

# ISLE OF MADNESS

A PULP CTHULHU SCENARIO SET IN THE 1930'S



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# INTRODUCTION

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Isle of Madness is a hair raising 1930's Pulp Cthulhu scenario taking place on a secret island hidden in the North Atlantic Ocean—an island occupied by terrible fish-man amalgams, referred to as devil-fish due to their strange red coloring, and a mad scientist intent on mastery of everything below the surface of the seas. This is a short scenario suitable for up to six players. This scenario can be run as an introductory scenario for a new group or as a side-trek for an established group of heroes between chapters of a campaign. While set in the North Atlantic Ocean, the scenario can take place on any ocean of the keeper's choosing with minimal alterations. Essentially a tale of survival and escape, Isle of Madness is light on investigation but heavy on action.

It is the late 1930s and the heroes' seaplane encounters bizarre and violent weather while crossing the North Atlantic Ocean from New York on the way to Hamilton Harbor, Bermuda. Freak lightning strikes take out the controls and the plane crashes hard into the briny waves below.

Survivors of the crash find themselves in hostile waters, attacked by sharks. The heroes swim to a mist-shrouded island in the distance. There they encounter strange fish-men amalgams who try to capture them. Through either stealth or capture, the heroes arrive at the compound of the island's master, a deep one hybrid scientist named Doctor Caspian.

An outcast of deep one society, shunned because of his pursuit of science, Doctor Caspian intends to control the oceans and everything in them. To that end he has been using his weather machine to disrupt flights and ship passages to bring fresh humans to his island so that he may enslave them. He then transforms them into his twisted notion of a deep one army through horrific experimental procedures. Finally, as his crowning achievement, he has created a giant robot – a replica of Mother Hydra – which he intends to use in his final battle against the deep-ones who rejected him. If the heroes are unable to escape they will join his army of horrific devil-fish in Caspian's war.

## BACKGROUND

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Doctor Rex Caspian carries the Innsmouth taint. Originally from Innsmouth, MA, Caspian left the town of his birth as a young man in 1901 and enrolled in Miskatonic University in Arkham to study advanced Physics and Chemistry. Inhumanly intelligent, he quickly rose to the top of his class and excelled in the theoretical and practical applications of several fields of science and medicine. Aware of his cursed heritage, he intended to achieve as much as he could scientifically before his glorious transformation into a pure deep one.

But that complete transformation never occurred.

By 1927, Caspian remained stuck in transition, doomed to be a deep one hybrid, neither accepted completely in the world of mankind nor in the underwater cities of the deep ones. In particular, the deep ones he considered family rejected Caspian for his pursuit of scientific discovery and invention over the simple and arcane ways of the deep. He was turned away from the sea, the one place he knew he truly belonged. Shunned and enraged, he vowed revenge. He plotted to use his abilities as a top scientist and inventor to make himself ruler of all the seas – especially over those whom rejected him.

In the early 1930's he started to move on his plans. First, he needed his own deep one army to control. But none of the deep ones, save his loyal brother Gilbert, would have anything to do with him. So he decided to create his own version of a deep one army. He began by setting up operations on a small volcanic island in the Atlantic Ocean, a base to muster his forces. Using a weather control device of his own design, he began to down planes and capsize ships close to his island. Survivors who managed to make it to shore were captured and transformed into devil-fish to serve his will. The process of these operations usually broke the will and the sanity of its victims and the wretched amalgams willingly and obediently fell into line behind their new master. At present, his forces do not yet rival the power nor the sheer numbers of the true deep ones. But eager to begin his conquest, Caspian has embarked on one final, terrible creation.

It is now the late 1930s and he is in the process of creating a giant robot, capable of traveling to the deepest underwater city and destroy any resistance it may encounter—a mechanical replicant of Mother Hydra herself. It is not tested, but Caspian expects it to be ready soon. As work on robot Mother Hydra ramps up, Caspian continues to grow his amalgam army at a furious pace.

His activities have not gone unnoticed by the deep ones from from the underwater cities Y'ha-nthlei and Fre-silic C'ye off the coast of North America. A deep one army has been assembled and gather close to the island, just out of range of Caspian's sensors, waiting for the right moment to engage their enemies. They cannot allow Caspian to continue his plans and prepare to destroy his compound and all his blasphemous creations. The time approaches.

Amid all that, the heroes' plane now flies perilously close to Doctor Caspian's secret island and a mysterious storm gathers...

# THE HEROES

This adventure works well with either a new or an established group of 1930s pulp heroes. The scenario presumes the heroes are traveling across the Atlantic for reasons that have nothing to do with Doctor Caspian's island of lost souls. Perhaps they are red-lining to the next phase of a ongoing campaign. Perhaps they are strangers to each other on a passenger flight bound for Bermuda, unaware of the fate about to befall them.

Alternatively, they may be investigating a rash of mysterious lost ships and planes in the area. That mission is well suited for a party of heroes associated with organizations such as Caduceus or even the Vanguard Club as detailed in the *Pulp Cthulhu* sourcebook.

# DRAMATIS PERSONAE

## GILBERT CASPIAN

Gilbert is Doctor Rex Caspian's loyal deep one brother. In many ways he is Doctor Caspian's opposite. Where Rex wished to be a pure deep one, Gilbert wished to stay human. Gilbert is a hulking pure deep one, purple grey in color, with clawed and webbed hands and a mouth full of tiny sharp teeth.

Gilbert pines for the days before his deep one transformation and likes to dress up to the nines in human fashion. His favorite outfit is a sharp pin-striped suit. He's a formable opponent as a deep one, but has the added advantage of being armed with an electric harpoon gun of Doctor Caspian's design. For the most part Gilbert does his brother's bidding and attempts to capture the heroes for the devil-fish army. However, should they engage him in talk of current events of the world, he participates eagerly. He is especially prone to compliments on his suit.

## RODGER AND ELIZABETH GOODALL

This unlucky couple was transformed into devil-fish six years ago. Unlike most devil-fish, they retain memories of their past life – a luxurious life at that.

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Hiding in their sea cave, they prefer to wear ragged cloaks and cover their faces with hoods. Their scaly skin has the characteristic red tinge shared with other devil-fish. Their faces are misshapen and fish-like. They lack noses and ears and their pale lips are stuck in permanent frowns. Elizabeth still has the long brown hair she had before the transformation, though disheveled and laden with seaweed. Unlike their devil-fish brethren, there is intelligence behind their large black eyes. They are able to speak with some effort. They attempt to aid the heroes, though won't get near Caspian's volcano complex if they can help it. They are consigned to their sad exile. They would leave the island if they could, but where would they go?

## DOCTOR REX CASPIAN

Caspian is the complete ruler of this volcanic island. He is short and bald and grossly deformed. His eyes are far apart and his lips spread into a too-wide mouth. His head is mottled with patches of scales and he stinks of the sea. Stumbling about with a broken gate, he gasps like a fish out of water. When the heroes encounter him he treats them coldly and analytically, barely recognizing them as human until they pose a threat to his operations. At best he considers them an annoyance, like escaped lab rats. At worst he views them as bugs that must be crushed under foot. He cannot allow them to live if he fears they will ruin his plans.

### *Keeper's Notes:*

*There are likely to be several survivors, passengers and flight crew, that make it to shore with the heroes. They have not been given stats and are intended to be largely disposable for the purposes of this scenario.*

*Ideally, they are meant to enhance the horror the heroes find themselves in. The keeper is encouraged to provide stats and personalities as necessary but should not allow them to have key roles in this story except as victims.*

## TIMELINE

The events of this scenario may follow the timeline below, though not necessarily so. Whatever path the heroes take, keep the action moving forward. The heroes should feel harried and compelled to proceed without much chance to catch their breath.

**The Devil's Storm** – The heroes, traveling by plane over the Atlantic, encounter a sudden and devastating storm that brings them crashing down into the ocean. As the survivors of the crash tread water in the violent sea, they are attacked by creatures below the waves. The outline of an island appears in the distance. The heroes must make the swim to shore before succumbing to the waves and the hungry sea.

**Island of Mystery** – Making it to shore, the heroes find themselves on a small horseshoe-shaped island. On the other end of the island the heroes see a variety of industrial structures and a volcano with a strange metal statue built into its side. Soon after landing ashore, the heroes are attacked by the devil-fish. The heroes may find a brief respite as two hooded strangers come to their aid. From them, they may learn of a sea-vessel moored somewhere at the other end of the island. But the devil-fish's attack is relentless and the heroes must flee or be captured.

**House of the Metal God** – The heroes arrive at the compound of Doctor Rex Caspian, either by stealth or as prisoners. Caspian orders any free heroes to be captured and put into the transformation chamber. Failing that, he orders them to be killed. The heroes fight off the devil-fish and Caspian's deep one brother. During the melee, if it looks like the heroes will prevail, Caspian attempts to activate his masterpiece, a 30-foot-tall robot replica of Mother Hydra, to destroy them. Regardless of the heroes actions, a party of deep ones raids the island and moves to attack Caspian's forces. As they attack Caspian's base, they cause a reaction that leads to an eruption of the island volcano and destruction of everything on land. An escape tunnel and a strange underwater boat is the heroes' only chance for escape.

# CHAPTER ONE: THE DEVIL'S STORM

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

**“Traveling over the Atlantic on a Sikorsky S-42 flying boat airliner, you are about four hours into a five-and-a-half hour flight. The trip has been largely non-eventful, though strong headwinds have slowed your progress more than you'd like. You hope to land in Hamilton Harbor, Bermuda within a couple hours. You share this flight with 25 other passengers and a flight crew comprised of two pilots, an engineer, a radio operator, and a steward.**

**“Your plane took off at 7:30 in the morning and it is now nearly noon. A basket of sandwiches is being passed around to hungry passengers, and you think you saw a bottle of whiskey being passed as well. A woman wearing a fur coat and a fox shawl is gesturing wildly toward the window and speaking to the steward, though it’s impossible to tell what she is saying as the engines of the plane are so loud. Someone hands her that bottle of whiskey and she stops talking to drink straight out of it, not bothering to pour it into the glass the steward is trying to give her.**

**“As she drinks you look out the window and see that storm clouds have appeared quite suddenly. Impossibly so. The clouds have an unnatural red color to them and are growing at an alarming rate. Suddenly the plane lurches and strong winds buffet your aircraft. Some passengers have been thrown from their seats. Lightning now flashes in the clouds rapidly, about one every second. The sound of thunder can be heard over the roar of the engines. Then a series of lightning strikes hit the plane. There is a moment of silence as the engines have stopped running. The plane is no longer under the pilots’ control and your stomach drops as the planes nose-dives toward the Atlantic.”**

At this point give each hero the chance to react. Note that most of the heroes’ luggage will be in the baggage compartment of the plane and inaccessible, but they may have some useful things in the overhead compartments. Use common sense to determine if a requested item is present in the overhead. Any hero not retrieving belongings from the overhead at this point will not have another chance.

Should any hero attempt to reach the cockpit, they do not arrive in time to do any good. The pilots are both dead from the energy discharges that struck the plane.

**“What happens next is chaos. Screams fill the cabin as the plane drops and becomes a plaything of the wind. The lightning continues its relentless assault. The radio operator is shouting into his radio and the steward has hit his head against the overhead and has fallen unconscious. Then the wind spins the plane completely upside-down and passengers are falling out of their seats onto the ceiling of the plane. Within moments the plane hits the ocean surface and there is a loud cracking sound. Then there is just water and blackness.**

## **FIRE ON THE WATER**

Heroes should roll against their **Luck** score. Anyone failing takes 1D4 points of damage from the crash. Even a regular success carries one point of damage, though a with a Hard success or better the hero is unscathed.

The heroes find themselves floating in the ocean and the plane they were in a moment before split into two pieces and floating upside. Furthermore, there is a strong smell of fuel and the front part of the plane is on fire. It is clear that an explosion is imminent. Other than the heroes, there are 12 other people floating in the water, 11 passengers and the radio operator. The woman with the fox shawl is beating the radio operator with the whiskey bottle, trying to dislodge him from a life jacket she is using to stay afloat. There is no sign of the pilots, but the steward can be seen trapped inside the burning plane, pounding on the window.

Call for a second **Luck** roll. Heroes successful at that roll find themselves within easy reach of some floating debris such as luggage, a life jacket, or a buoyant section of the plane.

The ocean is turbulent and large waves continually buffet the survivors of the crash. Hard **Swim** checks are required for all heroes to stay above water. No **Swim** check is necessary for any hero holding onto floating debris. Failure indicates that the hero has begun drowning. A **CON** roll is required for each round thereafter; once a **CON** roll is failed, heroes sustain 1D6 points of damage until death or until they are able to breath again.

Heroes that succeeded at their **Swim** roll may attempt to assist anyone drowning with a subsequent successful **Swim** roll. If none of the heroes require saving, there are a few fellow traveler needing help.

The next order of business should be getting as far away from the burning plane as soon as possible. No further **Swim** rolls are required to swim away, but note any player not doing so or foolishly trying to help anyone in the burning plane. It explodes in 1D4 rounds. Anyone closer than 12 yards to the plane takes 2D10 points of damage. Anyone trying to help free the steward sees a look of abject horror on his face moments before the explosion. **Sanity** loss to witness his death is 1/1D3.

## **SHARK ATTACK**

Following the explosion, another problem presents itself. Caspian’s weather machine has the unintended side effect of agitating the sea life close to the island, namely sharks. There are easily a dozen of them in the area and their dorsal fins are spotted by any hero making a successful **Spot Hidden** roll.

Luckily, through the violent weather, the outline of Doctor Caspian’s island is seen. The island can be reached in about 15 minutes of swimming. The sharks make that swim more urgent as they attack the survivors in 1D4 rounds. They begin by attacking the other passengers first, biting them and pulling them below the waves. One or two are pulled under in this way and the water becomes bloody from the kill. **Sanity** loss is 1/1D3 to see someone killed in this fashion.



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Call for **Luck** rolls. Any hero failing this roll is attacked for one round by a shark. After that round is resolved the shark swims away. Repeat that pattern for six rounds, after which the sharks seem to lose interest, but continue to circle the survivors. Once the party is within 100 yards of the island the sharks swim back out to sea. The weather calms down as well.

The players can reach the beach without further effort. At this point, the beach is the only part of the island the heroes can easily access as the rest of the island rises high above sea level. Hard **Climb** rolls are needed for anyone wishing to climb up the island rather than swim to shore.

#### *Keeper's Notes:*

*The keeper must decide how many of the other passengers survive to shore. Ideally there should be a few, the rest perishing beneath the waves. Should any of the heroes die during this first part of the scenario, players may choose to take the role of one of these fellow travelers, quickly assigning stats using the Quick-fire Hero Creation method described on page 41 of the Pulp Cthulhu sourcebook, and continue the game. A resourceful keeper may even have a handful of replacement characters at the ready.*

## CHAPTER TWO: ISLAND OF MYSTERY

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

**“Exhausted and injured, you manage to pull yourself up to the beach of a mysterious, mist-shrouded island. The beach is rocky and covered with a layer of slimy seaweed. You see that the island is roughly horseshoe shaped with the beach at one end. Surveying the island, you see that it is rocky and jagged with an occasional leafless tree or patch of tall pale grass. As the island curves to the north and east, it rises treacherously and curves back to the south where, at the highest point of the island, lies a volcano belching black smoke into the sky. At the base of the volcano is a series of industrial looking buildings and some kind of large metallic statue.**

**“Washed ashore, is the debris from various wrecks, sections of boats and planes. Open luggage trunks litter the beach, mostly empty, though some filled with shells. There is one large section of boat leaning up against some rocks. The front of it reads 'Danger! Go back!'; the back is painted with the name R.M.S. Northern Light. And finally, there are several thin poles spread throughout the beach and further up the island, each topped with a conch shell.”**

### A SHORT REPRIEVE

Allow the heroes a brief moment to catch their breath, attend to injuries, and search the beach.

There is nothing of value in any of the trunks. Although, some of the debris washed ashore may make useful clubs (1D6 damage).

Hard **Spot Hidden** rolls discover several footprints on the rocky ground. An Extreme success reveals that there is something inhuman about some of the footprints, they are webbed and clawed (**Sanity** loss 0/1).

Players making a successful **Know** roll may remember the news from 1932 about an ocean liner named the Northern Light that disappeared without a trace in the Northern Atlantic. It was big news because some very wealthy people of industry went missing.

If any player inspects the conch shells on poles, they discover something odd about them. Within each shell is a tiny circle of glass, a lens, attached to a small metal casing and a wire running down the pole and into the earth. A successful **Electrical Repair** or **Mechanical Repair** roll allows the hero to posit that these devices are some kind of camera. Indeed they are. Doctor Caspian has dozens of these placed throughout the island, a means to monitor his devil-fish and any survivors making it to his shore. The wires run a foot underneath the earth and up to his island compound high on the volcanic mountain.

### THE ISLAND

Caspian's island is shaped like a horseshoe. The beach on the southwestern shore and is the lowest point of the island.

From here the island continues north for about two miles as gradually increases in elevation. At its northern end it runs about a mile and a half, west to east, and the incline rises much more dramatically. The highest point of the island is at its southeastern end, the location of the island's volcano, 1000 meters high. The terrain is largely rocky and uneven. Plant life is sparse and sickly. In the bay between the two legs of the horseshoe is a swirling, unnatural whirlpool. See **Island Map**.

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## AMBUSHED BY DEVILS

A group of Doctor Caspian's devil-fish, expecting visitors, are hiding behind large rocks and dead trees. They attack the heroes in five rounds after washing ashore. The heroes should have just enough time to take in their surroundings before the attack.

Allow each of the heroes an opposed **Spot Hidden** or **Listen** roll against the devil-fish's group **Stealth** roll. Heroes unsuccessful at this roll are surprised and unable to attack for one round. Though a surprised hero may dodge or fight back, the surprising devil-fish is awarded a bonus die to their attack roll for one round.

They devil-fish do not wish to kill the heroes as they've been ordered to capture them alive. They attempt one of two things during combat. They either use fighting maneuvers to grapple and immobilize a hero and then throw them into the miasmic whirlpool in the bay. See **Whirlpool**.

Alternatively, they use their tridents, the tips of which are coated with an immobilizing neurotoxin. Heroes subdued by this poison are also thrown into the whirlpool.

The poison does no additional damage, but causes unconsciousness in 1D4 rounds unless the hero makes a Hard **CON** roll. If poisoned but still conscious, the hero receives a penalty die for all actions for the next 1D4 hours. A hero with an Extreme success in this roll does not incur the penalty die. The toxin on each trident is good for only one successful hit.

There are three devil-fish for every hero, though not all of them are attacking the heroes. Some attack the other survivors. All with the intent of throwing them into the whirlpool. Assume with every passing round a devil-fish has grabbed a survivor and thrown them in until there are no more survivors or until they are defeated.

## THE DEVIL-FISH

Devil-fish are the result of horrendous experimental procedures. Devil-fish vary wildly in appearance. They usually have the basic form of a human with some parts of their body entirely fishlike. They may have fish heads instead of human heads. They may have a dorsal fin running down their backs. Some may have the whole lower bodies of a fish. Commonly, they all have gills that allow them to breath underwater. All of them have watery fish eyes. They don't speak but instead open and close their mouths with a dull gurgling sound. They are clothed in rags, remnants of the clothes they were wearing before they were changed. They have rudimentary intelligence and are completely in Doctor Caspian's control. One other thing they all have in common is an unnatural red tint to their skin color, a result of the chemical process of their transformation

After three rounds of combat, the heroes hear gunfire coming from a rocky cliff adjacent to the beach. **Spot Hidden** success reveals two armed cloaked figures behind large rocks. Extreme success reveals they are attacking the devil-fish. One is shooting a rifle, the other a revolver. This is Roger and Elizabeth Goodall, two poor souls transformed into devil-fish but retaining their intelligence. They shoot at any remaining devil-fish in an attempt to save the heroes. Two devil-fish break off their attack on the heroes and pursue the Goodalls.

If and when this attack is beat back, the Goodalls silently wave the heroes toward them. They have a home against these rocks, a sea cave, and wish to give the heroes aid if they are able. They also wish to warn the heroes off the island.

## ROGER AND ELIZABETH

It was 1932 when Caspian first used his weather control machine to sink the R.M.S. Northern Light and cull survivors for his underwater army. 1500 souls were lost under the waves while about 50 survived to make it ashore Caspian's island. Under the guise of helping the survivors, Doctor Caspian provided medicine and treatments that precipitated their transformation to devil-fish.

Roger and Elizabeth were a newlywed couple on a honeymoon cruise five years ago when Doctor Caspian's storm capsized that ship. They were among the survivors who made it to shore and subsequently captured and transformed by Caspian.

For some reason they were able to retain their intelligence and self-determination. They fled and found a sea cave to hide.

They continue to live in that cave, evading Caspian's forces. Luckily, Doctor Caspian is unaware of them and they are able to stay out of the way. They realize they can never go back to civilization and the life they used to have. They try to warn off anyone who comes to shore. Better to die out at sea than live life as a monster.

## THE SEA CAVE

If the heroes enter the Goodall's sea cave they note that there has been some attempt to make it seem like a home.

There are two chambers to the cave. The first is roughly 20' X 20' with a 8' ceiling. In one corner is a makeshift bed made of wet seaweed and a worn blanket. There is a wooden table in the center of the room, recovered from a recent shipwreck, topped with a candle. Opposite the corner with the bed is a weather beaten steamer trunk with a framed picture resting on it. Anyone taking a closer look at the photo sees two people, a wedding couple, posing happily in each other arms. A successful **Idea** roll suggests that the couple in the picture bear a strong resemblance to the two strange creatures before them now, despite their grotesque features. The hero recognizes that the people in the picture and the fish-people are one and the same. (**Sanity** loss 1/1D2.)



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## The Fate of the R.M.S. Northern Light

The Goodalls are not interested in sharing their sad story, but an appropriate interpersonal skill check (e.g. **Charm** or **Persuade**) gets them to open up.

They tell the heroes how they were honeymooning on an ocean liner named the R.M.S. Northern Light, when extremely violent weather capsized them. They describe how they barely made it to shore with a few dozen fellow passengers. They tell of a strange man who gave them medical care and medicine to calm their nerves.

The next thing they remember is waking up chained underwater in a strange glass pool, wracked with pain, yet somehow able to breathe. The other passengers were in the pool as well, and they were changed. Eventually they were all freed from their underwater cage by a menacing sea creature who started barking orders at all of them.

They don't know why, but the other passengers began following orders, as if compelled. The Goodalls describe that they escaped the first chance they got and eventually found the sea cave they currently inhabit. Occasionally, new people wash ashore, quickly taken away by the devil-fish. They note that there are more and more devil-fish on the island, as if someone is building an army. They are afraid something terrible is going to happen. **Sanity** loss for hearing this tale (1/1D4).

Whether the Goodalls tell their tale or not, they strongly urge the heroes to leave the island, to swim out to sea, even if that means drowning or being eaten by sharks. Anything is better than the fate they are enduring.

If pressed, the Goodalls suggest that they've seen some kind of boat skimming the water on the other end of the island. They recommend against going that route however, considering it too dangerous. Better to take their chances on the open sea than getting close to the terrible compound of the devil-fish.

They do not leave their cave home to help under any circumstance. No amount of persuasion or intimidation compels them. But if it becomes clear that the heroes intend to move onward toward the compound, they offer them some items that they've stored in a second, smaller chamber of the cave, items that washed ashore with the detritus of various wrecks over the years. They can offer a first aid kit, a 12-gauge shotgun with 12 shells, and a large knife. A successful **Persuade**, **Charm**, or **Intimidate** roll convinces the Goodalls to part with the .303 Lee-Endfield rifle and the .44 revolver they used to help fight off the devil-fish attacking the heroes, each has twelve rounds of ammunition left.

*Keeper's Notes: The heroes may decide to just hunker down here. This is a bad idea. A larger force of devil-fish are on the way, four for each hero. The keeper should send them onto the beach searching for the heroes if the forward motion of the scenario stalls here. The cave does not hide them for long. Allow the devil-fish to roll their Spot Hidden for every round they search for the heroes. If the heroes are found the devil-fish again attempt to capture them. The devil-fish also kill the Goodalls if they are found protecting the heroes any further.*

## WHIRLPOOL

In the center of the island, between the western and eastern legs, is a bay containing any ever-swirling whirlpool, one of Caspian's creations. The water is black and foul smelling. Large ragged rocks jut out from the pool's surface. The whirlpool is rapid and frothy.

Heroes thrown into the whirlpool, either conscious or unconscious, are pulled deep into the bottom of the bay. From there they are sucked into a long pneumatic tube and flushed into Doctor Caspian's containment pool in his lair (see **Pool of Horror**).

Conscious heroes may attempt to resist the whirlpool's force. They have two chances and the closer they get to the whirlpool's center, the more difficult it becomes. At first, heroes may attempt a **Swim** check. Successful heroes may swim to the rocky cliff surrounding the bay to safety, a **Climb** roll needed to get back onto the island. Failure means they are pulled deeper into the whirlpool. Now they need a Hard success on a **Swim** roll to swim back to the outer edge of the whirlpool (where a regular **Swim** success is still needed). Heroes failing at both the initial **Swim** check and the second Hard **Swim** check are sucked down into the inky waters below, sucked through the pneumatic tube.

In addition to all that, a **Luck** roll is needed for every round in the pool to avoid being dashed against the rocks for 1D4 points of damage.

## ONWARD

Initially, navigating the island is not difficult as long as one stays on the path leading to the top. The incline is gradual. Staying on the path, the heroes notice more of the conch shell cameras they saw on the beach. Any hero approaching on this trail is being watched by Doctor Caspian at his monitoring station and will not surprise him. He will send out 12 more devil-fish to intercept them, his deep one brother Gilbert among them.

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The heroes may wish to proceed by going off the beaten path. The ground off the path is a rocky, difficult terrain. **DEX** rolls for each hero are needed if they wish to continue this way. Failure reduces that hero's movement by half. There are teams of devil-fish looking for the heroes up and down the island mountain. Any attempts at secrecy require opposed **Stealth** rolls versus the devil-fish's **Spot Hidden** roll. Three separate successful attempts are required to make it to the compound gates unseen.

## EEL VINES

The chemicals from Doctor Caspian's transformation tank is often slopped out and spilled onto the earth. The foul stuff forms a thin river and flows out of the compound and into the northern sections of the island where it is absorbed into the earth. This has a terrible effect on the plant life there and has created eel-vines, an unnatural, non-sentient hazard that grows in the rocky lands.

Eel vines are a cross between long thorny vines and scaley, twisting eels. They instinctively grab for any living creature unlucky enough to get close to one. They then wrap around the victim and constrict, sharp tooth-like thorns digging into flesh.

Heroes walking off trail through the northern bend of the island must each make a **Luck** roll. Any hero failing this roll has come within striking range of an eel vine.

The unlucky hero may make a Spot Hidden roll to see the vine moving and thrusting toward them. They must then roll successively against their **DEX** score. Failure at both of these rolls means a eel vine has grabbed them and dug in for 1 point of damage. After this the vine continues to constrict and dig in for 1 point of damage per round until removed. In addition 1D4 more eel vines move in per round (**DEX** roll with a penalty die is needed to avoid) per round to a maximum of four of the strange plants attacking one hero.

Heroes can free themselves with a successful **STR** check to pull the plant out by the root or by doing 4 points of damage. Striking the plant is automatic but will miss on a fumble.

Any hero scratched by the eel vines thorns are injected with a diluted amount of the transformation fluid. A patch of fish scales forms over the spot of the injury (**Sanity** loss 1/1D6). This effect is permanent.

## PERIMETER FENCE

The trail starting at the beach eventually leads to the perimeter of Doctor Caspian's compound and ends at a security fence. Conch shell security camera run along the length of the fence from end to end, every 15 feet. **Stealth** rolls are need to approach the fence without being seen by Doctor Caspian in his lair. The fence is 10' high and is electrified. Allow the heroes a **Listen** roll. Successful heroes can hear a low hum near the fence. Anyone touching the fence is shocked for 1D4 points of damage.

There is a control panel next to the gate where the trail ends. **Electrical Repair** roll success deactivates the electric fence. Doing 6 points of damage to the panel also deactivates the electric fence but further alerts Doctor Caspian. A group of devil-fish are then sent to intercept the heroes and arrive in 6 rounds.

# CHAPTER 3: HOUSE OF THE METAL GOD

## THE CLIFFS

There are two separate cliffs on the island leading to the volcano. One is between the security fence and the devil-fish compound. The other is between the compound and the island. Each cliff is 100' high.

The northern-most cliff has a zig-zagging series of ramps built into it, allowing Doctor Caspian's forces to easily go up and down. However, anyone else using the ramp is spotted automatically. Heroes may attempt to climb the cliff at the outer edges undetected with both successful **Climb** and opposed **Stealth** rolls.

## DOCTOR CASPIAN'S COMPOUND

There are four areas of interest in the compound: the barracks, the transformation pool, Doctor Caspian's lair, and the island volcano.

## BARRACKS

There are a dozen concrete, one-story buildings that act as the barracks for Doctor Caspian's army. They are each 90' long X 90' wide X 18' high. There is only one entrance for each building, a slide up gate, always located on the northern wall. The barracks are arranged in a haphazard way between the cliff ledge to the north and the southern cliff wall. They surround Doctor Caspian's bunker close to the southern cliff wall.

Each building has a pool within, 70' long X 70' wide X 10' deep. It is filled with the same stinking red liquid found in the transformation pool. The devil-fish rest and eat in the pool when not being commanded by Caspian or his brother. Various melee weapons line the walls (spears, tridents, etc.) and over twenty devil-fish may be in the pool at any time.

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Sneaking through any of the barracks unnoticed is virtually impossible. There are always several devil-fish soldiers awake and alert at any given time. Although a hero may peak in quickly without alerting the devil-fish within with a successful **Stealth** roll. Any hero failing at that roll or looking in without stating they are using **Stealth** must make a **Luck** roll to avoid detection. If the devil-fish become aware of nearby heroes, they move to capture them and throw them into the transformation pool (see **Pool of Horror** below).

## POOL OF HORROR

This pool is a circular glass tank 20' high and 80' in diameter. The pool is filled with a chemical slurry that is cloudy and tinted red.

The chemical in the pool is necessary for the transformation from human to devil-fish. It lies close to the northern cliff, 10 feet from the northwest corner of the edge.

There is no cover to the tank but there is a ladder on both sides of the tank wall. The ladder on the outside of the tank extends from the ground all the way to the top. Inside of the tank, the ladder extends to just above the liquid surface, about 15' above the ground.

The pneumatic tube coming from the center of the whirlpool travels all the way to the pool from a cliff edge, a few feet south of the tank. Victim's of the whirlpool are spit out here and splash unceremoniously into the tank.

There are three permanent residents of the tank, devil-fish tasked with preparing victims for their transformation. All three have the complete upper bodies of humans and the lower bodies of fish, like hellish mer-folk. When a victim enters the pool from above, they attempt to shackle them to chains anchored at the bottom of the pool. There are 25 such chains secured to the bottom, arranged in a 5 X 5 grid.

Once secured it is nearly impossible to break free (Extreme **STR** check) unless using the key. Victims are chained around the waist with a leather belt riddled with electrodes that run down the length of the chain. Electrical charges from the terminals on the belt accelerate the transformation.

In order to secure a resisting victim, the devil-fish must succeed at two **Fighting** (mnvr) rolls in a row. The victim receives a penalty die in this exchange for fighting underwater, an environment the devil-fish are completely accustomed to.

The liquid in the tank is highly oxygenated and completely breathable, though conscious humans still feel as if they are drowning (**Sanity** loss 1/1D6) while under the liquid's surface.

Once secured, the process of transformation begins. Every round the victim is in the pool they must roll against their **POW**. Failure equates to a loss of 5 points to **POW**. This continues until the victim is free or all **POW** is lost. The victim is then immobilized and becomes semi-conscious as the body slowly changes to a fish-human amalgam. Complete transformation can take a week or more. By that time the victim's **Sanity** is reduced to zero and they are ready to join the devil-fish army, completely obedient to Doctor Caspian and his deep one brother.

The pool's devil-fish continue to swim around the pool looking for any humans that need to be secured. Captured heroes wishing to grab one of these passing devil-fish may make a **Luck** roll every round to determine if one swims close enough. **Fighting** (mnvr) success is required to grab one. Alternatively, a Hard **DEX** roll allows the hero to snatch the keys of one of their captors.

## THE MAD SCIENTIST'S LAIR

Standing defiantly on the north edge of the Island volcano, Doctor Caspian's base is a 20' high building constructed entirely of a shiny, blue-tinged metal. Two metallic conduits connect the building to the base of the volcano. Caspian uses the geothermic energy of the volcano to power his lair and other inventions, converting energy from the volcano to electricity through a basement power plant.

Upon entering the lair, Doctor Caspian swivels around in his chair to face the heroes and speaks aloud. "Why are these fish swimming around free? Someone put them back in their tank!" Caspian prefers not to engage in combat if he can help it. If his brother Gilbert hasn't been encountered yet, he is here standing next to Caspian, dressed in his pin-striped suit and carrying his electric harpoon gun. He attacks the heroes while Caspian sounds an alert that calls in 10 devil-fish.

All of Caspian's strange devices are controlled from this lair. Banks of machinery, switches, and blinking lights fill the walls and numerous cables and wires dangle from above. Dozens of screens fill the southern wall, displaying the views from all the conch shell cameras on the island. One screen shows a strange oval shaped boat floating on the water in a dimly lit cave (the boat moored in the secret dock).

The weather control device is activated and manipulated through a table top console covered with blinking lights, buttons, and levers. A display screen set in the middle of this table is a map showing parts of the east coast of North America and islands of the Atlantic. The map has several blinking lights representing the major cities on the coast, labeled by name (e.g. New York, Boston, and Miami). Also represented on the map are two deep one cities known by Caspian, also labeled by name. One, Y'ha-nthlei lies off the coast of Massachusetts, the other, Fre-silic C'ye off the coast of North Carolina. Heroes that make the connection and realize that there are living underwater cities must make a **Sanity** check (0/1).

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## ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE

In the far southeastern corner of the room is a concealed trap door. Heroes notice it with a successful **Spot Hidden** roll. If opened, the trap door reveals an underground tunnel that leads to the secret dock (see **The Secret Dock**).

## THE VOLCANO

The island volcano rests on the southeastern end of the island. It is active and relatively small, a third of mile long north to south, and 6500 feet tall. Energy conduits connect to the volcano at its northern base and reach to Doctor Caspian's compound which is powered by its geothermal energy. The volcano is on the edge of erupting, held only in check by Doctor Caspian's energy capturing technology.

On the western side of the volcano is the giant Mother Hydra robot, overlooking the violent whirlpool and southwestern beach. Anyone looking at the robot is likely to think it nothing more than a large metal statue.

## WAKING MOTHER

The Metal Mother stands like an immobile statue at the side of the island volcano. If Doctor Caspian feels personally threatened by the heroes or if it looks like they are endangering his operation, he activates the giant robot from the control panel in his lair. Caspian has not tested his creation in battle yet and is eager to give it a trial run. The heroes make convenient targets. He is about to discover some design flaws.

If so pressed to activate the giant robot Mother Hydra, Caspian lifts a metal cover up from his control panel revealing a large red button. Laughing maniacally as he presses the button, he points in the direction of his creation. "She lives! She lives! All will cower and worship at the feet of the Metal Mother!"

The robot begins to move, slowly at first, and then picks up steam as all her systems engage. Lumbering and screeching loudly she moves toward the cliff edge between her and the heroes. She gets to the cliff's edge in four rounds with gigantic strides. Then she easily jumps down to the compound grounds. Unfortunately for Caspian, she is not able to tell friend from foe and is just as likely to attack Caspian and his devil-fish as she is to attack the heroes. She attacks any living creature detected in her sensors and continues to attack until all are dead.

The only way to shut her down is to climb her and deactivate her from the computer in her head casing. If she kills enough of Caspian's devil-fish, he attempts to do that himself. He reluctantly tells the heroes how to deactivate her with a successful **Intimidation** roll against him.

At a time determined by the keeper, likely during a battle between the heroes and Caspian's forces, the waiting deep ones raid the island. They enter through the underwater cavern and secret dock (see below). There are 15 raiders with another 15 waiting in the Atlantic, close to the southeastern coast.

Initially, no one is aware of the invasion as they are preoccupied by the battle. But if Caspian is close to his lair's control panel he sees a flashing warning light in two rounds and yells at his brother to inform him that there are invaders in the secret dock. Gilbert then orders a group of devil-fish to rush down the secret tunnel with him to intercept the deep ones.

Unless the heroes rush into the tunnel as well, it isn't necessary to play out the meeting of these two groups. Just assume the deep ones defeat Gilbert and the group he took with him. The deep ones aren't especially interested in destroying the heroes, though they engage them in battle if attacked. But they do welcome their aid if the heroes are seen to be helping them by fighting the devil-fish.

Once out in Caspian's lair, if not stopped, the deep ones go about destroying all the machinery and devices. They destroy the power connections to the volcano as well. The volcano is now set to burst. More alarms go off. If Caspian is in the area he yells, "You fools! The volcano! You've killed us all!" Keep track of rounds at this point. In five more rounds the volcano erupts.

The deep ones move on to the compound and attack any devil-fish they run across. If the robot Mother Hydra is running amok, they attack her too. It is not necessary to make any combat rolls for conflicts the heroes are not involved in. The keeper should simply narrate the scene as is seen fit. Generally speaking a single deep one is a match for four devil-fish. There is no hard number count of devil-fish on the island and the keeper can call into play as many devil-fish as is felt necessary for the final battle scene.

Finally, the island volcano erupts as molten lava and ash explode out onto the island. Lava pours out of the volcano and covers the entire island in 10 minutes. Heroes caught out in the open may attempt to flee. Call for appropriate **DEX**, **Climb**, and/or **Swim** checks depending on what route of escape they wish to make. The lava eventually flows out into the sea.

Anyone caught within the lava's path are killed instantly. The Metal Mother does not register the lava as a threat and does not avoid its danger. It is destroyed in the lava flow as well.

## THE SECRET DOCK

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There is a secret dock at the southeastern edge of the island, known only to Caspian and Gilbert. It can only be accessed through a tunnel connected to Caspian's lair. The tunnels from the lair twists and turns as it descends deep into the island and to the sea. The dock itself is completely enclosed within the island in a chamber 80' X 80' chamber with 30' high ceiling. In the center of the cavern is a large pool with a 30' radius. Doctor Caspian's boat, an experimental vehicle capable of traveling underwater, is docked to a wooden pier jutting out from the cavern floor to the gently bobbing boat.

Access to the Atlantic is achieved by first sinking the boat under the surface of the pool 50 feet, then following a track of lights through the underwater tunnel 100 feet to the sea. Once in the open sea, the boat can travel either above or below water at speeds unheard of for the modern sea-vessels of the day. Caspian prefers to stay underwater while traveling in this way.

## THE BOAT

The boat has enough room to fit eight passengers and the pilot comfortably and enough oxygen to remain underwater for seven days without needing to come back up for air. There is consumable food and water stored on the ship, but amenities are spartan.

The controls of the boat are unusual but intuitive. Heroes with 30 or more points in **Pilot (Boat)** may operate the vehicle automatically unless under pressure. Anyone with less than 30 points in **Pilot (Boat)** must roll a Regular success in that skill.

It can easily travel 1000 miles before needing to be refueled.

## CONCLUSION

This scenario can end any number of ways. The heroes may successfully stop Doctor Caspian's mad quest to rule the seas by destroying his giant robot god and his minions. The heroes may encounter failure, with one or more of them transformed into subservient devil-fish. A reasonable ending sees the heroes simply surviving by escaping the island via the underwater boat while the island volcano pours molten lava into clashing devil-fish and deep ones. The heroes may simply swim out to sea and hope to be rescued. The heroes will likely find an ending not predicted by the scenario. Keep in mind that if Doctor Caspian or Gilbert survive as well, they do not forget how the heroes thwarted their plans. Heroes should expect their return at an inconvenient time to extract revenge.

## REWARDS

Apply the following reward to the surviving heroes:

- Destroying the Robot Mother Hydra: +1D10 Sanity points
- Thwarting Caspian's plans to rule the seas: 1D6 Sanity points
- Rescuing the Goodalls: +1D6 Sanity points
- Fleeing the island while leaving fellow heroes who have been transformed into devil-fish: -1D6 Sanity points
- If the deep ones noticed the heroes have helped them take down Doctor Caspian and furthermore did not engage any deep ones in combat: 10 pieces of Innsmouth gold delivered by a deep one at a later date in some unnerving fashion.

# APPENDIX: NPCs,

# BEASTS, AND

# MONSTERS

## SHARKS

STR 90    CON 90    SIZ 90    DEX 50    POW 50  
HP 18    DB: +1D6    Build: 2    Move: 12 swim

Combat  
Attacks per round: 2

Fighting attacks: Biting, thrashing and slashing with fins.

Bite and hold (mnvr): A shark may bite and hold onto its victim, inflicting automatic damage on following rounds until it can be dislodged by an opposed STR roll.

Fighting 75% (37/15), damage 2D3 + half (1D6)  
Bite and hold (mnvr) damage 2D6 + 1D6 for each round held  
Dodge: 25% (12/5)

Armor: 5-point tough skin  
Skills: Sense Life 95%

## DEVIL-FISH, *wretched fish-human amalgams*

STR 50    CON 65    SIZ 55    DEX 60    INT 10  
APP 5    POW 15    EDU ---    SAN ---    HP 12  
DB: 0    Build: 0    Move: 8    MP: 3    Luck: ---

Combat  
Attacks per round: 1

Fighting 50% (25/10), damage 1D3  
Trident 60% (30/12), damage 1D8 + 1, (1D8 + half DB if thrown)  
Dodge 40%

armor: none  
Skills: Climb 55%, Stealth 40%, Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 60%, Throw 40%  
Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a devil-fish.

ELIZABETH GOODALL, *ill-fated wife*

STR 45    CON 65    SIZ 45    DEX 65    INT 65  
APP 5    POW 75    EDU 60    SAN 75    HP 11  
DB: 0    Build: 0    Move: 8/8 swim    MP: 15    Luck: ---

Combat  
Attacks per round: 1

Fighting 30% (15/6), damage 1D3  
.44 revolver 40%, (20/8), damage 1D10+2  
Dodge 40%

armor: none  
Skills: Climb 50%, Stealth 40%, Listen 55%, Spot Hidden 60%, Throw 30%  
Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a devil-fish.

## ROGER GOODALL, *ill-fated husband*

STR 65    CON 55    SIZ 55    DEX 40    INT 60  
APP 5    POW 60    EDU 65    SAN 60    HP 11  
DB: 0    Build: 0    Move: 8/8 swim    MP: 15    Luck: ---

Combat  
Attacks per round: 1

Fighting 40% (20/8), damage 1D3  
.303 Lee-Enfield rifle 40%, (20/8), damage 2D6+4  
Dodge 45%

armor: none  
Skills: Climb 50%, Stealth 50%, Listen 45%, Spot Hidden 50%, Throw 35%  
Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a devil-fish.

## GILBERT CASPIAN, *loyal deep one brother of Doctor Rex Caspian*

STR 70    CON 60    SIZ 75    DEX 70    INT 65  
APP ---    POW 45    EDU ---    SAN ---    HP  
DB: + 1D4    Build: 1    Move: 8/10 swim    MP: 9    Luck: ---

Combat  
Attacks per round: 1

Fighting attacks: Deep ones can use weapons as humans do. They are skilled with their spears and tridents. Gilbert is armed with an super science electric harpoon created created by his brother that shoots harpoons made of pure electricity.

Fighting 60% (30/12), damage 1D3 + 1D4 or by weapon type (e.g. spear, damage 1D8 + 1D4)  
Electric Harpoon Gun 50% (25/5), damage 1D8 + 1, target must also roll against their CON or be stunned for 1D4 rounds and is unable to engage in combat during that time.  
Dodge 30%



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### Special Abilities

Breath underwater: requires no exterior help to breathe underwater, and is equally capable of breathing on land.

Armor: 1-point skin and scales

Skills: Climb 55%, Stealth 40%, Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 60%, Throw 40%

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a deep one.

### DOCTOR REX CASPIAN, *master of the island*

STR 45    CON 60    SIZ 50                    DEX 65    INT 100  
APP 20    POW 70    EDU 85    SAN 00    HP 11  
DB: 0    Build: 0    Move: 8/8 swim    MP: 14    Luck: 50

### Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting attacks: Deep one hybrids can use weapons as humans do.

Fighting (45%) (22/9), damage 1D3 or by weapon type (e.g. spear, damage 1D8)

Dodge 30% (16/6)

Skills: jump 45%, Listen 60%, Stealth 40%, Swim 60%

Pulp Talents: Fleet Footed -- may spend 10 Luck points to avoid being outnumbered in melee combat for one combat encounter.

armor: none

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to see a deep one hybrid.

### DEEP ONES, gilled masters of the deep seas

STR 70    CON 50    SIZ 80    DEX 50    INT 65  
APP ---    POW 50    EDU ---    SAN ---    HP: 13  
DB: + 1D4    Build: 1    Move: 8/10 swim    MP: 9    Luck: ---

### Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting attacks: Deep ones can use weapons as humans do. They are skilled with their spears and tridents.

Fighting 45% (22/9), damage 1D6 + 1D4 or by weapon type (e.g. spear, damage 1D8 +1D4)

Dodge 25%

### Special Abilities

Breath underwater: requires no exterior help to breathe underwater, and is equally capable of breathing on land.

Spells: Deep ones have a 40% chance of knowing 1D4 spells.

Armor: 1-point skin and scales

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a deep one.

### THE METAL MOTHER, *giant robot Mother Hydra*

STR 315    CON 210    SIZ 420    DEX 50    INT 65  
APP ---    POW 50    EDU ---    SAN ---    HP 63  
DB: + 7D6    Build: 8    Move: 10    MP: ---    Luck: ---

### Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (heat ray, smash or grab).

Weakness: The Metal Mother's brain is vulnerable to being shut down. A hero must gain access to the robot's brain: a successful Climb roll is needed to reach the head and then a successful combined Computer Use and Electrical Repair to deactivate the brain.

Fighting 80% (40/16), damage as DB

Heat Ray 50% (25/10), damage 2D6

Grab (mnvr) target held, following round robot may either carry off the target, drop them from height, or squeeze (DB inflicted)

Dodge 20% (10/4)

Skills: Spot Hidden 40%

### Special Abilities

The Metal Mother is able to travel underwater.

Armor: 10-point hide

Sanity Loss: 1/1D8 Sanity loss for seeing the giant Mother Hydra robot.

# ISLAND MAP

