

# SONG OF THE SIREN

A ONE SHEET ADVENTURE FOR THE DAY AFTER RAGNAROK BY MOE LANE



The heroes are hired by Texan company Magnolia Petroleum to do monster hunting on the high seas. Magnolia is setting up offshore drilling rigs in what used to be Louisiana; things were going as expected until 'mermaids' started capsizing their supply boats and chewing on the sailors. It's clearly not something they can handle in-house; hiring freelancers was the next logical step.

## THE SETUP

In 1946 Japanese/Mexican forces secretly occupied the former naval base at Panama City, Florida. The site (now called *Fuerte Sirena*) is meant to be—eventually—a haven for Mexican/Japanese commerce raiders. Since it's a dangerous, underfunded backwater, the Japanese assigned an embarrassingly *female* ophiurgist named Ningyo Manami to the project: an only slightly megalomaniacal mad scientist, Ningyo uses a serum derived from oil of scarlet rose mallow (a plant common to the region) to control the carnivorous mutated manatees now infesting the area. She also discreetly works on giving man the power of the manatee: of which, more later.

Unfortunately, Ningyo-kun does not know that non-mutated manatees migrate. Or that her mallow extract wakes up those buried migratory instincts...

## BEGINNING

Magnolia Petroleum's *Queen of Sorrows* oil rig just missed their last radio check, so Magnolia honchos believe it's the best place to start. Magnolia lends the party a boat (the *SS Atargatis*) and someone to captain it should the heroes lack transportation. The heroes arrive at the *Queen of Sorrows* without incident... besides the odd bit of foreshadowing.

The rig itself is a fixed platform with four people on it; there were more, but most of them earlier calmly jumped off of the edge - and into the waiting maws of five 'mermaids' below (the mutated manatees). One victim jumps just as the heroes' boat comes in to dock, and just in time for the party to save him... or at least hear him croak out a last warning about "Les Sirenes. LES SIRENES GRANDS!" Knowledge, or a French background, tells any hero that means "the big sirens" (or "mermaids") in Cajun. What he meant soon becomes apparent. As the manatees begin their oddly melodious and compelling squeaking and honking, the heroes find vague urges to jump into the gulf bubbling up within themselves. Urges that get stronger.

## FIGHTING THE MANATEES

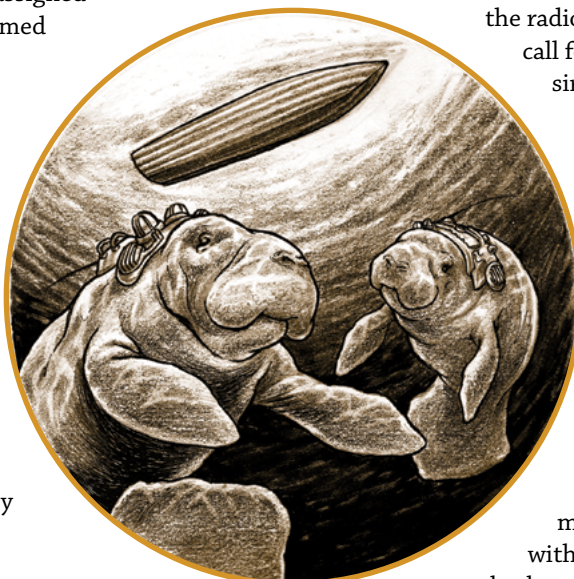
Any player who makes a Spirit roll to resist the manatees' *puppet* ability is free to act. The manatees' mental commands consist of "Start," "stop," and "jump;" they do *not* include "shoot the gun." As to combat... both explosives and high-powered firearms work fine against slowly-moving aquatic mammals. Killing off two causes the rest to flee: a cornered manatee attacks in a panic until it dies, or escapes.

After heroes drive off or kill the manatees and dock with the *Queen of Sorrows*, the grateful survivors inform the party that the manatees attacked two days previously, slowly whittling down their victims. Unfortunately, the manatees ate the radio operator first, which is why no radio call for help; and traditional methods against sirens (tying themselves up and/or stuffing wax in their ears) only worked temporarily. With little ammo and no explosives, direct attacks failed.

## RESEARCH

Knowledge (Biology, Florida geography, and/or Serpentfall-related mutations) reveals that the 'mermaids' are actually mutated, obviously carnivorous (the teeth are a dead giveaway) manatees. Each manatee also has a large, impossible to miss metallic implant faintly stencilled with Japanese kanji. However, a military background (or a military-related Knowledge) reveals that the implants are salvaged American equipment! Specifically (with Repair or suitable Knowledge) VLF submarine receivers slaved to medical injectors. A successful Knowledge (Chemistry, Botany, etc) roll reveals that the injectors are actually intravenous delivery systems for oil derived from the locally-common scarlet rose mallow.

The survivors use the heroes' radio to report in; Magnolia contacts the Texas Rangers, who respond by sending a force to find/neutralize the problem. This, of course, means that they send a helicopter that *drops off* a single Ranger (Charlie Miller) and a bag full of deputy badges. Treat the Ranger as an asset for the party, not a complication; Ranger Miller is approaching fifty and is there to provide missing skills (or a replacement character). He also has salvaged US Navy maps of the Florida coastline; combining them and a successful Smarts roll eventually reveals that the old Panama City Navy facility is an excellent place to look for a secret ophi-tech facility using salvaged American military materiel. Without Miller's maps, the heroes can eventually work it out from the charts on board their



boat, or by triangulating on the manatees' receivers (Repair or Knowledge (Radio)).

## FUERTE SIRENA

Panama City avoided the worst effects of the Serpentfall's tsunami, but plague and monsters rapidly wiped out the population anyway. The Japanese/Sinarquistas began slowly reconstructing the facilities in 1946. In ten years it's slated to be a fully-garrisoned naval base, and possibly a full-fledged underground lair; right now there's a few converted Quonset huts housing about forty miserable Mexican workers, a dozen Sinarquista soldiers riding herd on them, a half-dozen Japanese engineers overseeing the rebuilding, and resident mad scientist Ningyo Manami in her own 'lair.' Fortunately for the party, the Japanese officer in charge (Lt. Yamada Tarō) thinks that the manatees' presence makes more troops unnecessary.

## ASSAULTING THE BASE

The primary defenses of *Fuerte Sirena* are the fifty manatees patrolling its harbor: Ningyo controls the manatees via a combination of mallow oil and subsonic noise generators. The heroes have many options: preparing depth charges to kill the manatees, using the fetid jungle now surrounding the base as cover for a land-base assault, or even creating more of the mallow extract and stupefying the manatees. If the party neutralizes the manatees, an assault on *Fuerte Sirena* itself succeeds. The base personnel openly panic at an attack; the workers rise up against the Sinarquist soldiers as the soldiers try stealing the engineers' escape boat. If the party does not neutralize the manatees, the manatees freeze them in place and soldiers appear, capture the party, and take them to Ningyo in time-honored genre fashion. One way or another, the party ends up in Ningyo's "lair:" a Quonset hut containing various dramatic-looking equipment, and a pool connected to the harbor.

Captured heroes start this scene tied (*not* handcuffed) to chairs; they get at least a brief conversation with Ningyo before Lt. Yamada bursts in. If the party was not captured, Yamada is there when *they* burst in. Either way, Yamada confronts Ningyo, appropriating her research research—the heroes' presence gives him the perfect excuse.. Which inevitably means that Yamada flings Ningyo aside and shoots himself up with a prototype serum that promptly turns him into... the MANatee! That unholy hybrid of man, manatee, and snake then *tries* to kill all the heroes. It flees through the pool when the party inflicts enough damage (three wounds).

## AFTERMATH

Destroying a secret naval base before it can target Texas shipping makes the Rangers well-disposed towards the heroes. Assuming there's anything left of the base, Texas takes it over as part of its expansion into the Gulf: it's not the *heroes'* base, but they can use it. The base also contains a good bit of regular loot (precious metals, looted supplies, ammunition)... as well as Old American research on various anti-submarine projects.

## Ningyo Manami

Ningyo would have been perfect to head up a major Japanese ophiurgical project... if only she wasn't a woman in a culture that is not really comfortable with women who can *think*, let alone

crack the secrets of the Serpent. So the Japanese government assigned her to the IJN, which promptly exiled her to *Fuerte Sirena* to be its base physician. The Sinarquistas likewise treated her rudely, up to the moment that she made her pet manatees eat a few of them. Now the rest of the base largely leaves her and her research in peace. This suits her.

Ningyo is cold, immune to any rakish hero's personal charms, ruthless, slightly but not cripplingly megalomaniacal, and can easily end up falling into a convenient pool filled with conveniently enraged manatees. On the other hand, Ningyo truly despises the bureaucratic fools that denied her greatness simply because of her sex, and considers the West *much* more sensible about such things. If the Rangers agree to guarantee her safety and give her a budget—they will—Ningyo will happily slap the Texas state flag on her 'daughters' and keep researching the transformation process.

**ATTRIBUTES:** Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**SKILLS:** Healing d6, Intimidation d6, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Biology) d10, Knowledge (Chemistry) d8, Notice d6, Ophi-Tech d10, Repair d8, Shooting d6, Survival d4

**CHARISMA:** 0 **PACE:** 6 **PARRY:** 2 **TOUGHNESS:** 5

**EDGES:** Arcane Background [Ophi-Tech], Gadgeteer, Mr. Fix-It, Scholar

**HINDRANCES:** Arrogant, Bad Eyes (Minor), Vengeful (Minor)

**OPHI-TECH GEAR:** *gill array*

## Sinarquista Soldiers

Militia Soldier (**DAR**, p. 82).

## Lt. Yamada

In human form, use Officer (**DAR**, p. 82). After becoming the MANatee!, use Man-rilla (**DAR**, p. 85) with *aquatic*. Both forms are Overconfident; the MANatee! form is a Wild Card.

## Ranger Miller

If he's **absolutely** needed, the use the statistics for the Elite Soldier (Wild Card) (**DAR**, pg 82).

## Manatees

Use the stats for the Alligator (**SW**, pg 145), but remove **Rollover** and add (sound-based) *puppet*. 6 Power points; they use Strength in place of arcane skill for the *puppet* roll.

## Credits

**Writing & Design:** Moe Lane

**Editing:** Kenneth Hite **Interior Art:** Mike Vilardi

**Graphic Design & Art Direction:** Hal Mangold

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