'rich farmland' was, in fact, a swamp (or a waterway, depending on the version of the story), Taylee was forced to flee. He left his wife Shayonna behind, abandoning her to face the furious investors and a large debt from the tavern. The tales say that Shayonna stowed away on the same ship Taylee fled on to escape the angry mob and that a drunken sailor on deck one night claimed to have seen Taylee with his hands locked around a young woman's throat (or possibly even throwing her limp body overboard). Whatever the truth, neither Taylee or Shayonna were ever seen or heard from again. However, infrequent sightings of Shayonna's drowned ghostly spirit are reported to this day, in or around the harbors of a number of port cities.

Whatever the truth of this legend, Shayonna does exist. Whether it was as the tales describe, and Shayonna's outrage at her husband's betrayal kept her from succumbing to death and drove her to become what she is today or whether there was always the blackest evil in her heart and it was she who seduced Taylee, foully murdered him, and stole his fortune, no-one knows. But Shayonna lives and has become the powerful and villainous hag known as "the Gaunt". At present, the wicked sea hag seeks a shipment of slaves to work her foul witchcraft upon, and transmogrify into a horde of monstrous and slavishly obedient servitors.

Che Islet

Assuming the account of the valuable pearls strikes the PCs' interest, it takes less than a week of travel to reach the location marked on the map. It is a tiny islet, sandy and barren, surrounded by a large coral reef. The shallow

MAKING MYTHIC DRAMATIC!

Normally, a writer using up valuable word count on an NPC's background that the PCs may never learn isn't a good idea. However, the Gaunt is a *mythic* sea hag. Even in a short adventure like this one, the PCs should be aware that they face something ominous and terrifying. If the PCs defeat her and live to tell the tale, they automatically gain +2 to their Infamy and Disrepute when they next make port and speak of this deed. Whether or not you choose to give the PCs a mythic tier for defeating Shayonna, the PCs still gain a spark of her power. Each PC gains the one-time ability to use an imposition from the *Skull and Shackles Player's Guide* costing up to 10 Disrepute points as a supernatural ability. Using this ability does not decrease the PCs' Disrepute. waters and jagged reefs around this speck of land mean that the PCs' ship needs to moor at least 300 feet away to avoid damage to the hull. There is, however, no one on the isle and no other ships in sight.

RECEPTION

(CR 5)

Creatures: Shortly after the PCs land on the islet, a pair of hulking, brutish things put their heads above the surface of the sea nearby and warily wade toward the PCs. These are merrows, the unholy offspring of the legendary sea hag, Shayonna the Gaunt. They approach the islet from the east, using the shallow water for cover and, providing the PCs don't attack, slowly lumber ashore. Both creatures have the waterlogged remnants of sailor's outfits still clinging to their gross forms. One of them speaks in gurgling, barely understandable Common asking why the PCs have come. If the PCs provide a believable reason to be here, such as to sell slaves, the merrows nod and one dives into the water to convey this information to Shayonna. Shayonna is already aware of the presence of the PCs' ship and has sent her minions to ascertain their intentions if a party comes ashore.

The remaining merrow has a deep scar across the right side of its face that cuts off the lower half of its right ear. The curious thing is a piece of silver jewelry crafted to resemble the missing piece of flesh dangles from two earrings in the upper half of this ear. PCs can recognize this unusual jewelry and its owner with a DC 20 Knowledge (local) check. It belongs to a knavish scallywag named Gamin 'half-ear' Crystos, a womanizing half-elven pirate, popular in many local ports for his willingness to spread his plunder around. Gamin lost his ear from a close call with an imperial ballista bolt. If any of the PCs have ever actually seen Gamin, the merrow bears a warped, monstrous resemblance to the man. If addressed by name, the merrow stares blankly at the PCs before a flicker of recognition crosses the creature's face and it burbles three words in Giant, "please kill me". The grotesque thing that was once a man then stiffens and comprehension fades from its eyes, leaving only brutish hostility.

Merrow, Freshwater (2)

XP 800 each

hp 30 each (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2)

the second second

TACTICS

Morale If attacked when Shayonna isn't present, the merrows retreat into the underwater passage (see area 1 below) to warn her when reduced below 15 hit points. When defending Shayonna, they fight to the death.

Treasure: Gamin's earring is only worth 50 gp, but if spent to influence an Infamy check, it is worth 10 times that, giving a +1 bonus to the PCs' check.

Parley

If the PCs wait, after several minutes Shayonna the Gaunt (see area 4) rises up out of the ocean. She has used her disguise hex to conceal her horrific form, appearing as a youthful aquatic humanoid, similar to a merfolk, but with legs instead of a tail. Even in this unassuming form, there is something palpably sinister in her manner. The ocean itself seems to recoil from her and as she steps onto the sand; her blood-red hair is dry. Flanked by her two merrows, Shayonna approaches the PCs and asks what they have brought her. Shayonna cagily negotiates for the consignment of slaves and shrewdly asks why the PCs are making this delivery rather than the Captain Craw. Shayonna demands the PCs bring a sample selection of slaves ashore for her to examine. She haggles over the price and the quality of the merchandise but is prepared to pay up to 2,800 gp in pearls for all the Tamarind's slaves, regardless of their condition, which is an exceptionally good price.

If the PCs sell the slaves, these poor wretches are brought ashore where they huddle together on the tiny islet. Each day at dawn, shells full of brackish water and raw fish are left on the shore to sustain them, and each night one of the doomed slaves vanishes, as the unfortunate is dragged below the waves to a ghastly fate. After completing such a despicable bargain, the PCs had best be gone quickly and never return, for when Shayonna has at least six merrows in total under her control, she avariciously boards any nearby vessel to gain additional minions.

1. UNDERWATER PASSAGE

Just to the south of the islet is an underwater tunnel into the coral reef that leads through to Shayonna's lair. The tunnel is marked with a darker outline on the map; the other lighter areas are simply gaps between the colonies of coral surrounding the islet. The thick coral over the tunnel makes it impossible to spot from above and a steep overhang above the tunnel entrance conceals it from the view of anyone on the island. The passage slopes down from a depth of 5 feet at the northern end to 25 feet at the southern end where it opens out into area 3. Scattered sunlight filters in during the day, providing dim illumination; at night, the tunnel is in darkness. The Large-sized merrows need to squeeze through this tunnel which slows them significantly.

2. CORAL FLENSING TRAP (CR 3)

Shayonna has placed a warding trap on this area. When a creature of Small size or larger, other than Shayonna or a merrow, passes through this area, a torrent of water attempts to slam the creature into the razor sharp corals that line the passage. This trap automatically resets and can trigger once per round.

CORAL FLENSING TRAP

CR 3

XP 600

Type magic; Perception DC 26; Disable Device DC 26

EFFECTS

Trigger location (alarm); Reset automatic

Effect spell effect (*hydraulic push* [CL 4th], CMB +7 bull rush into razor-sharp coral, Atk +10 melee, 1d3+1 piercing damage plus 1 bleed)

3. URCHIN CLUSTER (CR 4)

The coralline tunnel opens out into an underwater clearing. Multicolored corals grow in profusion all around this open area, but there are gaps in coral branches overhead, allowing more light through from above (giving this area the same illumination level as above the waves) and providing Medium or smaller creatures with a way up to the surface. The area is 10 feet high and the seafloor is 25 feet below the surface. The passage to the south narrows to a small shaft that leads up to the outside of the reef. It requires DC 20 Escape Artist checks for Small- or Medium-sized creatures to squeeze along this shaft, larger creatures can't fit at all, and smaller creatures can move through without restriction.

Creatures: While there are tiny fish swimming among the coral and aquatic plant life, the main danger here is a large number of predatory sea urchins. These spiny marine creatures are under Shayonna's sway and don't attack her or her merrows, but hungrily surge over intruders.

CR 2 **RAVENOUS URCHIN SWARM** XP 600 Pathfinder Adventure Path #56 N Tiny vermin (aquatic, swarm) Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +1 Defense AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +2 natural, +2 size) hp 18 (4d8) Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2 Immune mind-affecting effects; Resist cold 5 OFFENSE Speed 10 ft., swim 20 ft. Melee swarm +6 (2d6 plus poison) Space 10 ft.; Reach 0 ft.

Special Attacks distraction (DC 14), jet, underfoot

STATISTICS

Str 1, Dex 13, Con 10, Int —, Wis 13, Cha 9 Base Atk +3; CMB +2; CMD 7 (can't be tripped) Feats Weapon Finesse Skills Acrobatics +9, Swim +3 SQ amphibious

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- Jet (Ex) While underwater, a ravenous urchin swarm can jet as a full-round action at a speed of 70 feet. It must move in a straight line, but does not provoke attacks of opportunity while jetting.
- Poison (Ex) Swarm—injury; save Fort DC 12; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Dex and reduce movement speed by 10 feet (to a minimum of 5 feet); cure 1 save. The venom of ravenous urchin swarms stiffens muscles and locks joints into painful

THE DESOLATE ISLET



1 square = 5 ft.

configurations. The save DC is Constitution-based. Underfoot (Ex) Each time a creature moves through a space occupied by a ravenous urchin swarm or starts its movement in such a space, it runs the risk of a ravenous urchin moving underfoot. The creature must succeed at a DC 13 Reflex save or take 1 point of damage plus poison. Additionally, the affected creature's movement speed is reduced by half because its foot is wounded. This movement penalty lasts for 24 hours, until the creature is successfully treated with a DC 15 Heal check, or until it receives at least 1 point of magical healing. A charging or running creature must immediately stop if it steps on a ravenous urchin. Any creature moving at half its speed or slower can pick its way through a tidal pool of ravenous urchins (but not a ravenous urchin swarm) with no trouble. The save DC is Constitution-based.

HUNTER URCHINS (2)

XP 400 each

Pathfinder Adventure Path #37 N Medium vermin (aquatic)

Init -4; Senses all-around vision, low-light vision, scent, tremorsense 30 ft.; Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 6, flat-footed 12 (-4 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 13 each (2d8+4)

Fort +5, Ref -4, Will +0

Defensive Abilities stability; Immune mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 15 ft. Melee tongue +3 (1d3+3 plus pull) Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; 20 ft. with tongue Special Attacks spines (+3, 1d4+2 plus poison), pull (tongue, 5 feet)

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 3, Con 14, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 2 Base Atk +1; CMB +3; CMD 9 (17 vs. bull rush or trip) Skills Perception +4 SQ amphibious

SPECIAL ABILITIES

All-Around Vision (Ex) All giant sea urchins can see in all directions. They gain a +4 racial bonus on Perception checks and cannot be flanked.

Poison (Ex) Hunter urchin venom causes intense pain that staggers those who suffer its effects, but does not actually inflict ability damage. The save DC is Constitution-based. Spines-injury; save Fort DC 13; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect staggered for 1 round; cure 1 save.

Spines (Ex) A hunter urchin's spines can swivel to face any approaching creature. Any creature that attacks a hunter urchin with an unarmed strike or a natural attack, or any Medium or smaller creature that attacks with a one-handed weapon or light weapon,

> is automatically attacked by the hunter urchin's spines as an im-



CR 1

17

mediate action. If the spines hit, they can poison the target as well.

Stability (Ex) All giant sea urchins receive a +8 bonus to CMD when resisting a bull rush or trip attempt.

4. SEA HAG'S GROTTO (CR 6)

A carpet of pale bones litters the seabed in this grotto of dead skeletal coral. Sharp spikes of lifeless coral jut from the walls and opposite the entrance, glistening pearls rest in several large seashells. Curtains of lifeless blackened seaweed hang from the walls.

The thick coral blocks any light from the surface leaving the area in darkness.

Creature: This dark grotto is the lair of Shayonna the Gaunt. Her merrow minions have likely already alerted her to the approach of the PCs' ship. Shayonna lurks here, patiently waiting for the PCs to bring her the slaves she needs to complete her foul ministrations.

If she retreats here to her grotto after a fight on shore, she animates her *claw of the briny depths* and attempts to heal her wounds with her *wand of cure light wounds* by activating it using her Use Magic Device skill. If she hears the PCs approaching, she attempts to use a *wand of summon monster II* she stores here to summon a fiendish octopus by activating the wand with her Use Magic Device skill.

SHAYONNA THE GAUNT

CR 5/MR 2

XP 1,600

Mythic female sea hag (<u>Mythic Monsters: Sea Mon-</u> <u>sters</u>, Legendary Games)

CE Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic, mythic) Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6 Aura horrific appearance (60 ft., DC 15)

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +5 natural) hp 58 (4d10+36) Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +5 SR 16

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft. **Melee** 2 claws +8 (1d6+4) or +1 returning harpoon +9 (1d8+7/x3)

Ranged +1 returning harpoon +8 (1d8+5/x3)

Claw of the Briny Depths

Aura faint conjuration; CL 3rd Slot none; Price 300 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

The thick webbed membranes between the withered digits of this severed claw hint at the subaquatic origins of the thalassic thing it was once a part of. On command, the claw animates as a <u>crawling hand</u> (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*) with a swim speed of 40 foot instead of a climb speed. This crawling claw is under the control of the creature who animated it and lasts for 3 minutes before decomposing into a foul nonmagical slurry of festering tissue and bones.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *lesser ani*mate dead; Cost 150 gp

Special Attacks evil eye, hexed harpoon^{MA}, <u>mythic</u> <u>power</u> (4/day, surge 1d6), salt wife^{MA} Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +7)

1/day—aqueous orb (DC 16), control water, old salt's curse (DC 18), water breathing

TACTICS

Before Combat If aware of the PCs' presence nearby, Shayonna repeatedly attempts to active her *wand of mage armor* with her Use Magic Device skill. She has an 8 in 9 chance of being able to successfully activate it before she rolls a natural 1 on her skill check (not included in her statistics).

During Combat Shayonna starts by revealing her horrific appearance and using her misfortune hex. She also cackles using her *cackling hag's blouse* to extend the hex's duration. Shayonna focuses her attacks on one PC, hurling her returning harpoon to lower that PC's saving throws and repeatedly using her evil eye ability to knock that PC unconscious for later transformation into a merrow. Shayonna uses *aqueous orb* to keep strong looking melee combatants away from her. She uses her mythic power to increase her saving throws again the PCs' spells or to resolve attacks with her harpoon as touch attacks. If her death is imminent, Shayonna reserves one use of her mythic power to cast *old salt's curse* on the PC who strikes the killing blow against her.

Morale If fighting on the islet, Shayonna retreats into the coral tunnel if she is being overwhelmed or when reduced below 30 hit points. In her grotto, however, she makes a final stand and fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 19, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 17 Base Atk +4; CMB +8; CMD 21

Feats Die Hard, Endurance, Extra Mythic Power^{MF}
Skills Bluff +7, Intimidate +12, Perception +8, Stealth +8, Swim +17, Use Magic Device +7

Languages Common, Giant

SQ amphibious, water witch^{MA}

Combat Gear claw of the briny depths, wand of cure light wounds (9 charges), wand of mage armor (15 charges); Other Gear mwk harpoon, cackling hag's blouse^{UE}

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Hexed Harpoon (Su) A mythic sea hag carries a twotined harpoon of dripping bone, coral, and rusted metal, with a trailing rope of braided kelp. She can wield this weapon proficiently, and in her hands it functions as a +1 returning harpoon. In addition, any creature she strikes with the hexed harpoon is

stricken with doubt and ill luck, causing the target to take a -2 penalty to one of the following (hag's choice): AC, ability checks, attack rolls, saving throws, or skill checks. This is a mind-affecting curse effect that lasts for 4 rounds; a DC 15 Will save reduces the duration to 1 round. The weapon has no magical properties and gains the fragile weapon quality in the hands of others. A creature carrying a hexed harpoon for more than 1 round must save be afflicted with a -2 penalty to all of the categories listed above for as long as the hexed harpoon is carried and for 24 hours thereafter. A mythic sea hag can expend one use of her mythic power to resolve attacks with her hexed harpoon as melee touch or ranged touch attacks until the end of her next turn. If her hexed harpoon is lost or destroyed, she can make another in a ritual requiring 8 hours.

Evil Eye (Su) Three times per day, a sea hag can cast her dire gaze upon any single creature within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Will save or be staggered as strange nebulous distress and a gnawing sense of impending doom plagues the victim. If a sea hag uses her evil eye on someone already afflicted by this curse, the victim must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be overwhelmed with fright and collapse into a comatose state for 3 days. Each day that passes, the comatose victim must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or perish (see the salt wife ability). The evil eye is a mind-affecting fear effect.



The save DCs are Charisma-based.

- Evil Eye Curse: *Gaze*—failed save; *save* Fortitude or Will DC 15; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* staggered (or fall comatose if already under the effects of the evil eye).
- Horrific Appearance (Su) The sight of a sea hag is so revolting that anyone within 60 feet (other than another hag) who sets eyes upon one must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or instantly be weakened, taking 1d6 points of Strength damage. Creatures that are affected by this power or that successfully save against it cannot be affected again by the same hag's horrific appearance for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charismabased.
- Salt Wife (Su) A mythic sea hag gains the charm, disguise, and misfortune hexes of a 4th-level witch. If she renders a victim comatose with her evil eye, that creature gains the amphibious special quality. She then drags the victim below the waves, and each day that passes the creature must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or be transformed into a freshwater merrow (this is true even if the transformation occurs in salt water; use the freshwater merrow statistics regardless) rather than perishing. This merrow regards the mythic sea hag as its beloved mistress. She gains a +10 bonus on Bluff checks when interacting with her merrow servants, and they in turn become immune to her horrific appearance. This transformation cannot be dispelled but can be reversed with remove curse, requiring a DC 19 caster level check. The DC of this check increases by 1 each day, becoming permanent after seven days have passed.
- Water Witch (Sp) A mythic sea hag gains aqueous orb, control water, old salt's curse, and water breathing as spell-like abilities and may use each once per day. If a mythic sea hag is killed, she can expend one use of her mythic power as an immediate action to cast old salt's curse upon her killer, even if she had already used that ability that day. If she has no mythic power remaining or if she was already unable to take actions prior to being slain, she cannot use this ability.

Treasure: A coral *wand of summon monster II* (6 charges) rests on a niche in the southwest alcove. The piles of silvery pearls are worth 3,200 gp in total.

Conclusion

Once the PCs have dealt with the *Tamarind* and Shayonna the Gaunt in one way or another, and likely gained a rich prize of pearls, they are free to continue raiding the sea lanes. If the PCs still have the *Tamarind's* cargo of slaves, they need to decide what to do with them. If Shayonna the Gaunt survives, PCs may encounter her again, perhaps as the captain of a ship of her own crewed by a horde of monstrous merrows.





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