

URESIA

The Grave of Heaven

Days by Caravel

Days by Road

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Introduction

WHEN I WAS a kid, I went with my Dad on one of his tennis-playing outings. A secret military tennis court, no less (who knew?) where the Vice President sometimes played.

Dad's good at tennis, but watching the game has never been a big charge for me. I exhaust what fun I can find in the building around us. The tennis court is in an ancient warehouse, one among dozens, and beyond the lit areas set aside for the game, it's all rusting ironwork, grimy old windows, catwalks to climb on, and people's names written, by fingertip, in layers of dust several years old. We'd been here before, though, and the rush of exploring in the dark is gone, so I get bored and wander further.

I head outside, and it's *snowing*. The scene is: huge black shapes of warehouses stretching into the distance in all directions, rows and rows, each spread with a layer of fresh white. The streets are entirely empty, except for me, and barely lit. I'm making the only footprints around. I stomp around in the darkness for a while. When I stand still, the silence is so complete that, all around me, I can hear the snow falling.

And then I see the *ship*.

There's a quayside in the distance, and it's so dark that I'd never know that, normally. But there's a tiny white ship anchored there, lit by floodlights. There doesn't seem to be anyone around, and yet here's this little ship, bathed in brilliant light, casting big shadows into the snow, and against the heavy clouds above. Fantastic.

Never a shy lad, I hike on over and walk up the gangplank, and the captain himself meets me halfway. He's surprised to see me, and I, stupidly, am surprised to see *him*. The night continues to go better than it should: he adjusts quickly to my presence and invites me aboard.

I learn that the ship – a small **NOAA** survey vessel – will be a centerpiece for some kind of showy presentation tomorrow. The floodlights and all are just a dry run. Most of the crew are off in the city, now; they've been at sea for weeks, measuring minute differences in water density somewhere. The captain's all out of responsibilities for now, except staying aboard to oversee preparations. So, I get a guided tour: engines, cramped little corridors and companionways, navigation, tiny little galley, and that same display of a hundred different knots that seems to be everywhere mariners gather.

There are only a few other people around, including a pretty girl with a denim baseball cap and long hair (tied back for work), who gives me a cheery hello as she passes by, carrying some papers somewhere.

Meeting her is a preface, as it happens, for meeting the snow-woman.

The snow-woman stood on deck. She'd been assembled crudely from handfuls of snow at sea, a week before. Ample mounds, carefully sculpted, made it

plain that *she* wasn't a *he*. She wore a cap, just like the girl I'd just met. She also wore fragments of a similar uniform, and a huge, crooked smile. She wasn't due to survive the night; they'd be tearing her down prior to the public festivities.

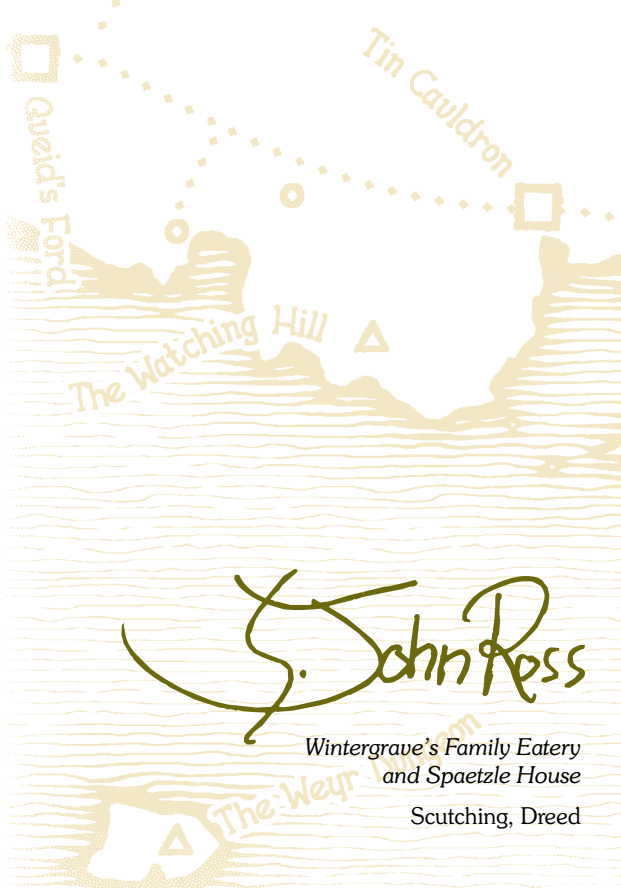
The captain relaxed, then. The formal tour-guide became a friendly sailor telling stories. The small crew, I learned, had just one woman aboard (the one still working), so she suffered a lot of teasing when voyages ran long. The snow-woman was a good-natured collective flirt from her fan-club among the crew, and she'd donated the clothing to provide her icy *doppelgänger* with modesty and character.

The captain's story painted the ship I'd just toured in an entirely different light. I became aware that I'd been invited into this man's home, and I was, in a sense, hearing about his family.

That moment is one of many woven into *Caravel*, a look at a single ship sailing Uresia's Inner Sea, and the crew who live aboard her. There's just one woman aboard *Poison Pepper* ... and while *Caravel* doesn't mention snow-women constructed to bashfully express the crew's infatuation with her, you can be sure, when the ship sails north and there's snow on deck, some of the sailors will make one.

We can only hope that none of the ship's able-bodied hail from Yem ...

Welcome aboard!



About Uresia

Uresia: Grave of Heaven is a traditional fantasy world warped through an anime lens, inspired by both Western swords-and-sorcery and things like *Slayers*, *Record of Lodoss War*, and *Bastard!!* It's got slimes, long-eared elves, and all the trappings you'd expect from an anime fantasy world, and quite a few twists and turns that you might not. Uresians sail caravels, and **Caravel** is a supplement for **Uresia**. You'll need a copy of **Uresia** (any flavor; there've been a few by now) to make the best use of **Caravel**, but it's adaptable to many other fantasy worlds, as well.

About Chun

Chun has been drawing *manga* style since she was 15. Her work appears weekly in a comic column for a major Chinese daily paper in Singapore, and her other art projects include a forthcoming graphic novel. When she isn't drawing, she enjoys digital photography (taking countless pictures of everyday things; especially food, flowers and pets). She enjoys experimenting with simple cuisines for her loved ones when she gets the chance to attempt blowing up the kitchen. Chun's illustrations for **Caravel** were her first for Cumberland Games; you can see more of her art in **Uresia: Grave of Heaven**. To learn more about Chun and her work, visit her website at www.puppy52.com.

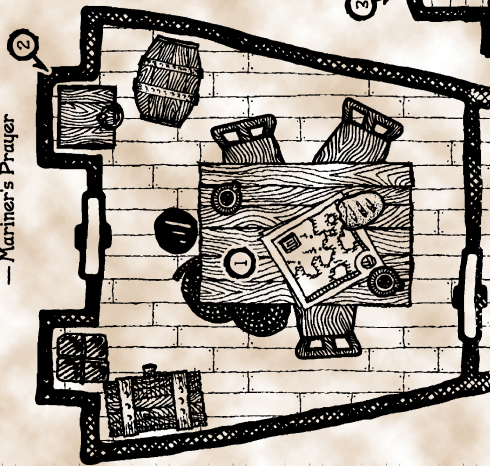


About S. John Ross

S. John's been writing RPG stuff professionally since 1990, but he's been a cartophilic gamer a lot longer, skipping lots of high school to walk railroad tracks, explore the woods, drink schnapps with a waitress in her trailer park, get caught by the school principal while hitchhiking, run away to the beach, invent the world's smelliest pizza while airborne, practice stage-magic and comedy, and set things on fire. When he got tired, he'd spend time curled up in a chair with a purring kitten named Sergio, drawing floorplans, villages, dungeons and cities for his fantasy games. As he got older, some of those habits changed, and in addition to creating **Uresia: Grave of Heaven**, he's sold work to TSR, Wizards of the Coast, White Wolf, Steve Jackson Games, Flying Buffalo, Last Unicorn Games, West End Games, Avalon Hill and others before founding Cumberland Games to make the kind of stuff he'd been *itching* to all along (including **Risus: The Anything RPG**, **Sparks** paper miniatures, and Uresia's "sister" RPG, **Encounter Critical**). Since 1997, he's been happily married to Sandra Ross. They currently reside in Denver, Colorado.

Devour me not, I fear you. Let me
 sail, and I will dream of you. Spare
 my ship and my mates, and we will
 sing for you. Drown me on another
 night, and I will say to the world:
 She is magnificent! She is strong!
 She has great and terrible beauty!
 Eat today, mistress, but eat another
 I rest, upon you, and I am afraid.

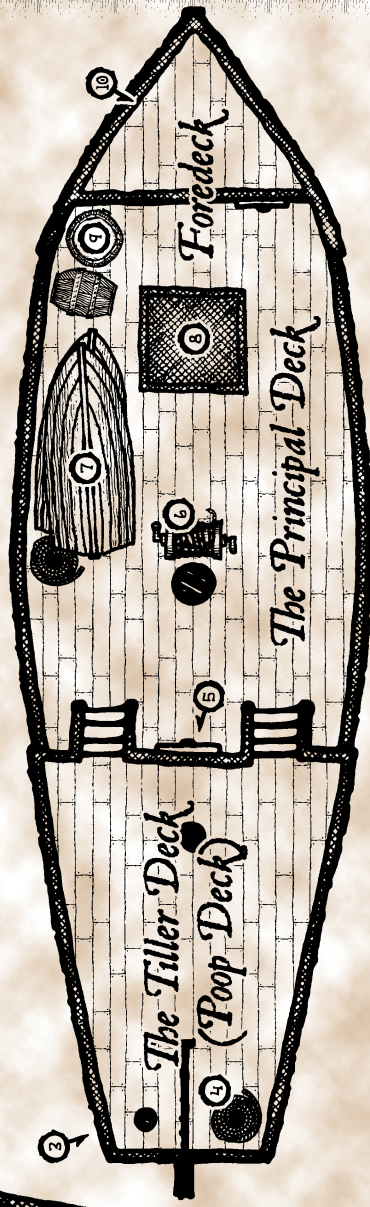
— Mariner's Prayer



Main Cabin
 Interior Detail
 (Enlarged)



Ships Master: Auriga Buckler
 Chief Mate: Crux, a Slime
 Navigator: Perseus Picaro
 Tender of Sails: Vela Skjlarik
 Boatswain: Pypis Four, a Golem
 Maid: Soubrette Ljmx
 And asst. able-bodied.



CARRAVEN

The Poison Pepper, A Vessel of Fogport

- 1 - The Captain's Table (used more by the navigator).
- 2 - Small interior hatch leading to the cargo hold.
- 3 - Captain's Private Quarters (beneath the tiller).
- 4 - Tiller (relatively short).

- 5 - Entrance to the cabin (see corresponding detail, left).
- 6 - Winch, used for cargo handling and hauling the boats.
- 7 - The ship's boats (two shells shown here without their covering tarp).

- 8 - Main hatch (drops directly to the hold).
- 9 - Open water barrel hung with tin cups for the crew.
- 10 - The maid's locker (directly beneath the foredeck).

Poison Pepper

THIS CARAVEL'S FIRST master – a Dreed merchant named Caecus Comstock – christened her *Poison Pepper*. The original “Pepper” had been a girl for hire in Jubilance, or so the stories tell ... a woman of such impish charms that Comstock had expended a fortune in emeralds buying her the life of luxury she wanted. If that’s true, there wasn’t much fortune left over for Comstock, who sailed the *Poison Pepper* as his only home and property.

Pepper set sail, with a crew of 10 and three fresh sails, in the bright spring of 1351, what some sailors and wizards call the Year of Great Curses. She was built of white teak imported from Boru, and from native Dreed oak. Her sails were ensorcelled in the silver tower at Naldera. The luck of those sails did her no good. All hands were dead before winter.

Poison Pepper appeared adrift near the icy Heltish coast, drawn to harbor with many bodies on deck beneath a silent crust of snow. The corpse of Caecus Comstock wasn’t among the dead; he was presumably overboard. In many ways, the story of the *Poison Pepper* isn’t much different from many other ships sailing that year. Nearly all of the cursed ships were put to the torch ...

But dishonest hands found and preserved *Poison Pepper*, which sailed under several other banners and several other names – a hasty slap of white paint made her the *White Courser*, and then another made her the *Star of New Hope*. Under the name the *Bloody Promise*, she gained minor infamy as an Elu pirate ship (and some tell-tale damage to the hull, repaired but never fully disguised) in the summer of 1370. When the ship’s present master – Captain Auriga Buckler – found her, she bore the name *Thanatopsis* and the grim banner of Yem.

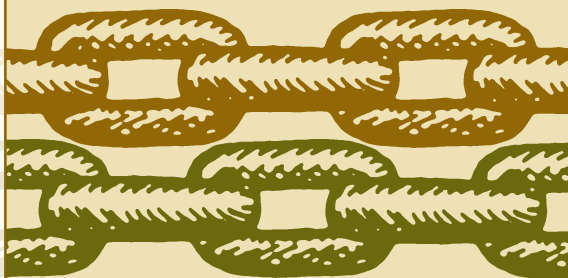
Buckler was a veteran of the horrors of the sea – and a son of Temphis – so neither the foreboding name nor the unmistakable mien of dire spirit deterred him. Most sailors avoid curses, but the sailing men of Temphis collect them like a child gathers shells, and the old salt grinned and gave the good news to his mates: they had a ship again. Buckler called on the services of some local sorcerers to look beyond the veil of time to learn the ship’s real name, and it was still there, clinging to the hull beyond layers of obscuring history. The *Poison Pepper* would set sail again, and the cursed ship would fly the banner of Temphis. It was 1375.

From the Keel to the Foretop

Caravels aren’t complicated vessels. There’s a single deck running the full length of the hull, with a high tiller deck (poop) above, and a miniature foredeck. The ship’s cabin lies beneath the tiller deck; the maid’s locker beneath the foredeck. Everything below deck is the hold – good for a

Captain & Crew

The *Poison Pepper* sails with a crew of 10-18, depending on the season and where she’s sailing. Of these, eight are permanent crew who’ve sailed with the ship for a year or more (including two of the able-bodied). The captain takes on additional deckhands whenever needed to keep the ship properly manned for its current adventure.



Captain Auriga Buckler

The owner and master of the *Poison Pepper* is a grim, solid man of the sea, an aging salt named Auriga Buckler. The *Pepper* isn’t Buckler’s first ship. He’s mastered at least two others, as a thrill seeker, a trader, an explorer, and (many whisper) as a pirate.

To be sure, nearly every old sailor – especially those who take on challenging adventures – earns the same whisper of a buccaneer’s past. But in Buckler’s case, the rumors are a little more specific. His genuinely regal bearing, his distinctive hawkish nose, and his remarkably deep green eyes mark him as reminiscent of several west-Temphis noble families, and in particular, he’s nearly a dead ringer for Duke “Iron Hook” Harridan of the Duchy of Bells.

It’s a matter of history that, nearly thirty years ago, Duke Harridan gave governorship of the tiny Isle of Afton to his brother. It’s also irrefutable that his brother fortified the island and turned pirate, raiding the ships sailing to trade with the Duchy of Bells, nearly ruining his brother’s reputation in the process. It is, finally, a matter of unquestionable truth that the Isle of Afton *doesn’t exist anymore*, and that nobody – nobody – in the Duke’s court likes to talk about it.

History begins to lose footing after that, but anyone who knows the story, and who knows what Duke Harridan looks like, can draw their own conclusions about who “Auriga Buckler” might really be. A few of the older sailors aboard share the story and their theories, but don’t press the Captain about his past. Every sailor is a man of secrets; the sea is a good place to keep them. Buckler’s crew admire him, regardless of who he may have been thirty years ago.

Caravels as Microcosms

Dreed's sails are famous, but nearly every part of Uresia contributes *something* to the construction of a caravel. The keel and hull are usually made of oak from Helt, Anandriel or Birah, or of teak from Boru or Koval. The masts are typically pine from the Rindenland, Dreed, Temphis or Laöch. Boru, Rinden and Celar provide jute and hemp from which the cordage and hammocks are woven. Metal parts come from dwarvish sources: hooks, pulleys, anchors and other well-crafted iron pieces from Laöch; the iron pegs used to join the hull from Orgalt, where they're made cheaply. Both Orgalt and Yem provide the copper used to plate parts of the hull – a hull caulked with string, tar and wax from Celar and Sindra.

hundred tons of cargo, or a little less. In many respects, *Poison Pepper* is a typical Temphisian caravel. In just as many respects, she's *not* ... Refer to the deckplan on page 4 in conjunction with the sections that follow.

Masts, Sails and Rigging

A single crow's nest hangs atop *Poison Pepper's* foremast, and this is where Vela Skylark – the ship's Aracor sailtender – likes to spend his time. The crew have learned to call it the "lark's nest" only when Vela isn't listening.

Beneath the foretop, *Poison Pepper* has the traditional array of shrouds, stays, running rigging, sails and masts the crew must tend. Like most Uresian ships, *Pepper* is three-masted. The foremast (and foresail) is the largest; the masts and sails get smaller going aft. A skilled mariner can, in fair weather, climb from nearly any point on deck to nearly any other via the rigging. Those who *do* hear the gentle voices of the air-spirits, a haunted whisper from the painted sails.

Most caravels sail square-rigged, which lends both strength and stability to a ship's progress when the wind favors her. There are mariners, though – captain Buckler among them – who prefer a lateen (triangular) rig. Most lateeners sail the southern waters, berthing at Boru and Koval. In those reaches of the Inner Sea, the winds are warm and fickle, and sudden storms are common. Lateen-rigged ships make better time there, sailing closer to the wind, maneuvering tightly. The drawbacks are a rougher ride from more constant yawing, and less steady power.

Poison Pepper is lateen-rigged for three reasons. First, Captain buckler likes sailing the southern waters. Second,

Pepper has a crew unusually suited to the challenges of handling a lateen rig, including a bosun with tireless might for working the tiller. Third and most important, though, is just that Captain Buckler likes to toy with trouble, and a maneuverable ship is a better toy.

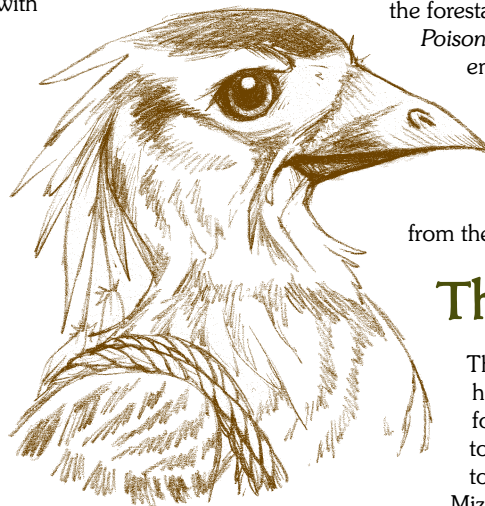
Upper Decks

The poop (the tiller deck) is the highest standing deck, and forms both the cabin roof and the platform where the tillerman masters the rudder. Bosun Pyxis Four considers that duty his greatest purpose aboard, and few can argue, considering his unbelievable strength and comparably impressive balance. He can wrestle the rudder like a man tossing a rag, even in high winds and choppy waters. A year ago, he shortened the tiller to suit his stance. By means of an extension pole and a pair of spikes, the rest of the crew can re-lengthen it, to restore the leverage Four doesn't need ... but that's rarely necessary, and the crew have plenty more to do when the ship's in motion.

The foredeck has a railing, but it isn't really meant for standing on, unless someone needs to access the forestay, or on those occasions where the *Poison Pepper* grapples close with an enemy ship. Primarily, the foredeck acts

as a roof for the ship's forward locker – the Maid's Cabin.

There's no companionway up to the foredeck; sailors need to grab a short rope ladder hung from the rail, or leap over from the shrouds.



Sailtender Vela Skylark,
A Skylark Aracor

The Main Deck

The foremast stands just aft of the hatch, cabled to the prow by a forestay. The crewmen say as much to any land-dweller aboard, just to have a little fun with them (see Mizzenjib, page 16). The main deck features the ship's mounted winch, and the ship's boats (stacked and covered along the port rail).

The main deck is where most of the work and most of the play takes place. It's where the ship's maid cooks the meals and serves them, where most of the crew chooses to sleep, and where most of the rigging is run. When *Pepper* is at rest, the mariners play music and share stories under the open sky.

The Aft Cabins

There are two chambers beneath the tiller deck; the general cabin and the captain's private quarters. The latter features a humble bunk (more of a shelf than anything) and a cabinet where Buckler keeps the ship's navigation equipment, and some private effects. The former (see the inset map on page 4) consists of a simple table, a sea-chest and bundles tucked beneath the port

Sailtender Vela Skylark

Even on a ship where the Chief Mate is a Swarming Bandit Slime and the Bosun is a metal golem, Vela Skylark stands out as something of an oddity; Aracor aren't common at sea. Aracor are *valued* at sea – their tremendous eyesight and their ability to fly grants any ship with an Aracor aboard an almost unbeatable advantage in defense and navigation. But, most Aracor don't enjoy sailing.

Vela Skylark isn't much different, really. He was drawn to sail not by the romance of the sea, but by the *whispers of the sails*. Like any good sailtender, Vela Skylark is haunted. Spirits seek his company; ghosts feel a kinship with him, the elements focus on him.

Vela's flight (his extended family) isn't from Helt proper, but rather from the highlands of Lochria – those hills and mountains now more famous for spawning dragons than for the noble centaurs and others who live there. Vela's people were hunters and simple craftsmen, almost barbaric by the standards of the more central islands. Vela himself is, now as he was in his youth, quiet, even brooding. He's haunted in more ways than one, really, and never did well at anything his family expected him to. He dreamed, and he sang, and he felt that, beyond his beautiful hills and cloudy skies, there was more for him. He left home with tears in his eyes, over the objections of his father, and traveled to Coatestown. In Coatestown, wandering by the quayside, he heard the sails of the ships anchored there. It was, to him, an almost deafening chorus

of whispers, a heady susurraton like a distant mountain avalanche.

When he realized that no one else seemed to *notice*, he investigated. It didn't take long for the sailors to recognize what he was referring to. Fingers pointed to the local house of the Sailtender's Guild, and Vela found his calling, among the ghost sails and those who care for them.

Or, at least, he found something closer to his calling than he'd known before. Truth be told, Vela still doesn't feel settled, but he's enjoying his life and he loves his friends aboard *Pepper*, even if he's still too quiet to express it. When others haul out the strong drink and dance, Vela ascends to his nest, to listen to the wind and sails. He watches the party from above, happy to see his friends having such a fine time, but unsure how to really join in, or even if he wants to. He joined Buckler's crew on their previous ship, the *Prince of Fogport*, just before it was destroyed smuggling slaves from Orgalt. He saved several lives that day, and no crewman doubts his affection or loyalty – they just wish they could guess what he's thinking about.

Every night, Vela sings as he ascends to sleep near his sails, and every night, Crux joins in (his deep, basso hooting split into a chorus of a dozen) resonating from the depths of the hold. On occasion (when he isn't in his cups) Perseus adds a tin whistle to the song, Soubrette hums sweetly as she sips her evening tea, and the Captain takes off his hat and squints at some distant star, smiling slightly. In those moments, *Poison Pepper* feels most like home to all aboard her.

companionway, coils of rope, hanging weapons, lamps and other miscellany the crew needs kept dry. There's enough room to hang a dozen or more hammocks in the cabin, and – aboard *Poison Pepper* – every crewman is welcome to sleep there (on some ships, only the principal officers are). Most mariners prefer to sleep on deck anyway, except in poor weather, when the cabin becomes warm with the stink of ale and wine, and heavy with the doubtful mass of mariners' tall-tales. A small hatch beneath the starboard companionway provides a secondary entrance to the hold, useful when the main hatch must remain closed to shield the cargo from rain.

The Maid's Cabin/ Forward Locker

Properly speaking, the Maid (see page 13) takes quarters in the ship's *locker*, the space beneath the foredeck. Soubrette's quarters are tiny and cramped, but she's worked hard to make it home, complete with tiny blue curtains, a hand-made quilt bundled into her hammock for cold nights, and a small locked sea-chest stocked with

personal comforts like stuffed animals, cookbooks (including the trendy *King Timberfell's Favorite Recipes*), and her maid arsenal.

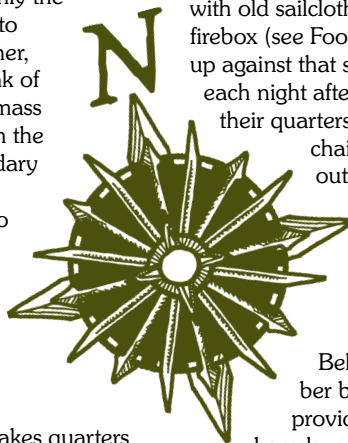
Mira, her kitten, sleeps in a small wooden box padded with old sailcloth. Mira's bed sits right next to Soubrette's firebox (see Food & Drink, page 11), and Mira snuggles up against that side, soaking up the lingering warmth, each night after mealtime. Soubrette and Mira share their quarters with several large coils of rope, and the chain for the ship's anchor, which hangs just outside on the starboard side of the hull.

The ropes and chains rest beneath Soubrette's hammock.

The Cargo Hold

Belowdecks is the hold: a single large chamber braced with sturdy teak, with a plank floor providing a (usually) dry platform for bales, barrels, crates and the ship's Chief Mate, Crux.

Poison Pepper's pair of cannon, too, stays in the hold most of the time, in wooden braces designed for quick winching to the deck when the captain calls for the guns. While many caravels maintain more guns (and some keep



them ready on deck at all times) Captain Buckler has enough confidence in the prowess of his unusual crew that he regards the guns as something for signaling and warning. When maneuvering to its full capacity, *Pepper* isn't a stable firing platform, anyway. Most of the crew love the guns, and make excuses to recommend hauling them up to be discharged.

Other Caravels, Other Crews

Pepper is an adventuring ship. Captain Buckler's reputation is that of a man who can achieve unusual things, so the ship's journeys tend to be errands of no predictable sort, paid for from the purses of mysterious patrons who, often as not, turn out to be the villains, anyway. Like most captains, Buckler also lives as a merchant, buying goods wherever he goes, based on what sells wherever he's going next. The ship takes on passengers, too, from time to time (they're permitted to sleep in the cabin). As befits an adventuring ship, *Pepper's* crew is far from an ordinary mix of mariners. A few notes on "everyday" Uresian caravels:

It takes only three strong men to operate a caravel under most conditions, but "most conditions" means no storms, no sea monsters, no magic whirlpools, no sudden emotional breakdowns on the part of the mainsail's resident ghosts. The typical merchant caravel has a crew of 10: captain, navigator, boatswain, sailtender, and a half-dozen able-bodied. Ships that limit themselves to very localized travel (like many of the passenger caravels that run along coasts between cities) sail with as few as three able-bodied,

but usually add a servant to the roster. Some even employ jesters or minstrels, lending a new terror to the prospect of an already-perilous sea.

Ships outfitted for a king's navy, or as corsairs, carry larger crews. A well-funded naval caravel adds to the basic merchant crew both a physician and a cabin boy (as well as military training for the crew proper, and often additional able-bodied to cover losses). Corsair crews are similar to military crews, but physicians are difficult to come by, and nearly unheard-of (pirates do like their cabin boys, though). It's not unusual for a naval or pirate ship to boast a crew of 15 or more, even in times of peace.

Ships outfitted for exploration of the Troll Lands carry the largest crews, since their voyages will take them well beyond familiar reckoning marks, through dangerous waters where losses to hazard (or to supernatural homesickness) are likely, and take them to wild shores with no laborers to hire. Such vessels carry dedicated carpenters, an apprentice navigator, and often as not the ship's owner and his best servant (expeditions to the Troll Lands typically have

Things the Cat Already Knows

Between the ribs, in the sloshing water beneath the planks holding the cargo, there are rats aboard *Poison Pepper*, just as there are rats aboard every caravel, everywhere. *Poison Pepper* sails from Fogport, though, which means many of her rats are from Dreed. Quite a few caravels that sail near Dreed end up with entire rat-centered subplots, usually unbeknownst to the larger life forms aboard.

Boatswain Pyxis Four

All aboard *Poison Pepper* call Pyxis Four the ship's "red metal golem." It suits him well enough, and he uses the term himself, these days. His shape is humanoid and masculine. He's not very tall, but he's broad and carries himself with great presence and obvious might. He is, in fact, many times stronger than any ordinary Man or Dwarf. He seems forged of hundreds of curved plates of dull red metal, from which green light shines softly between the cracks when he exerts himself. His eyes, too, are a luminous green.

Pyxis Four was a maintenance and assistance robot assigned to a starship – a scout crewed by traders and explorers, wandering profiteers. Eleven years ago, the ship found Uresia the "heavenly way:" by falling on it. The ship, crippled by a lance of sorcerous energy the crew could barely comprehend, landed in the hot wastes of the southernmost Troll Lands, disturbing a nest of demons. Most of the crew were slaughtered; a few ran off into the desert. They left Pyxis Four behind; neither the demons nor the survivors gave him a second thought.

With only wreckage for a ship and his remaining superiors busy exploring, Pyxis Four waited for orders. He waited for nearly a year, but while he's inhumanly patient, he is his own entity, and finally took the hint. He walked out into the blinding sun, quickly adjusted his optical sensors to compensate, picked a direction, and started walking. He came upon one of the Mummy Towns, where he was mistaken for a magic relic from the ruins. He was claimed by the infamous Vasalt Trio (identical Creesh triplets, notorious thieves and adventurers) but if he knows what became of them, he isn't telling. He wound up exploring the inner islands, looking for a way to find purpose. Purpose, to Pyxis Four, means serving aboard a ship.

When Captain Buckler met Four in a Borumaga debating parlor, both sensed they had found the beginning of a useful relationship. As *Poison Pepper's* bosun, Four maintains the deck, repairs the rigging, and organizes the able-bodied into an efficient force of hard-working mariners. He also mans the tiller whenever he can, with tireless strength and precision which – combined with the efforts of Chief Mate Crux – make *Poison Pepper* the terror of any sporting race, and safer in a storm than nearly any ship afloat.

wealthy patrons who hire captains and come along for the ride, rather than captains like Buckler who own their own ship, or ordinary merchant masters who don't sail with the ships they own). Like a military ship, these expeditions carry additional able-bodied, and even additional laborers unskilled as mariners, plus (usually) at least one scholar conversant in what's known of the Troll Lands. It's common for such a vessel to carry as many as 25-30 souls, half again the number that can comfortably find a place to sleep. Such ships carry as many supplies as they can, riding very low in the water, and those aboard face extreme discomfort: from a deck almost continually awash; from a lack of privacy lasting days or weeks; from overcrowding. At journey's end, most are eager to leap to shore at the deadly Troll Lands, just to escape the smell.

Finally, there's a wild card when it comes to wizards. A vessel of Temphis whose master can afford it (perhaps one in six), adds a magic maid to the crew, but wizards who make a career of sailing aren't common enough to make them ubiquitous, no matter how many captains would appreciate the help. However, many sailors dabble in magic – mostly spells that provide simple comfort (like warmth) or handle tasks like unraveling cordage. A Sindran survey of "sailor's tricks" once catalogued more than a hundred incantations, all of them weak enough for the Council to dismiss them as trivial folk-witchery (and technically they are, but it was churlish of the Council, anyway).

Painted Ships, Painted Sails

Uresians paint their caravels, both for decoration and to provide a base for simple magics. The paint job on most ships begins just around the loaded waterline, and extends, in many cases, to the rail on the foretop. There are ships of every color, and ships bearing complex

designs, even a few with murals. In every case, the colors, images and designs have meaning to the crew, and usually reflect both the ship's captain and something of the traditions of the nation from which she sails. *Poison Pepper* now bears a dark blue limning, trimmed out in thin, interlocking patterns of fainter blues and bright white. The design mimics both the night sky and the city banner of Fogport, the town Buckler calls home.

Pepper's sails continue the motif. They're new equipment, installed at Fogport. They're a rich blue, painted with stars and moons, and embroidered with fine silver thread. They are – like the sails of any caravel whose master can afford it – enchanted and, literally speaking, haunted (see Looms of the Sea-Witches, page 11). These sail-spirits are especially potent and strong-willed. Keeping them happy and in harmony with the cycle of the stars is the work of the ship's sail-tender.

Chief Mate Crux

The ship's chief mate is Crux, an enormous Swarming Bandit Slime from parts unknown (many believe, from the marshes of north Sindra). Crux is massive and richly, deeply black. Even in the bright of day, it seems the sunlight shuns his surface. He stands no watch. As the second in command, he's always available, and takes his rest when he can. He is the cargo master, and lurks in the bowels of the hold, where he serves a curious second function ...

Crux is the ship's thinking *ballast*. As a giant, swarming Slime, he's able to shift his great bulk quickly around the bales, crates, and barrels in the hold, hugging tight to the keel or throwing hard to port or starboard to keep the ship aright in difficult maneuvers or challenging waves. When needed, he's an army of *small* Slimes, leaping and trumpeting and providing an unmatched stability to *Poison Pepper's* performance in the water.

Crux can be in many places at once, so while most of him stays lurking in the hold's darkness, a sizeable chunk of Crux is a common sight on deck, especially in the evenings. He's social, witty (in a simple, pantomime way), and – like many large Slimes – much gentler than one might suppose. His voice isn't the high-pitched squeak of most of his kind ... Even when he's fragmented, Crux has a deep, woody hoot that works nicely as a foghorn in a pinch, and that complements his friend, Vela, in his nightly song (see page 7).

Crux came aboard *Poison Pepper* with the captain. He's sailed with Buckler for many years, and if the captain was ever really a pirate, Crux probably was, too.

The Able-Bodied

The remaining crew consists of the Maid (see page 13) and the able-bodied, a scruffy handful of mariners swinging on the rigging, singing dirty shanties, dancing jigs, wearing eye-patches and otherwise living up to nautical expectations. The two veteran hands aboard are also the eldest: Corvus and Lupus, a pair of brothers from Yem, who've sailed nearly as long as the captain and have almost grandfatherly salt-and-pepper beards to show for it. They're both carpenters and joiners, primarily, but their skills are sufficient to handle nearly any job aboard. Corvus is even learning navigation from Perseus (page 10). In exchange, Corvus is teaching Perseus that not everyone finds Perseus sexy.



Navigation

Most Uresian vessels find their way by *dead reckoning* (estimating the ship's position based on direction and speed since the last fix) and by *piloting* (establishing a new fix by sighting charted landmarks, including predictable moving ones like the *vernia*). Perseus Picaro handles most of his ship's navigation, working closely with the captain to chart *Poison Pepper's* progress on the large table in the cabin. When both the captain and the satyr are asleep, other crewmen keep an eye on the course – a few of them are dab hands at navigation, and Corvus, in particular, has taken a strong personal interest in it.

The ship's cabinet, within the captain's tiny private room, is a locked case of many shelves. In addition to personal mementos, the cabinet holds the navigational equipment: a compass, a library of charts, and a reckoner (see next column). Both Perseus and Crux have free access to the cabinet when the captain is awake.

Poison Pepper's charts are an excellent collection, and unless the hold is well-stocked with emeralds or fine weapons, these are the most valuable treasure aboard. Each is

a hand-painted masterpiece of sorts, marking shorelines, islands, light-houses, reefs, and any sort of landmark visible from the water (including mountain ranges, distinctive cliffs, and anything else that might help the ship fix its position). Some of the charts focus on the breeding grounds of dangerous sea serpents and other monsters – sailors have, for years, tracked where these beasts live and where they migrate as the seasons warm and cool the sea. Others predict the location of dangerous pack-ice, or the recurrence of magical "storms" that play hob with the ship's sails. Captain Buckler's library of charts could almost buy him a second ship, if he were daft enough to sell them.

The *reckoner* is a magical device which many ships carry, but which Buckler and Perseus regard with suspicion. It's a tiny copper ball engraved with hundreds of miniature runes. Place it on a chart, and the ball will slowly roll of its own accord, wobbling almost randomly, but on balance mimicking the movement of the ship, as all those aboard perceive it. The result is a kind of dead-reckoning *consensus* that gets less accurate when the ship takes passengers aboard ... since most passengers lack seamanship, and have precious little clue how to reckon movement relative to sky and wind. With a seasoned crew and no one else aboard, the reckoner is only slightly

Ship's Navigator, Perseus Picaro

Perseus Picaro – the ship's only Satyr – is a self-described swashbuckling adventurer, master storyteller, peerless warrior, spirited musician, artful drunkard, and "living embodiment of what your naughty bits are for." He's the ship's second mate and navigator, and, like Crux, he's sailed with the Captain since before the days of *Poison Pepper*. Unlike Crux and Buckler, though, Picaro has no air of mystery about the possibility of his days as a pirate. He likes telling stories about them – spinning improbable yarns to get a laugh, seduce a new passenger, or just to hear himself talk. He also likes displaying his pirate tattoo – the mark of the *Peeping Tom*, one of the dreaded panty-raid fleet that nearly halted passenger travel to Helt for more than two years before a Dreed cannonball splintered her mainmast. Somewhere, on a remote island, there's a buried cache of pantaloons and thongs where an X marks the spot, and – Perseus claims – he knows where that island is.

The captain treasures Perseus for his uncanny skill as a navigator. Perseus has a perfect memory for landmarks, eyesight nearly as good as the sailtender's, and a kind of magic when it comes to interpreting a stack of contradictory maps and charts. The rest of the crew treasure his love of stories. In fact, Perseus was something of a failed storyteller in his youth ... He became a legend in his village and, encouraged by his kinsmen to seek his fortune, journeyed to Vasalt to challenge the Lie-Crafters and become a legendary storymaker.

His stories – personal renditions of the folktales of his village, with new twists and more bawdiness – earned him only lukewarm appreciation. "Provincial," most

declared. "Quaint," said others. "Too vanilla," sneered the *avant-garde* coterie, and that was enough abuse for his very first day. He found a bar, found a bottle, and wallowed.

Satyrs in bars make friends easily, and Perseus fell in with a group of young satyrs who, for various reasons, had decided to take to the sea, to join with a gathering they'd heard about – a new era of piracy under one of the Pirate Kings. Perseus didn't really want to sail, but he had decided that, while he was too *provincial* for Vasalt, he was now too *worldly* to be comfortable back home ... That, and he couldn't bear to face his old friends as a failure. He journeyed again, this time to the coast, selling foot massages to earn his keep, and learning the art of swordplay. In his days as a sailor, he mastered the tin whistle and the Minotaur drum, and it wasn't long before he noticed his talent for reckoning a ship's movements.

Today, he makes sure that *Poison Pepper's* course holds no mysteries, and he tells all manner of tales, gathering new ones in every port to weave them into a personal body of legend. He even knows Slime folktales, performing a witty rendition of *The Tassel-Eared Terror*, and a moving version of the *Song of the Squirrelslayer*. He also draws stories from his dreams, telling tales of a hero of Helt named Bennith, a human boy raised by kindly Adlet and searching the world for his true origins. He's begun to suspect that his vivid dreams of the hero may even be visions of some genuine truth, and, someday, he wants to return to Helt to see if this hero is real, somehow. Perseus is a happy Satyr: a success, now, as both a teller of tales and as a mariner. He is certain that groupies will resent, and his daydreams reflect this every few seconds.

more accurate than a typical navigator, and a bit less accurate than a *good* one like Perseus. Captain Buckler lets the reckoner roll when the ship sails, but mainly because he likes to focus on it when he thinks – watching the runes turn gives him somewhere to fix his steely gaze in concentration.

Slimes at Sea

Slimes strike some as unlikely mariners, but they're more common as sailors than most suspect. Even many dread pirates have been Slimes, though the land-dwelling public hasn't always known as much. Crux is the only giant Swarming Bandit Slime the captain knows of among Uresia's mariners, but several ships have taken to recruiting Purple Slimes to do similar "ballast" work. Even a few Iron Slimes (a rare Metal Slime combining Purple and Red powers) have found well-paid work, especially aboard Orgaltish vessels. These trends are recent, and Captain Buckler would give all the credit to Crux's own reputation, if he were the sort of Captain to brag. *Crux* brags of it *constantly*, but aboard *Poison Pepper*, only Buckler speaks Slime (Pyxis Four and Soubrette can communicate with Crux with effort and their own methods, however).

Emerald Slimes, despite (or, really, due to) their aquatic nature, shun ships entirely, even as passengers. They're just as enigmatic to sailors as they are to land-dwellers. In the easternmost reaches of the Inner Sea, though, tales abound of vast swarms of Emerald Slimes attacking and destroying ships, hauling their crews down to the Sea Dragon's gullet.

A curious mystery surrounds Slime passengers. Quite a few board at one port, pay for passage, but then never debark at the other end. Their destination is a *Slime ferry* – a ship crewed entirely by Slimes who never sail to the lands of Men. When a Slime books passage aboard a caravel, it's likely that his "destination" is really a rendezvous with one of these strange vessels, which appear from the mists and vanish quietly the same way, sailing off to only-Slimes-know-where. Sometimes, the rendezvous becomes an exchange, as Slimes return from wherever they've been ... invariably decorated with flowers, moving drunkenly, and visibly dancing to music no one else can hear. Sailors whisper of an entire Slime kingdom, hidden somewhere at sea, but no one really knows. Slimes, when challenged on these matters, squeak with mild amusement, and then pretend not to have heard.

Food & Drink

Most of the foodstuffs stored aboard *Poison Pepper* are dry goods – ship's biscuits (bread so hard it must be soaked in beer or wine to be chewable), dried meats, dried fruit, packets of ramen in assorted flavors (torn open and eaten dry: "It's a man's way to eat," Lupus insists). Kegs of water and wine help it all go down easier, drawn up from the hold as needed. A single barrel of fresh water stands on deck, kept refreshed so thirsty sailors can dip their cup in when they need a drink. When there's extra money, there's rum (the crew favor the spiced kind, from Boru, enhanced with subtle alchemical delights).

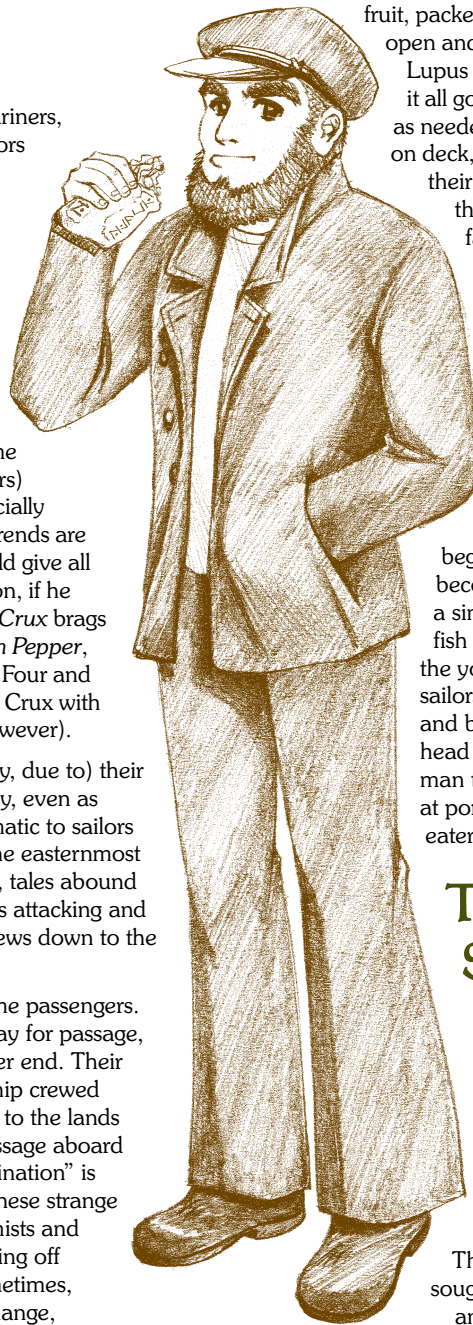
Once a day – just in time for sunset – Soubrette prepares a hot meal with (relatively) fresh ingredients in her firebox: a copper case filled with sand and charcoal. When the coals are hot, she cheerfully roasts cuts of fresh fish and other beasts the men have drawn up from the sea, along with a bubbling pot of burgoo. As the coals begin to cool, she covers the box and it becomes a slow oven, baking leftovers into a simple, thick pie filled with vegetables, fish and gravy. The diet is monotonous, but the young maid is an excellent cook. All the sailors line up politely to be served, blushing and bowing as Soubrette pats each on the head – except Captain Buckler, who's not a man to be patted. When *Poison Pepper* lands at port, everyone aboard races for the nearest eatery to enjoy the local cuisine.

The Looms of the Sea Witches

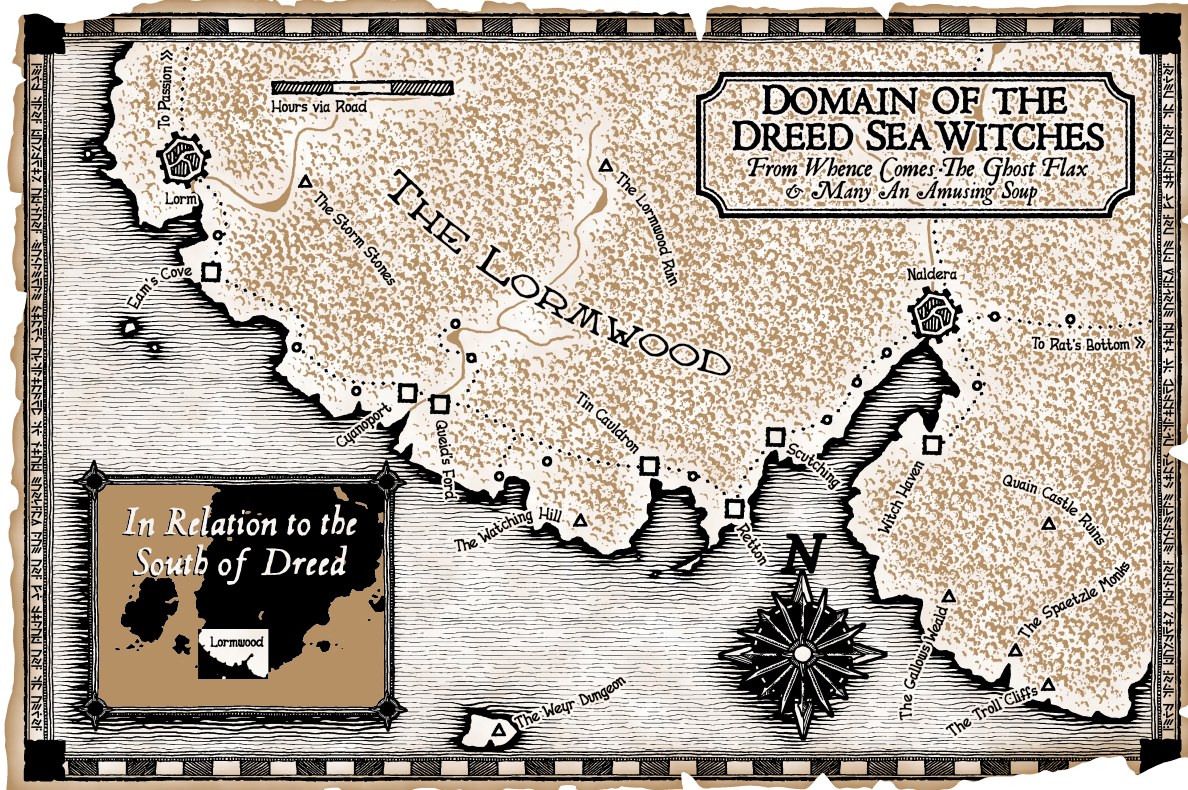
Dreed is a wealthy kingdom, and even a youngster in faraway Koval can tell you why: emeralds. Mariners, though, think of Dreed as the island from which great sailcloth comes – sails enchanted to draw the wind-sprites, sails that bring good luck even on accursed waters.

The artificers of Boru and Sindra have sought, for years, the secret to these sails, and it's not difficult to find imitations – cruder linen, with spirits drawn down from the sky and forced within by brutal sorceries. The imitation sails are better than nothing, but they're not the real thing, and any seasoned mariner knows the difference.

The whispering flax is a plant native to Dreed, and grows best at the southern end of the kingdom. Every summer, the villagers who grow the flax harvest it by tugging each



"It's a Man's Way To Eat,"
Says Lupus



plant from the soil by hand (to cut it would ruin it). They stack the flax in great layers and keep it damp, to rot. It does so, fragrantly, for three weeks. Then, the villagers carry the flax to open hilltops overlooking the sea.

The sea witches are masters of the whispering flax. They watch it grow, command the villagers who harvest it, oversee its journey to the hilltops, and – as the flax dries in the open winds – the sea witches gather, and make spells over it, and commune with very old things. As the flax dries, the greatest of the air sprites – ghosts of dead winds drawn by the scent of the flax from the sea – slip down out of the sky, become one with the flax, and the whispering begins.

This would happen, some surmise, even without the witches' guidance. But they are an order dedicated to the *perfection* of the flax, and of what happens next: the fibers are drawn out, combed and spun. From the looms of the witches – and of the hundreds of villagers who answer to them – the sailcloth is woven into linen rich with ghosts. Whispering flax also makes fine hot-weather clothing prized in Boru (to wear a linen shirt made by a sea-witch is to cut an extra-dashing figure, sleeves flapping smartly in the fresh breeze). The flax-seed (linseed) renders fine oil used for oilcloth, inks, and even the paints on a caravel's hull.

The towns of Lorm and Naldera – and the string of smaller towns and villages between them – are the realm of the sea witches. They (both the towns and the witches) are dedicated to the cycles of the whispering flax, and to flax-craft of all kinds from harvest to loom to the intricate dyeing and painting of the finest sails. When the last of

For Starters, Jets of Flame Help Dry the Flax

The joke “Since this is Dreed, shouldn’t they be called sand-witches?” was declared no longer funny in 1366, by formal proclamation of the Council of Passion (née Faithful Bay). The Governor was sick of hearing it when entertaining foreign emerald merchants aspiring to jesterhood. Uttering the joke in the presence of an actual Sea Witch is an excellent way to find out if they have any powers *apart* from haunted agronomy.

the designs are laid, the witches cast one final spell to ensure the benevolent favor of the spirits haunting the canvas, with secret rituals carried out in high towers riddled with holes and windows, moaning in the wind like great ghostly flutes.

Most visitors to southern Dreed lay anchor at Passion, to enjoy fine Dreed cooking and the playful decadence of Dreed city life. Only a few, drawn by curiosity, make the trip along rocky shores to the cliffs and hills of the sea witches and their towns, to smell the rotting flax in the summertime, and see hundreds of painted sails flapping gently as they dry in the breeze. Some adventurers come, too, seeking the many magical secrets locked in the region's ruins, and discovering, perhaps, if there is some tie between the magic of the flax and the secrets lurking in the dungeons.

Maids

Maids as domestic servants to the wealthy are an old tradition. Winnow introduced the traditional uniform in 616, and the noble houses had certainly retained maids before then. Phuraxis of Koval once wrote: “The first urge of a powerful man is to see the head of his enemy on a plate, but the second urge is to have that plate served up by a dainty maid.”

Maids as battle-ready, sorcerous defenders evolved more slowly. Most point to Batigua, fifth Lord of Localona and conqueror of the Brock Citadel, as the patron who would found the notion. Batigua employed a large corps of maids to look after his nine infant sons and – fearing assassins – he hired his maids from among a neighboring order of witches. He demanded both the defense of his family and uninterrupted domestic luxury, even in the heat of war. In exchange, the maids got land and wealth for their retiring years. Three of those witches founded the first order of magic maids in 876. From there, the history of the magic maid explodes across the inner islands, as foreign nobles – and those rich enough to emulate them – seek similar household services as a matter of both practicality and fashion.

There are today several competing orders (“houses”), each defined by unique magics, and by an identical body of formal laws and traditions. There are major training centers in Localona, Medra, Malbarion, and tucked away in hidden places in the wilderness across Uresia. Each maid trains in four principal arts (the “sacred services;” see sidebar) and takes no less than 300 oaths, binding her to a strict code of ethics focused on loyalty, personal boundaries (romances between maids and those they serve are forbidden, with dire consequences) and quality of service. One of the many oaths involves the sanctity of the employer: a maid protects not only her family’s house (or ship!) but also the privacy of those who live there. No family need fear scandal from gossipy maids (though, as several Winnowite plays enjoy depicting, there is no oath prohibiting gossip within the household). Other vital oaths emphasize the secrets of maid skills and spells, including the use of maid battle techniques and unusual weapons, such as the Iron Feather Duster and the Forty Apron Blades.

Maid magic combines the practical with the martial; there are just as many spells for cleaning, cooking, and organizing as there are for burning, tossing and flattening. Maid battle magic makes good use of things maids will have ready access to – those attacking a maid should expect to

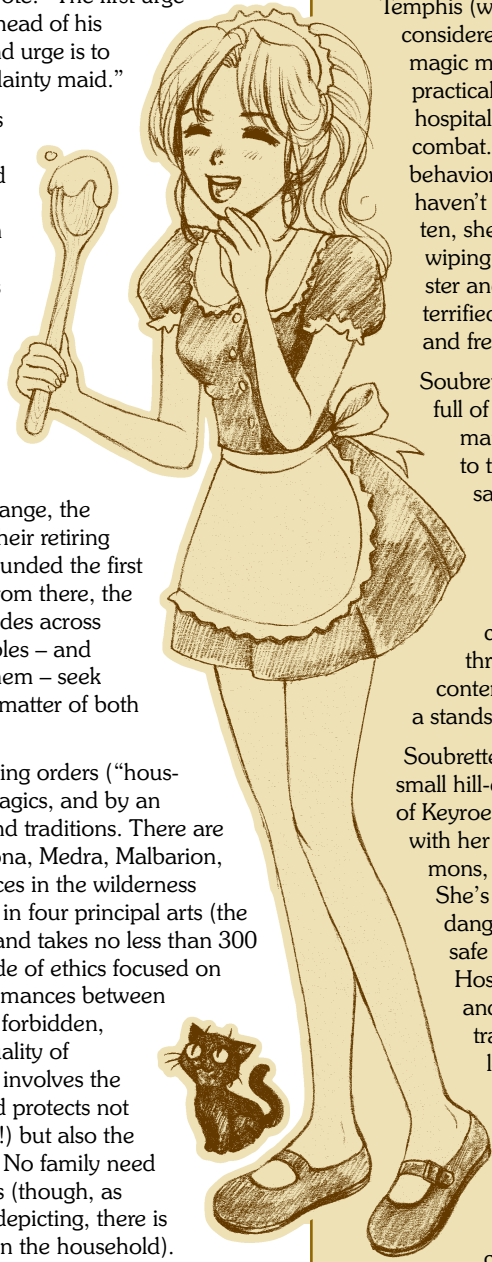
Ship’s Maid Soubrette Lynx

To be sure, Captain Buckler is the soul of *Poison Pepper*, but just as surely, Soubrette is the heart. Her position among the crew is rare outside Temphis (women, maids or otherwise, are considered bad luck at sea). She’s a certified magic maid, trained in both the magical and practical arts of the “four sacred services:” hospitality, housekeeping, childcare and combat. Given the sometimes-adolescent behavior of sailors, her skills at childcare haven’t atrophied aboard *Pepper*. Very often, she amounts to the ship’s den-mother, wiping bloody noses, bandaging sea-monster and cutlass wounds, and comforting a terrified crew with a warm pot of porridge and freshly-laundered blankets.

Soubrette is a young girl: gentle, delicate, full of laughter. Her caring smile and kind manner are genuine, and she tends to the ship in ways that no captain, sailtender or bosun ever could. But on those occasions where *Poison Pepper* is threatened, Soubrette’s demeanor transforms. Her powers are thunderous and vast, and she can stir the ocean like a cauldron, throw soldiers flat to the ground with a contemptuous glance, and battle a troll to a standstill with her personal arsenal.

Soubrette is a Temphis native, raised in the small hill-country town of Waybrook, Duchy of Keyroe. She grew up playing in the woods with her brothers – games of tag with demons, games of hide-and-seek with ghosts. She’s at ease in the face of supernatural dangers, and believes in the value of a safe home. A scout for the Malbarion Hospitality Guild spotted her at age 13 and offered her passage to Sindra for training. Eager to see what she might learn, she agreed, and the Guild paid her family a princely sum for the privilege of taking their daughter into the ranks. When she finished her training, three years later, she brushed aside offers from seven royal families, eager to ply her trade in a way that let her see the world. She found Captain

Buckler nailing a “Maid Needed” notice on the public board at Fogport, and dissolved the nail with a spark of fire before he could drive it in. On her first voyage with the crew, she saved the second mate from a sea serpent near Votus, and forcefully ended a tradition among the able-bodied of making underwear “lucky” by never washing it. She’s been part of the crew for just over a year, now.



Kawaii!

Soubrette's kitten, Mira, is a Toshish Tawny, just a year old. She's the newest member of the "crew" aboard, and as cats often will, she's already concluded that the ship belongs to her. Soubrette, clearly, is her feeder. The others, by process of logical elimination, are her toys and – at her whim – her scratching posts. The crew loves Mira; she's playful and energetic, and got her sea-legs after just a few days.

Mira does, however, have a problem that may soon mature into crisis.

Every time Mira begins a really *satisfying* yawn and stretch, Soubrette becomes so charmed by it that she tickles the cat in playful delight, telling her how cute a kitty she is. This interrupts the stretch, leaving Mira a little edgier each time. She's tried wandering out on deck, but the sailors do exactly the same thing.

She tried hiding in the damp shadows of the hold, but Crux thinks a stretching kitten is cute, too! The rats there snicker and taunt her in her torment.

The captain was Mira's last hope. So grim, that captain. So serious. So studious, so dignified. Mira slipped into his private cabin one evening, and let go a really big yawn.

Not only did the captain tickle ... not only did he *coo* and praise her cuteness ... but he made some very undignified googly expressions in the process. A captain's private space, it seems, is another world.

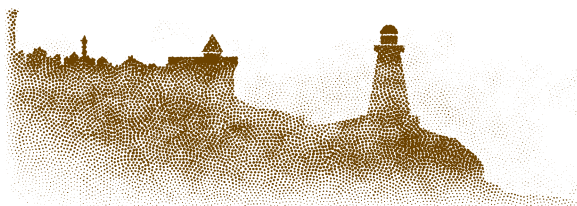
Mira twitches now, jittery. Her left eye darts this way and that, seeking private corners in vain. She hasn't enjoyed a satisfactory stretch in 26 days.

Just last night, one of the rats approached her, grinning knowingly, rubbing claws greedily. The rats have an offer: they'll act as defensive lookouts in exchange for "a little favor, later on." Mira is considering it.

face clouds of choking and blinding dust and flying furniture. There is a strong mutual respect between most maids and the more magical of the Cookery Gods of Dreed, and possibly even some exchange of trade secrets for mutual benefit. Some overlap is inevitable, since nearly a dozen of King Timberfell's most favored Food Gods are, or have been, trained as magic maids.

Many maids have distinguished themselves in action. Most of the eastern duchies of Temphis that fell to Koval's invasion lost *land* to the Koval forces, but *none* of them lost the private villas housing the noble children. The Koval armies were held at the door or left decorating the garden, unable to challenge the defending maids.

The Temphis notion of shipboard maids hasn't gained much favor in other lands. A few Sindran ships employ maids, and a few from Winnow and Boru, but the old notion that women are bad luck aboard a ship (except as passengers, or company at port) prevents the notion from becoming a fad. Temphis, a land priding itself on thumbing its collective nose at curses and things like them, celebrates the shipboard maids as both an emblem of national character and a powerful factor in the safety of her fleets. Most Temphis sailors are – like all sailors – still superstitious to the point of comic exaggeration, but the Temphisians have decided that, even if women *are* bad luck aboard a ship, women who can wield mighty magics and serve up clean, warm socks on chilly mornings are *more* than enough to make up for it.



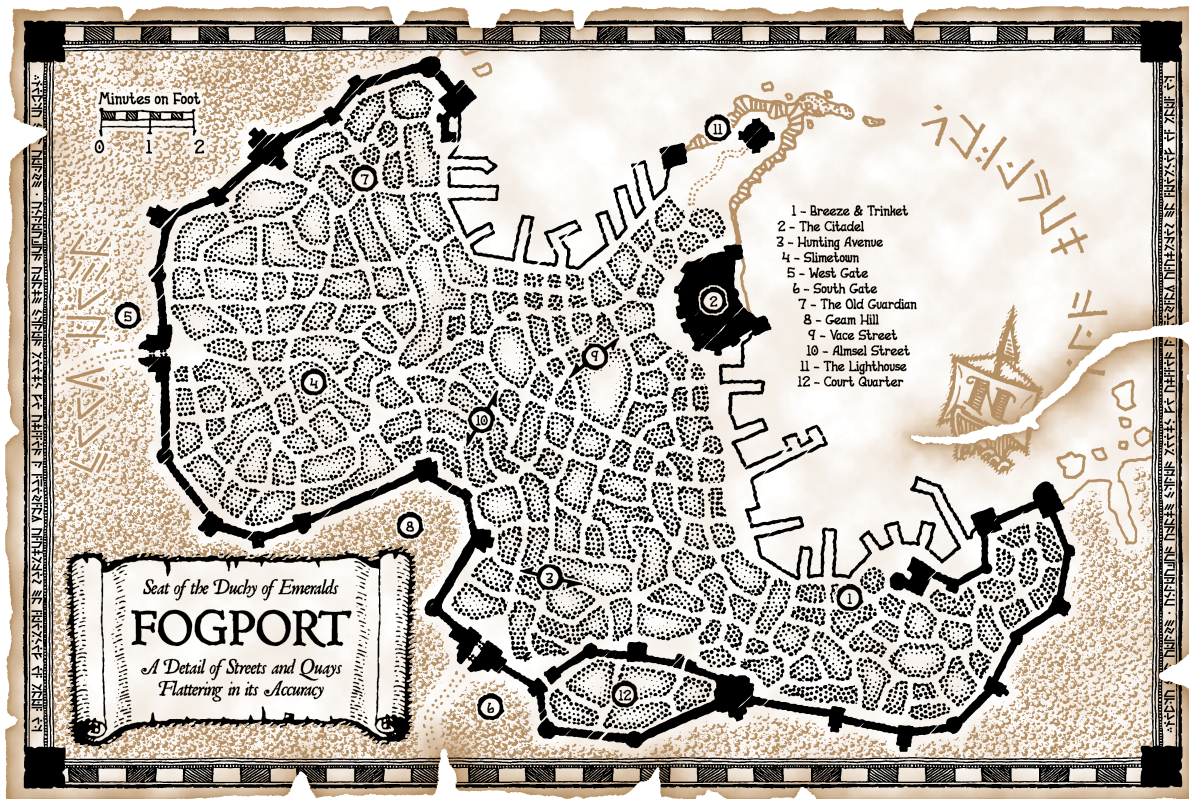
Fogport

For years, now, Captain Buckler has called Fogport his home, and it's the home anchorage, too, of *Poison Pepper*. When *Pepper* lands at home, Captain and crew spend their days drinking and singing at the tavern of The Breeze and Trinket.

Fogport is the oldest city in Temphis, and the seat of the wealthiest Duke – Judac, the Duke of Emeralds. While Judac's dinner-party claim that Fogport is the original landing site of the Dreed colonists isn't true (and he knows it), it's near enough – they landed just a few leagues north along the coast, and Fogport was among the first handful of settlements.

Fogport is Temphis' second-largest city, with a population just over 24 thousand. It's wealthy, serving as the largest emerald marketplace outside Dreed, and as a center of international diplomacy since the days of the first emerald treaties. Duke Judac plays up his wealth heartily, and invites foreign knights from every kingdom he knows of, to share battle-tales and learn news. The Duchess is social, too, seeking the company of scholars, wizards and artists. She used a large chunk of her husband's wealth building the Judac Collection, a library of several thousand tomes and scrolls, housed in a vast, palatial structure on Hunting Avenue.

Quirks of geography prevent Fogport from growing much larger than it is now. This region features scores of sudden changes in elevation – huge vertical slopes of naked stone with tiny clumps of trees and vegetation hanging on for dear life. Many believe they can make out writing on some of the cliff faces – enormous runes each taller than a large Troll. Most of the rivers that find the sea, here, do so through the mouth of a steep gorge. Fogport rests in abrupt and difficult terrain, where roads snake inconveniently through narrow valleys and any river-traffic to the city must make an overland journey of several



leagues. There's a constant struggle there between the Duke's order of guardian rangers and gangs of bandits taking advantage of the wealth of the city's visitors ... and of the many excellent ambush locations along the roads. Fogport is a mighty city, but any future growth will be upwards toward the sky or downwards into the rock. A few of the city's many points of interest (see map):

Slimetown: Fogport has the largest of only three urban Slime colonies in Temphis, occupying five blocks near the east quayside. It's a polychrome community, but Purples dominate. Most of the Slimes are craftsmen, and there are also several Slime restaurants, so out-of-town visitors visit the Slimetown to shop, dine, and wonder how such excellent fare can be made without hands. Away from the streets, there's a small temple where several Savant Slimes offer their services in exchange for coin or favors.

The Old Guardian: Four massive brass golems stand guard at the city's gates (two each at the west and south entrances), but this one is a relic from the early days of the city ... Years of weather, and of the strange magics seeping constantly from the enchanted hills, have addled it beyond value as a defender of the town. Rather than scrapping it, a wily Duke built a pit for it, and surrounded it with tiers of benches. Some warriors sail to Fogport just to fight the Old Guardian, which is powerful enough to take on ten strong men as a roughly even match. The Old Guardian fights drunkenly, slowly – even a little sadly – but it doesn't kill. Those who pin it to the ground are showered with coins and adulation from the onlooking crowds, which gather day and night.

The Fog Parade: Fog isn't more common in Fogport than in any port on the north shores of Temphis, but the fog *lingers* more ... It clusters between the steep hills, sheltered from both the sun and the sea breezes. When the fog is thick enough, the Fog Parade appears ... a stream of hundreds of ghosts and specters, barely visible as flickering images against the mist. The Fog Parade begins at the top of Geam Hill, floating down into the city right through the Geam Wall and along Vace and Almsel Streets. The ghosts march somberly to the lighthouse, and then plummet to the rocks, where they vanish into the sea. Most of the ghosts are of mariners lost on the rocks, but why they emerge from Geam Hill, in particular, is a mystery. Over the protests of his advisors, Duke Judac sent some wizards to poke around there, and they discovered some secret catacombs. The Duke is considering opening the hill to brave explorers, but first he wants to send in a more private expedition to feel out how much wealth might be had from it.

The Court Quarter: While many visiting nobles live at court in the citadel, many more take houses here in the Court Quarter, an all-gentry neighborhood kept within the walls that formerly housed Fogport's first citadel. Only those displaying wealth (dressed in finery, traveling with a retinue, etc) may enter this district of the city. The streets immediately beyond it house the wealthiest of the merchant class, along with enough expensive boutiques, theaters, eateries and brothels to keep everyone entertained.

The Game of Mizzenjib

THIS IS A drinking game, known by every sailor from the crustiest salt to his freshest cabin boy.

Since the game is verbal (verbal plus a lot of rum) it's easy to include in an RPG session, if you're old enough to drink or willing to simulate drinking with a die-roll or two ...

To understand the game of Mizzenjib, it's important, first, to understand that the complexities of nautical terminology – that body of jargon that so perplexes landlubbers – are playful nonsense coined to have a laugh at the expense of non-mariners. All those “words” *come from this game*, credited by nautical tradition to Captain “Barley John” Crode, the terror of the West-Sindran coast from approximately 740 to 755 (when he either died or retired to enjoy his treasure).

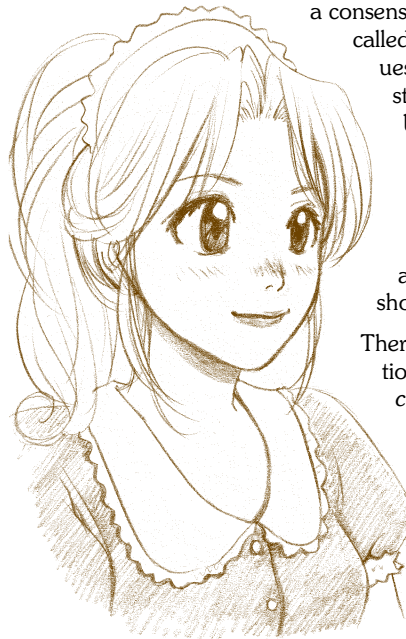
To begin the game, a sailor raises a jack, takes a drink, and shouts, “*Cut athwart the mizzenjib!*” This phrase constitutes a

challenge to every sailor present. Every one must shout, in turn, out a new order in nautical style: “Haul the bellstay!” perhaps, or “Swab the boomline!”

Variety is key. Should any sailor shout an order the *same* as one already shouted (or too *similar* to a recent one), all the other sailors will judge it a foul by shouting “Arrr!” in unison. If not every sailor shouts “Arrr!” then there isn't a consensus and so, there is no foul. A sailor justly called foul must take a drink. The game continues until only one sailor is sober enough to stand or (just as frequently) until a fight breaks out. Long silence, too, is foul.

(Note that the sailor who initiates the game takes a drink before the contest even begins. That tradition boils down to the belief that if you dare challenge a man to a game of Mizzenjib, you first show how *certain* you are to win.)

There's an irony to the Mizzenjib tradition. Some of these terms have taken on *concrete meaning* as sailors use them to provide a chuckle on long days at sea. So, directional terms like fore, aft, starboard and port – once meaningless color to spruce up the drinking game – have become real. Similarly, stays, masts, booms and poop decks are now *genuine* nautical things. Given another 600 years, nautical terminology could become as complicated as it seems ... For now, though, it's still (mostly) good-hearted mariner's humor.



Soubrette Gets Topsy Easily, But Her Winning Record Speaks For Itself

A Mizzenjib Cheat-Sheet

The perfect Mizzenjib order consists of a nautical-sounding verb, the word “the,” and a nautical-sounding noun assembled from meaningless fragments. Optionally, insert a direction in the middle of the phrase (“Hoist the aft catline!” “Splice the starboard jollywhip!”) or at the end of it (“Hold the quarterbale astern!”)

The Game Master may use this list to keep a proper Game Master's advantage when playing NPC sailors in a game of Mizzenjib. Use the terms as they are, or combine two or more fragments to make more complex terms. Spice as desired with squinting, scowling, and breath stinking of rum.

Back	Brace	Down	Gun	Jettison	Mizzen	Secure	Strut
Bail	Bring	Draw	Haul	Jib	Parcel	Spike	Swab
Bale	About	Ease	Head	Join	Pitch	Splice	Top
Batten	Bunt	Fair	Heave	Jolly	Quarter	Spring	Trim
Down	Cap	Flog	Heel	Jump	Roll Out	Sprit	Turn
Beam	Cats	Fore	Hitch	Land	Run	Staff	Unlay
Bell	Chafe	Frame	Hoist	Line	Sail	Stan	Whip
Bilge	Cross	Furl	Hold	Mar	Scuttle	Stoke	Yard
Board	Cut	Ground	Jack	Mast	Seam	Stow	Yaw
Boom	Athwart						