

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

THE SEA QUEEN ESCAPES!

#75: A LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE
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Plus: The Sunken Kingdom of Ru!

HANDOUT A



A LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE

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THE SEA QUEEN ESCAPES!



INTRODUCTION



The Sea Queen Escapes is designed for six 3rd-level characters. If the judge is running this adventure for larger or more experienced parties, he should increase the number and strength of the encounters to ensure a proper challenge for the group. This adventure can be set in any rocky coastal region. It is helpful for the PCs to have access to an ocean-going ship, and the judge should take the necessary measures to provide one for sale or for hire in order to complete the final stages of the adventure.

BACKGROUND



A half century ago, the wizard Shadankin dedicated his life to plumbing the secrets of the ocean depths. Through magical means and archaic artifacts, he made regular sojourns beneath the waves. Unlike many sorcerers, Shadankin sought not to conquer and enslave but to learn from and befriend the ocean's denizens. He counted amongst his allies both schools of simple fish and potentates of aquatic kingdoms. Shadankin was always welcome under the sea.

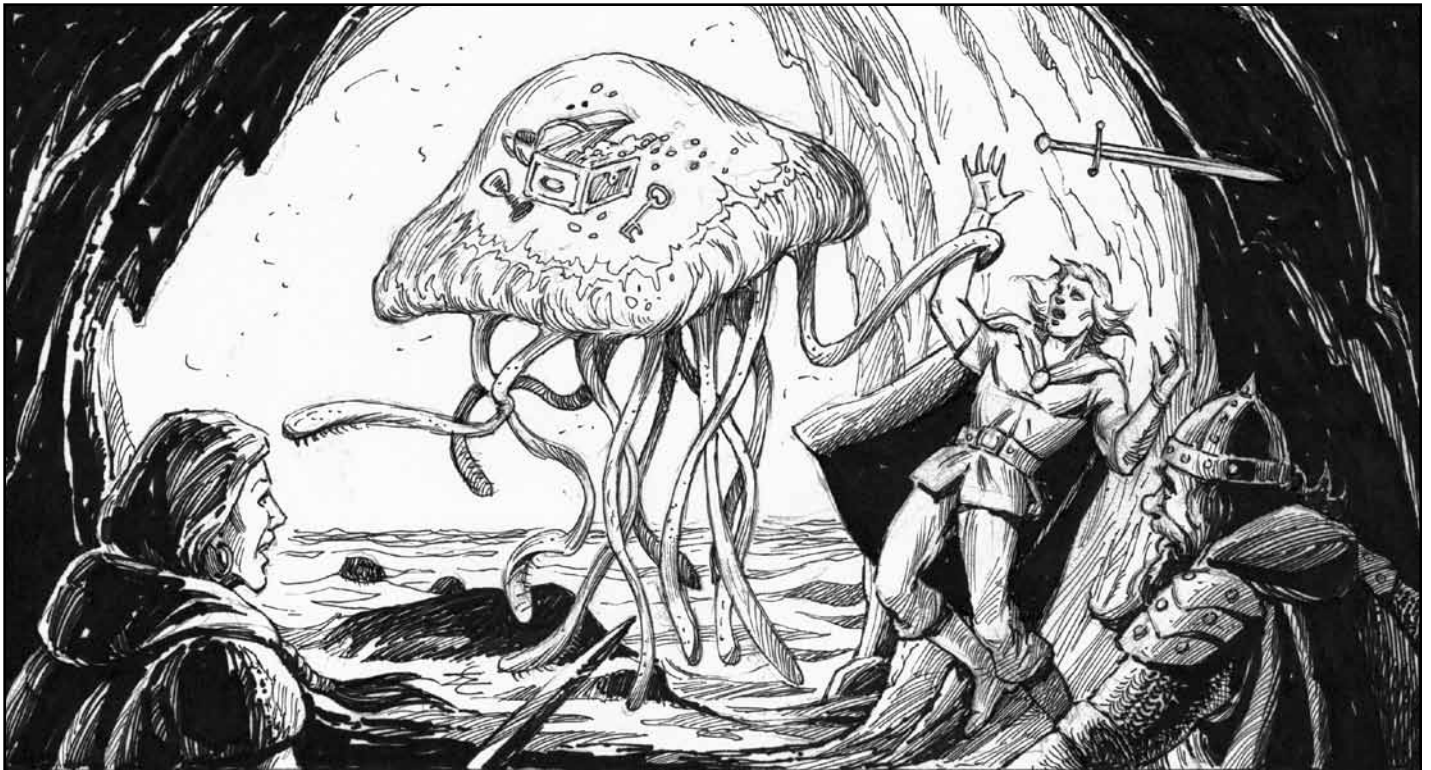
One of his dearest friends was Queen Cealheewhalool, the Imperatrix of Waves and ruler of the Sunken Kingdom of Ru. The Rueans are descendants of an ancient race who turned to the magic of watery patrons to live under the sea when their lands were claimed by the ocean waves. Shadankin was a regular guest of the Rueans and held in much regard.

Unbeknownst to all, Queen Cealheewhalool dabbled in arts that were old and forbidden long before her kingdom sank. In doing so, she mistakenly contacted forces best avoided, and through her they found a way back into a world that

had forgotten them. They transformed the Imperatrix into their agent, warping her mind and body, much to the horror of her subjects, who frantically summoned Shadankin to assist them.

Shadankin rushed to the Sunken Kingdom and found the queen in the midst of massacring her people. Despite this atrocity, Shadankin could not bring himself to destroy his friend and consort, and used his magic to bind her instead. He hoped he might divine a method to free her from the grasp of evil. He carried Queen Cealheewhalool to the lands above the waves and placed her within a prison that harnessed the forces of earth to keep her bound until she might be emancipated from the fiendish forces that gripped her soul. With the queen safely ensconced in this gaol, Shadankin hid the key inside his most secret vault, one located within the shell of an ancient and massive sea turtle he had befriended. With the Imperatrix contained, Shadankin dedicated himself to restoring the queen's mind and soul. Unfortunately, he died in far-off lands whilst searching for his friend's salvation.

Since that time, Queen Cealheewhalool has remained trapped within the Earth Prison, abandoned by the Rueans and her demonic patrons. Recently, earthquakes have damaged her prison, causing its protective magics to weaken. Through a crack in the prison's wards, the queen reaches out to touch the minds of those who possess items once dear to her. She plays the part of an innocent and beautiful princess stolen by a malignant sorcerer and held against her will. Desperate for rescue, she promises her would-be heroes riches, strange magic, or even a throne once she is restored to her rightful position as potentate. Freedom is her only goal, however, and she intends to honor none of her promises once released...



BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE



The events of *The Sea Queen Escapes* begin with the PCs finding a strange token amongst the riches of a defeated enemy. The token is a small, 4-inch-tall scrimshaw idol depicting a lithe female form dressed in a clinging gown woven from kelp. The woman is humanoid in appearance and quite beautiful. Atop her head is a slim crown adorned with coral and pearls. The only abnormalities to her slender form are a slight dusting of sparkling scales around her eyes and delicate webbing between her fingers.

The token can be found anywhere the judge desires: in a bandit's treasure trove, on the body of a slain enemy, or among the bets on a gaming table. How it is introduced is incidental, but it must end up in the PCs' possession, optimally in the hands of an idealistic, greedy, or power-hungry character.

The first night the token is in the PCs' possession, they all dream of the woman depicted in the carving. She appears forlorn yet beautiful, residing inside a sphere of water held aloft by unseen means in a dim, stony chamber. Weakly, she cries out, "Trapped. Please, can you hear me? The wizard Shadankin holds me prisoner. I can't see you, but I sense you. Aid me. Please!"

Dreams of this nature continue each night even if the party discards the token (Cealheewhalool can keep sending visions to them now that they've touched it). In each dream, the woman becomes weaker and more desperate. She claims to be a princess stolen from the "Sea People" and that her father would pay her rescuers a fortune in pearls, sunken gold, and other material wealth if they rescue her. She describes Shadankin as a horrible mage who imprisoned her when she rejected his advances. The Imperatrix informs the party that she is contained in a magical prison located on a small speck of an island known as the Lone Ait, but that Shadankin has hidden the key to her prison in a secret vault. Cealheewhalool begs the PCs to find the means to free her swiftly, as her time is running out.

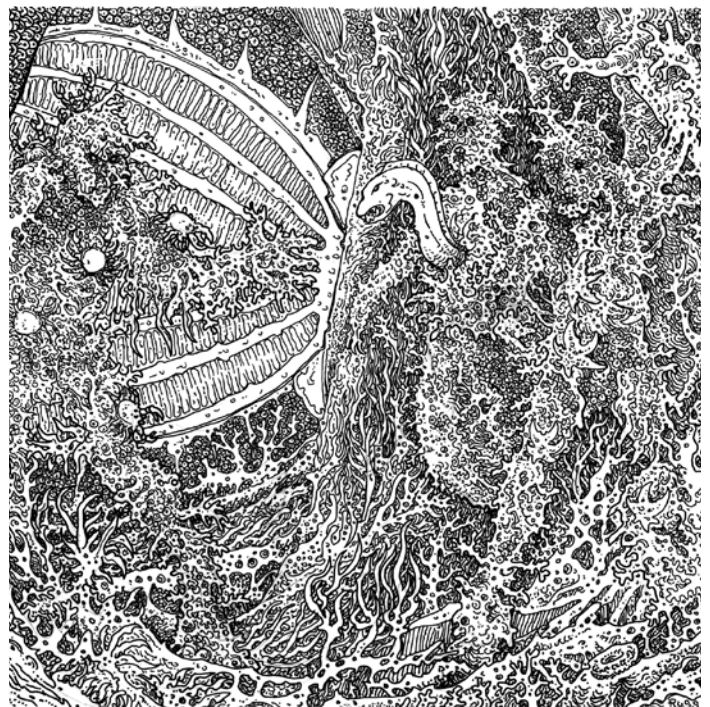
Learning of Shadankin is not difficult. Asking around any seaport town reveals he was a strange sorcerer who engaged in unknown alliances with "things under the sea," but nobody has heard from him in years. Local legends paint him, like most wizards, as an unseemly type undoubtedly up to evil. In life, Shadankin had little use for surface-worlders, and his reclusiveness did not help his reputation in death. Locals don't know what happened to him — accounts vary from teller to teller — but they point the party to his old sanctum just down the coast. Shunned by sensible folks, it stands close to the shore, housed within a pinnacle of stone that rises from the sea beyond the breakers. What they don't know is that the sanctum is now home to a number of lampreymen who utilize the place as a safe haven for their eggs.

If the party asks about Lone Ait, a few grizzled sea dogs confirm it is a tiny, forlorn island located in a barren stretch

of ocean several days sailing from the coast. Should the party part with sufficient coin or agree to share any treasure recovered, they can recruit a ship or navigator to take them to the Ait when needed. The judge can elaborate on the process of recruiting a navigator or hiring a ship and crew as he desires.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Area	Type	Encounter
1-2	T/C	Floating shells 0-4 lampreymen harpooners
1-3	C	4-6 lampreymen guards
1-4	C	3-5 lampreymen nursery guards
1-6	C	Giant hammerhead shark Giant clam "chest"
2-3	C	Killer sea anemone
2-4	C	3 dead guardians Sea change curse
2-5	T	Jellyfish chest
3	T	Flammable petroleum with asphalt throughout
3-1	T	Open pit
3-3	C	1 living tar
3-4	T/C	Teetering debris, adamantor lizard
3-6	T	Elemental door trap
3-7	C	Queen Cealheewhalool 2 handmaidens



SHADANKIN'S SANCTUM



In order to free the imprisoned Sea Queen, the party must first find the key to the Imperatrix's prison, and Shadankin's sanctum is their only clue as to where the key might be found. Reaching the sanctum is easily accomplished. An old, disused trail runs along the rocky headlands for several miles before terminating at a promontory that juts out over the sea. A natural stone bridge runs from the lip of the 80-foot-tall cliff to the wave-battered pinnacle of rock standing 100 feet offshore. The droppings of sea-birds are the only spots of color on the drab stone. A dropping-encrusted stone door lends entry to the sanctum. It grinds open when pushed.

Area 1-1—Entry Cave: *Beyond the encrusted portals lies a space shaped by both man and nature. Portions of the wet, craggy walls are decorated with mosaic images formed from sea shells and small stones. These designs depict a human dressed in sea-green robes amid a menagerie of sea life. The air here is moist and bears the saline scent of the open sea.*

Show the players **Handout A**. The floor of the cave is damp with small puddles of sea water scattered about. The mosaics show the human figure (Shadankin) engaged in various interactions with sea creatures both fair and foul: casting spells upon them, feeding them, and calling them up from the deep. Many of the creatures are of abnormal size. In one mosaic, he is shown summoning a titanic turtle that dwarfs him and the pearlescent horn he holds in his hands. From his belt hang a number of large, intricate keys. The mosaics meet at the far end of the room where they depict a large shark with open mouth. The entrance to the passageway down to area 1-2 is through the shark's maw.

A closer examination of the mosaics reveals that mixed in among the shells and pebbles are five pearls worth 50 gp each. Anyone specifically scanning the floor discovers an odd, somewhat humanoid footprint on one of the few dry sections of stone. This is the track of a lampreyman from area 1-3.

Area 1-2—Shell Game: *The stairs end abruptly at the edge of a gloomy chasm. The area is illuminated by a wan, shimmering blue-green light that originates from no discernable source. The chasm plummets 30 feet to a lagoon of seawater. At the far end of the chasm, the mouth of another passage awaits. Hanging in the air before you and leading to that egress in a zigzag route are ten turtle shells of large size. There is no obvious support holding the shells aloft and they appear slick with ocean spray.*

The ceiling to this cavern is 30 feet above the level of the entrance ledge and the walls are of rough stone. A thief attempting to climb the damp walls must make a DC 12 climb check.

Each of the turtle shells is that of the green sea turtle. They are held aloft by ancient and decaying levitation magic. Each measures 4 feet long by 2 feet wide and can support 400 pounds before the levitation fails, dropping the shell and

anyone upon it into the lagoon below. These rules apply:

- The shells are 10 feet apart and leaping from shell to shell requires a DC 10 Strength check (modified by armor).
- PCs who fail the Strength check are allowed either a DC 12 Reflex check or Luck check (player's choice) to grab the edge of the shell before plummeting into the chasm's depths.
- If hanging from a shell, a DC 12 Strength check is required the following round to clamber up onto it; failure indicates the character remains hanging from the shell.
- A hanging character can only hold on for as many rounds as his Stamina score before falling.
- Should a dangling PC suffer a wound, he must immediately make a Stamina check against a DC equal to the number of points of damage sustained or fall.
- PCs who suffer damage while standing atop a shell must make an Agility check with a DC equal to the damage taken to avoid falling.
- Falling into the pool below inflicts 2d6 points of falling damage (less than normal due to the water cushioning the fall).
- A PC perched upon a shell loses any positive modifiers to AC from Agility.

Along both walls of the chasm are two ledges leading to areas 1-3 and 1-4. Due to the folds in the rock and the dim illumination here, a DC 12 Intelligence check is required to notice them. If the PCs are loud while in this area or spend a long time dickering over how to proceed across the chasm, the lampreyman in those areas detect their presence. Two lampreyman move onto each ledge and hurl harpoons at the party as they attempt to cross. They concentrate their attacks on either PCs dangling from the shells or whoever seems to be making the fastest progress across the stepping stones. The lampreyman enjoy the benefits of cover due to the dim illumination and rocky folds surrounding their perches. Each ledge has a cache of twenty harpoons. If the lampreyman suffer more than 50% casualties, they retreat back to their lairs and prepare to meet the PCs there.

Should the PCs levitate or otherwise descend the chasm to the lagoon below, the lampreyman continue to hurl harpoons at them as long as they can, then gather their brethren and race down to area 1-6 to continue their attack.

Lampreyman (4): Init -1; Atk bite +3 melee (1d6+3 plus blood drain) or harpoon +2 melee (1d6+2) or harpoon +2 missile fire (1d6+2, range 20/40/60); AC 15 (with cover); HD 2d8; hp 14, 12, 6, 4; MV 20' or swim 40'; Act 1d20; SP blood drain (automatic 1d3 dmg per round after bite); SV Fort +2, Ref -1, Will +2; AL C.

Lampreyman are slimy, pallid gray humanoids with horrific circular maws lined with vicious teeth. Their sinuous bodies are clumsy on land as they move about on flipper-like feet, but they cut swiftly through the water. They wear no clothing, carrying their few belongings in woven pouches and sacks strapped to their bodies with belts of kelp.

Area 1-3—Lampreymen lair: If the lampreymen are aware of the PCs' presence, the door to this area is barred (DC 12 Strength check to batter it down). Otherwise it is unlocked.

The smell of the sea is stronger here and the odor of dead fish mingles with the fresher scent of salt air. This cavern shows signs of being shaped by artificial means: the floor is flat and level, and an archway of fitted stone stands at the far side of the room. The walls and floor glisten with moisture and the bodies of large fish dangle from the ceiling, their sides bearing horrible round wounds. Moving among the dangling meat are sinuous, eel-like humanoids with large circular mouths rimmed with fearsome teeth. They move to attack!

There are up to six lampreymen here: six minus any casualties killed on the connecting ledge in area 1-2. They move into melee to assault intruders with their bite attack.

Slick floor: The floor of this room is slick with an accumulation of lampreymen slime and fish blood. Any PC moving or attacking must make a DC 5 Agility check before doing so or lose his action as he falls prone to the floor. The lampreymen themselves and motionless PCs need not make a check to remain standing.

Cover from dangling fish: The fish hang from rusting iron hooks and are mostly large game fish. They provide slight cover (+1 to AC) against missile fire attacks on opponents more than 10 feet away.

Treasure: The room contains only rotting nets and wooden crustacean traps. The lampreymen have treasure on their persons consisting in total of 200 sp, 40 gp, 3 pearls worth 25 gp each, and a small coral statuette depicting a whale with numerous lamprey eels affixed to it. It is worth 250 gp.

Lampreymen (6 or less): Init -1; Atk bite +3 melee (1d6+3 plus blood drain) or harpoon +2 melee (1d6+2) or harpoon +2 missile fire (1d6+2, range 20/40/60); AC 13; HD 2d8; hp 14, 12, 11, 9, 7, 7; MV 20' or swim 40'; Act 1d20; SP blood drain (automatic 1d3 dmg per round after bite); SV Fort +2, Ref -1, Will +2; AL C.

Area 1-4—Lampreymen Nursery: *This chamber was once a bath. The natural stone walls are decorated with mosaics depicting sea creatures cavorting in the ocean depths. Two large tiled basins are sunk into the floor. Once filled with scented waters, these tubs now hold seawater and large clumps of glistening yellow and black eggs the size of grapes. Several strange eel-human hybrids brandishing harpoons move to bar your entry into the room.*

There are up to five lampreymen here: five minus any casualties killed on the connecting ledge in area 1-2. They hurl their harpoons before closing to attack intruders with their bite attacks.

Lampreymen defend their young fearlessly and the ones here gain a +2 bonus to their attack and damage rolls (figured into the stats below) due to their ferocious devotion to the eggs in the tubs. Each lampreyman has on its person 1d10 gp and 1d4 small pearls worth 10 gp each.

Tubs: The tubs are 3 feet deep and filled with salt water. One thousand eggs are present in each basin. The eggs are



easily destroyed with weapons and will dry out in 12 + 1d12 hours if exposed to air. Although they have no special properties and can even be eaten (they have a rank, bitter taste), the eggs are desired by certain sages and the priests of bizarre aquatic cults. The eggs fetch 1 sp each if a buyer can be found before they dry out.

Lampreymen (5 or less): Init -1; Atk bite +5 melee (1d6+5 plus blood drain) or harpoon +2 melee (1d6+4) or harpoon +2 missile fire (1d6+4, range 20/40/60); AC 13; HD 2d8; hp 9, 8, 7, 6, 4; MV 20' or swim 40'; Act 1d20; SP blood drain (automatic 1d3 dmg per round after bite); SV Fort +2, Ref -1, Will +2; AL C.

Area 1-5—Former Sanctum: *This room served some arcane purpose in years past, but time has not been kind to this place. Old furniture stands forgotten here, spongy with rot. Scraps of former finery lie in piles slick with algae and decay. Small stones and shells crunch underfoot, obviously torn loose from the now-patchwork mosaics that cover the walls.*

Show the players **Handout B**. This chamber was Shadankin's living quarters and sanctum, but it is in a severe state of decrepitude. Aside from the barrels in the alcove



by the door to area 1-6, all the room's furniture, which includes the remains of a bed, chairs, chests, and a desk, is ruined and empty. The wall mosaics are largely destroyed, and the few that remain are missing entire sections. If carefully inspected, a particular image may catch the PCs' attention. This mosaic depicts Shadankin standing before a large open clam, his body surrounded by lines suggesting an odd covering or costume. Within the clam is a spiral horn made of mother-of-pearl and encrusted with gemstones.

In the alcove by the door leading to area 1-6 are four wooden barrels. One has been breached and contains a dried membrane, roughly the size and shape of a human adult. The other three barrels contain a clear, sweet-smelling liquid. Soaking in this fluid are three special suits crafted from the transparent, gelatinous bodies of giant jellyfish. These suits allow the wearer to function underwater for short durations without drowning.

Each jellyfish suit is worn by stepping into an opening at the top of the suit and then pulling it completely over the body. Once the wearer is inside the suit, the gelatinous material seals shut, creating an air pocket that allows the wearer to breathe for up to 60 rounds (10 minutes) underwater. Somewhat bulky, the suits reduce the wearer's Agility by 1 point when worn. The jellyfish suits provide no protection against attacks, but can be worn over armor. However, any damage suffered while wearing the suit is subtracted from the number of rounds of air remaining. These suits cannot be repaired by any means and must be returned to their barrels every 12 hours to avoid drying out. A dried-out suit is useless.

Area 1-6—Lagoon: *The passageway leads to an enormous cavern illuminated by a rippling, pale green light emitted by no apparent source. The corridor ends on a small platform crafted from worn stone. Stretching out before you is a large aqua blue lagoon of some depth. Piles of coral and stone litter the lagoon's sandy*

bottom, forming concentric rings around a giant clam the size of a wagon sitting in the depths near the pool's center. A set of narrow steps leads from the platform down into the water.

The lagoon is 20 feet deep and mostly contains harmless sea life. However, if the PCs observe the water's surface for more than a minute, they notice a large gray dorsal fin break the surface and cut across the lagoon like a knife before submerging. This is the lagoon's guardian: a hammerhead shark of considerable size.

Giant Hammerhead Shark: Init +4; Atk bite +6 melee (1d8+4); AC 15; HD 7d8; hp 30; MV swim 60'; Act 1d20; SP frenzy (when reduced to 14 hit points or when water is bloodied with collective loss of 30 hp from all submerged creatures: +2 attack and +1d20 action die); SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +2; AL N.

The shark is 20 feet long and its gray hide bears old wounds inflicted upon it by the lampreymen (it no longer bothers them as they come and go through the sea tunnel). If reduced to less than 50% of its hit points or if any creatures in the water (including itself) collectively suffer more than 30 points of damage, the water becomes bloodied and the shark frenzies. While frenzied, the hammerhead gains an additional d20 action die and a +2 bonus to its attack rolls.

If the party stays outside the water and launches ranged attacks at the shark, it submerges and remains on the far side of the lagoon. Should the PCs continue to pepper it with missiles and spells from afar, it retreats into the sea tunnel, remaining there until someone enters the lagoon. Once that occurs, the shark returns in 1d4 rounds, charging the closest PC and attacking.

Fighting underwater: It is likely that the PCs engage in combat with the shark and that the battle occurs with one or more PCs in the lagoon. The following rule modifications should be used when adjudicating that fight.

- Swimming PCs must make a DC 5 Strength check each round to stay afloat. This is modified by armor. A PC can choose to sink but risks drowning.
- Drowning: A submerged PC without an air source can hold his breath for as many rounds as his Stamina score. If he engages in actions while submerged, this duration is halved. Once this time limit expires, the PC begins drowning and must make a DC 10 Fortitude save each round or temporarily lose 1 point of Stamina. The save DC increases by 1 each round after the first. A drowning PC can take no actions and must be rescued by another character. When a PC's Stamina reaches 0, he dies. If the PC is rescued, the lost Stamina is restored immediately.
- The base speed of all swimming or submerged characters is halved. That rate is further modified by armor. The jellyfish suits from area 1-5 grant no special properties to movement.
- Swimming or submerged PCs suffer a -2 modifier to initiative checks.

THE VAULT OF THE TURTLE

- Targets swimming in the lagoon gain a +2 bonus to their AC against ranged attacks originating outside the water. Targets completely underwater add +4 to their AC against attacks from outside the lagoon.
- Attacks by submerged characters are less effective. Slashing and bludgeoning weapons such as axes, clubs, and two-handed swords inflict half-normal damage. Piercing weapons such as spears, daggers, and short swords do normal damage. Missile fire attacks are impossible underwater.
- Spells may not be cast while submerged unless the caster is wearing a jellyfish suit. Spells may be attempted while treading water, but the caster suffers a -2 penalty to his spell check when doing so.
- Certain spell effects are modified when cast in aquatic conditions.
 - Fire magics cast at targets at the surface of the lagoon inflict half damage, which may be negated with a successful save if allowed by the spell. Fire spells cast at completely submerged targets inflict one-quarter damage and are negated with a successful save if appropriate for the spell.
 - Rays and sprays are refracted by the water when directed at submerged targets; the target enjoys a +2 to its saving throw against these attacks.
 - Electrical attacks are especially unpredictable. Any electrical magic creates a cube of electrocution equal to its spell check in feet centered on the point the spell was created. Thus, a lightning bolt with a spell check of 20 would create a 20-foot cube at the point of origin. Damage is as normal, but any creature immersed in water suffers a -2 penalty to the saving throw. The judge has final authority on the exact effects and origin point of electrical spells.

The giant clam: At the center of the lagoon is a giant clam measuring 10 feet in diameter. This ancient bivalve holds the key the party seeks. The clam can be broken open with physical attacks (AC of 18 and 50 hit points). Reducing it to zero hit points cracks the shell enough to reach the horn. It may also be opened by a heroic demonstration of Strength. Lifting open the clam's jaw requires a DC 25 Strength check. Up to three PCs can combine their efforts, adding their Strength modifiers together to the die roll. Also, warriors and dwarves gain an additional Strength bonus equal to their level when making this check. Lastly, the clam can be "sprung" by a thief with an edged weapon. With a successful DC 15 disable trap check, the thief locates the correct muscle to sever on the clam's "hinge," causing its jaws to pop open.

Inside the clam is the *Horn of Tudines*, a coiled trumpet fashioned from mother-of-pearl and adorned with gemstones worth 2,500 gp. Around the *Horn's* bell is written in archaic script, "Sound me over waters deep to raise the treasures that you seek."



If the party paid attention to the mosaics in the Sanctum, they might have deduced the *Horn's* purpose. If not, Cealheewhalool tells them in dreams that the *Horn* summons Shadankin's sea vault and that he likely hid the key within it. Depending on their earlier efforts, the party might have a ship and crew awaiting them back in town. If not, now is the time to find one. Once they do, the PCs are ready to raise the Vault of the Turtle.

RAISING THE TURTLE



To call up the great turtle, Tudines, the heroes need to venture out onto the open sea. They must be at least one mile from shore for the *Horn* to work successfully; blowing the *Horn* before they reach the required distance results in a soft, breathless toot that produces no effect. Once they've reached the necessary distance from shore, blowing the *Horn* causes the following:

The horn produces a loud, primordial roar that conjures up thoughts of prehistoric beasts awakening from a long slumber. The waters around the boat ripple and reverberate, dancing in time with the vibrations of the horn's call. You grow breathless with sounding the pearlescent trumpet and pause to catch your breath. As you do so, you notice a change in the water beyond the bow of the ship.

More than a bowshot away, the green sea darkens as if in the grip of some aquatic night. The blackness spreads swiftly, growing to form a roughly oval patch that seems intent on engulfing the ship. Suddenly, the water's surface churns and an eruption of white spray bursts into the air like the exhalations of a titanic geyser. When the spume clears, you find yourself staring into the eyes of the largest sea turtle imaginable. The size of a small island, the creature floats placidly in the water some hundred yards away. His shelled back towers above you like a sea-born hill. At the apex of the turtle's carapace you glimpse a protrusion resembling a capstan or odd lever. Numerous indentations, footholds that form a steep staircase, lead up the turtle's shell to the mysterious protrusion above.

By the agreement struck between Tudines, the Great Turtle of the Eastern Seas, and Shadankin, he must answer the *Horn* no more than once every three years—so the party had best make the most of his appearance. Tudines does not hinder or threaten the party or their ship. He floats stoically at the surface, watching them with disinterest as they approach. He does not respond to attempts at conversation and if the party is stupid enough to attack a turtle the size of an island, he swallows the whole party with a mighty gulp (each PC can make a Luck check to avoid this fate) and then sinks never to be seen again.



INSIDE THE VAULT OF THE TURTLE



The protrusion at the shell's apex is a 4-foot-tall wheeled valve attached to a 3-foot-diameter metal grate set into the turtle's shell. The grate is perforated with several circular holes ranging from the size of a gold piece to that of a saucer. The chamber below is faintly visible through these gaps. The wheel valve is stubborn, but turns with some effort, allowing the grate to open like a hatch.

The rooms and corridors of this vault were magically formed within the keratin that makes up the turtle's shell, creating a small complex accessible only through the hatch in the turtle's back. The grating allows seawater and animal life to enter the vault and the entire area is normally flooded. Whenever Tudines surfaces, water exits through hidden drains, allowing visitors to access the vault.

The interior of the vault is dimly lit by patches of phosphorescent sea slimes that cling to the walls and ceiling. The floor is covered by a layer of silt, and harmless animal life is encountered frequently throughout. Fish flop about on the ground, crabs scuttle down hallways, and barnacles and seaweed cling to exposed surfaces. The entire complex smells of the deep. From time to time, tremors shake the vault as the turtle's body stirs below. Tudines remains at the surface for the duration of the party's visit, but they need not be aware of this, and the judge should use these tremors to keep the PCs from dawdling inside the dungeon.

Area 2-1—Entryway: This chamber is located 10 feet below the grated hatch and no access is provided. The PCs will either have to jump (DC 10 Fortitude save or suffer 1d6 damage) or use a rope to reach the floor.

Beneath the hatch is a round chamber with a domed ceiling rising 10 feet above the floor. The wet walls of this room are smooth and curved, and strange, colorful striations of green, blue, black, and yellow wind through the walls and the ceiling. The floor is covered by sandy silt and the odor of the sea is almost overpowering. Faintly, you hear the slow pounding of a massive heartbeat below your feet, reminding you that this is no simple vault carved from motionless stone.

This area is empty.

Area 2-2—Aquatic Lounge: A rusted gate and bars stand at the entrance to this room. The gate is ajar and rusted in place. A successful DC 13 Strength check is required to close the portal or bend the bars.

Weird furnishings protrude from the water like the wrecks of ancient ships. Formed from driftwood, coral, and other seaborne materials, these divans and chairs are strangely shaped as if to support the bodies of creatures more fish than man. The walls here are encrusted with barnacles, seaweed, and other aquatic flora. Hanging lifeless from the left-hand wall like the tapestry in a sea king's banquet hall is a massive manta ray skin.

The manta ray skin measures 30 feet from tip to tip and is preserved by long-forgotten means. It is affixed to the

wall on ten gold hooks (25 gp value each). The skin itself is worth 200 gp provided an appropriate buyer can be found.

Area 2-3—Sea Anemone, See An Enemy: *The aquatic fauna covering the walls is thicker here, making this room seem more like an undersea grotto than a man-made space. At the far end of the room are a half-dozen sea chests stacked in a pile and likewise encrusted with barnacles, seaweed, and other undersea growths. Most impressive of these clinging life forms is the tremendous orange-yellow sea anemone perched atop the heap like an alien tree growing on a hillock.*

The sea anemone is both dangerous and hungry. It attacks anyone who comes within reach of its 10-foot tentacles and throws its spines at prey that keeps their distance. Fleeing opponents discover it is not as slothful as it appears.

Giant Killer Sea Anemone: Init -1; Atk tentacles +4 melee (DC 10 Fort save or paralyzed for 1d6 hours), bite +3 melee (1d6), or spines +3 missile fire (1d5 + paralysis as tentacles); AC 12; HD 4d8; hp 22; MV 10'; Act 3d20; SP 10' reach; can charge up to 30' as an action; SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will +1; AL N.

A flower-like sea creature standing 10 feet tall, the giant killer sea anemone has a cylindrical body covered by long, thin spines and topped by an oral disc fringed with a ring of tendrils that can reach out to attack prey up to 10 feet away. It can also throw up to three spines each round at a range of up to 60 feet. At the center of the disc is a circular mouth lined with rasp-like teeth. Giant killer sea anemones are carnivorous and attack any creature smaller than themselves.

The sea anemone attempts to paralyze prey with its spines and tentacles before drawing them into its mouth. It can attack up to three targets per round with a mixture of both tendrils and spines. Immobile victims are automatically bitten; a normal attack roll is required for more lively opponents. The sea anemone can compress its spongy body and then surge forward at escaping enemies, allowing it to charge up to 30 feet in a round at the cost of one action die.

Chests: The chests are completely covered by sea growth and fall to pieces if handled roughly. Sand chokes the interior of each. Buried in the sand are the remains of old clothes, rusted personal implements, and decayed curiosities of no value. Mixed amongst these artifacts are also a total of 367 sp, 189 gp, a silver ring worth 25 gp, and an oddly intact rope bracelet. The bracelet is magical and grants the wearer a +2 bonus to any checks involving swimming, climbing, or resisting drowning. PCs with nautical backgrounds can make a DC 10 Intelligence check to recall that some sailors believe rope bracelets grant protection against drowning. Others can deduce the fact with a DC 15 Intelligence check.

Area 2-4—Dead Calm: *A long chamber extends before you, its walls caked with undersea growths of coral, barnacles, and kelp. On the far side of the chamber stands a massive door that shimmers with a lustrous, rainbow sheen. The door is fluted like a scallop's shell and some form of writing decorates its face.*

Covered by the growths on the walls are the ill-lucked bodies of three thieves who once tried to rob Shadankin. For their crime, the sorcerer cursed them and placed them

here to guard the vault. They've since become part of the vault's ecosystem and their bodies are now home to abnormal sea life. Because their water-logged bodies are covered with barnacles, starfish, and other natural life, a DC 13 Intelligence check is required to spot them amongst the other growths covering the chamber's walls. Otherwise the guardians gain surprise when they burst free from the walls to attack.

Each cursed thief is slightly different from its brethren and their game stats and special attacks are as follows. These guardians are the creations of a curse and are not considered un-dead for the purposes of turning, holy items, and spells that affect the living dead.

Cursed Thief #1 is a robust human fighter covered in kelp and sporting a "beard" of barnacles. He wields a rusted falchion in his one remaining hand. A moray eel makes its home in his hollow chest and bursts out to attack opponents on the second round of combat. The eel gains surprise, automatically attacking at the top of the initiative count on the second round.

Cursed Thief #1: Init +1; Atk falchion +1d5 melee (1d8+1d5); AC 14; HD 2d12; hp 13; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP mighty deed of arms (always attempts a trip/throw per table in DCC RPG rulebook), takes half damage from fire attacks, critical range 19-20, eel companion (see below); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +1; AL C.

Moray Eel (1): Init +6; Atk bite +4 melee (2d4); AC 14; HD 3d8; hp 13; MV -; SP none; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1; AL N.

Cursed Thief #2's body is covered by a mass of spider crabs that obey her commands to attack foes. Once the swarm scuttles off her body, she appears to be a thin, short woman dressed in tattered, exotic robes and wielding a wavy-edged dagger of foreign make.

Cursed Thief #2: Init +1; Atk dagger +1 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 2d8; hp 13; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP takes half damage from fire attacks; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C.

Crab Swarm (1): Init -4; Atk swarming claws +1 melee (1d3); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 8; MV 20'; Act special; SP attack all targets within a 10' x 10' space, half-damage from non-area attacks; SV Fort +1, Ref -2, Will -2; AL N.

Cursed Thief #3 is an elven male dressed in sodden leather armor. His arms, torso, and face are a mass of colorful coral. The coral is poisonous and anyone struck by his unarmed attack must make a Fortitude save to avoid the toxin's effects.

Cursed Thief #3: Init +1; Atk punch +2 melee (1d2 + poison); AC 12; HD 2d8; hp 14; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP takes half damage from fire attacks, poisonous coral (DC 12; 1d4 hit point damage if save is successful, 1d4+1 temporary Strength damage if save is failed); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C.

Door to area 2-5: The door leading to area 2-5 stands 10 feet tall and 8 feet wide and appears to be formed from the shell of a huge scallop. A pair of gold-plated, interlocked lobster

claws (20 gp value) holds the door closed. These handles turn easily to open the door.

Oddly fluid-looking script is written 8 feet up on the face of the door. The language is an obscure form of Serpentine used by aquatic races. Any character fluent in Serpentine, a thief who makes a successful DC 20 read languages check, or a spell-user with *read magic* deciphers the writing to be the following:

*A lesson beyond for those who dare
To abscond with treasures of the sea.
As tides change and currents swerve
And coral piles in oceans cold,
A sea change to thee who steal from me:
Newfound talents to replace thy old.*



This is a curse that takes effect when the door to area 2-5 is opened. Anyone inside the vault must make a DC 22 Will save or be affected by the Sea Change Curse. It is not considered a magical trap and thieves searching the door for such find nothing. It can be avoided via *dispel magic* (presumably before opening the door), or can be removed (once triggered) with magic such as *remove curse* or the solution provided at the end of this adventure (see below).

Area 2-5—The Treasury: *This chamber has been spared the ravages of the sea. Its walls and floor are free of aquatic fauna and sandy silt. Wet surfaces glisten throughout the room, drawing your eyes to the colorful striations of the walls and the floor tiled with enormous sea shells harvested from the ocean depths. Floating in the middle of the room is a large jellyfish. Within its transparent body, treasures sparkle.*

The jellyfish is an abnormally large box jellyfish and it is quite dead. However, magic keeps it preserved and floating, and its tentacles still pack their toxic punch. A flap on the underside of the jellyfish's umbrella allows access to the treasures within.

To access the flap, the party must either sever the stinging tentacles that surround it or perform some delicate maneuvering to avoid them. While severing the tendrils is simply done with a bladed weapon, the PC doing the cutting must make a successful DC 15 Reflex save to avoid droplets of venom that spatter about when the tentacles are cut. The poison must contact exposed skin to take effect and the PC gains a bonus to the roll equal to the AC bonus of any armor worn. (A PC in chainmail would add +5 to his Reflex save, for example). Failing the check indicates the PC has been splattered by the jellyfish poison (see DCC RPG, p. 446).

The party can also attempt to cut directly through the jellyfish's body to reach the trove. This requires an attack against AC 10 that does 5 or more points of damage in a single blow. Such an attack causes toxins to splatter the PC doing the cutting, who must make a DC 15 Reflex check to avoid being poisoned, modified by armor as above.

The jellyfish "chest" holds 5,000 cp, 3,500 sp, and 250 gp. It also contains a large ornate key of crimson steel. It unlocks the door to area 3-7.

THE SEA CHANGE CURSE



his curse randomly swaps the identities of its victims, trapping their personalities and intellects into the bodies of others. Once the curse is triggered, each player character who failed his save should hand his character sheet to the nearest player on his immediate left that also failed. The PC's mind is now trapped in the body of the character they were just handed.

From now until the curse is lifted, each player has the class and physical abilities (Strength, Agility, and Stamina) of his new body. His Intelligence, Personality, and Luck remain the same as the original character and should be recorded in pencil on the current character sheet. In most cases, the switch means that each character is now in possession of new talents and abilities formerly unknown to them. The cursed characters are instantaneously aware of which talents were lost and which were gained when the curse took effect. The judge should allow the PCs a few moments to consult the rules if they now have abilities they are unfamiliar with.



Most class abilities remain unchanged when used by a cursed PC, but special rules apply for spellcasting classes. First, any PC now in the body of a cleric, wizard, or elf uses his true Intelligence or Personality score when casting spells. Under normal conditions, this might mean the character loses spells if his Intelligence is unusually low. This condition should be ignored for the purposes of the curse. The PCs are facing enough problems without suddenly stripping them of useful magics. Likewise, in the case of clerics, the curse could result in a situation where a PC inhabits the body of a cleric who serves a deity of much different alignment than his own. While this would normally create a situation where the god might be unwilling to expend effort to assist a nonbeliever, the judge should gloss over this for the time being. So long as the mind inside the cleric's body doesn't actively engage in pursuits antithetical to the deity's concerns, the god will allow the cursed PC to cast spells. The PC's Intelligence or Personality score modifiers do apply to spell check rolls, however, and this might result in less-effective spells than normal.

A character's Luck remains unchanged by the curse and any Luck spent is lost as normal. PCs who find themselves in the body of a thief or halfling can spend Luck and regain it as appropriate for their classes, but can never raise their Luck score above the total they possessed at the time the curse took effect. A character's "lucky roll" remains the same regardless of whether it is applicable to his new body or not.

Should a character die while under the effects of the curse, the spirit of the PC occupying the body at the time of death also perishes, leaving the body's proper soul trapped in the body he is currently occupying. A DC 12 Intelligence check by a cleric, wizard, or elf deduces this fact. The PCs need to be very careful of one another's physical forms while the curse is in effect.

Once the PCs have had a chance to get acquainted with their new bodies (and hopefully engage in some entertaining roleplaying), continue with the adventure. Unfortunately, these new bodies take some getting used to and the first few times a character attempts to use an ability he does not normally possess, a negative modifier is applied to the roll. This modifier is -2 on the first occasion a new talent is used and -1 the second time an unfamiliar ability is employed. After that, the PC is familiar with his new form and suffers no more penalties.

If the party decides to seek remedy from the curse before continuing with their quest, the Sea Change Curse can be removed with a *remove curse* spell check of 32+ or through other means at the judge's discretion. A method to reverse the curse is provided at the end of this adventure should the PCs decide to press on.

In the unlikely event that every PC but one makes the Will save and avoids the curse, the Sea Change Curse manifests differently. Instead of swapping personalities, the sole victim is transformed into a 4-foot-tall, sentient fiddler crab with the following game stats:

Cursed Fiddler Crab Form: Init +0; Atk big claw +3 melee (1d8) or little claw +3 melee (1d4); AC 16; HD as level; hp as PC's normal; MV 20' or swim 40'; Act 2d20; SP Action dice must be split between both claws in combat; SV Fort as PC's normal, Ref as PC's normal, Will as PC's normal; AL as PC's normal.

The cursed PC in fiddler crab form can speak and read any language he or she knows, but loses all class abilities for the duration of the curse. This includes spellcasting, thief abilities, Luck benefits of thieves and halflings, Mighty Deeds of Arms, etc. The PC is, after all, cursed. The curse lasts until removed as above. If the only PC affected by the Sea Change Curse is the party wizard or cleric, it is suggested that the PCs exercise extreme caution in the encounters ahead or that the judge (if kindhearted) introduces a short side quest to allow removal of the curse before finishing the adventure.



HUGH SUCCESSFULLY PERFORMS A MIGHTY DEED!

PK

THE EARTH PRISON

INSIDE THE PRISON



With the key recovered, the party can now embark for the Lone Ait and the Earth Prison. The journey is a three-day trip and the judge can embellish the voyage with random encounters or other events if he so wishes. On the second night of the journey, Queen Cealheewhalool contacts the party one final time in their dreams. She senses their approach and feigns even greater distress and weakness, hoping to both speed her freedom and to divert any suspicions the heroes may have regarding their mysterious besecher. On the third day, assuming no other encounters are planned, the party's ship arrives at Lone Ait.

The journey to Lone Ait has taken you to a forlorn expanse of sea far from any other islands, trade ships, or even solitary fishermen plying the waters. After three days of favorable winds, you awake one morning to see a tiny speck of land ahead. The air grows calm as you approach, forcing you to ship the oars and row the final leg of your journey.

An hour of hard rowing brings Lone Ait into clear view. The islet is nothing more than a tiny spur of bare rock protruding from the ocean's depths. A trapezoidal building, its walls cracked but standing, is the only visible landmark on the island.

The water surrounding the Lone Ait is oddly still and black. The breakers that lap the islet's shores are slow, ponderous things that glisten with an iridescent sheen. A rich, chemical odor, like warm pitch, hangs in the air and you notice several spots of white dotting the black tide. A closer look reveals these to be the dead bodies of sea birds. With that realization, it becomes clear: the Lone Ait sits in the middle of a great patch of tarry water! A body of primordial asphalt burbles to the surface here to form an eternal oil slick around the islet, trapping birds and discouraging visitors to this barren hunk of rock.

Despite the presence of the oil slick, landing on the Lone Ait is not a difficult chore, but the PCs are likely to get dirty in the process. The rocky strand surrounding the Ait is covered in watery tar and bodies of gulls, terns, and other sea birds in various states of decay.

The Ait itself is small, measuring approximately 300 feet in diameter. Several small rivulets of watery tar run from the center of the island to the beach, carrying natural asphalt to the open waters. The Earth Prison sits at the center of the island, protruding from a shallow asphalt lake.

The prison is an isosceles trapezoid standing 40 feet tall and 200 feet square. Entry is by a single doorway in the western side. The prison is constructed of the natural stone of the Ait, but its once smooth walls are now cracked and shifted by the same earthquakes that caused the asphalt to rise from the ground. The doorway is slightly ajar, popped open and knocked askew by the island's shifting.



Most areas in the prison possess 15-foot-high ceilings, with the exception of area 3-3 and 3-6 which have 20-foot ceilings. The interior of the prison is slowly being filled by the asphalt lake rising from beneath it. Most of the rooms contain a 2-foot-deep mixture of water and tar that slows movement and presents a hazard for torch-carrying explorers. The ratio of water/tar varies from place to place: in some areas it is a watery mixture that merely clings to bodies and obscures the floor; in other chambers, it actively resists movement. Each area has a chance of catching fire if the tarry waters within are touched by open flame (including torches and fiery magic). The flames burn for 1d6 rounds and do 1d6 points of damage to any hero caught within them. Burning characters who escape the flaming waters can douse the fires by making a DC 10 Reflex save.

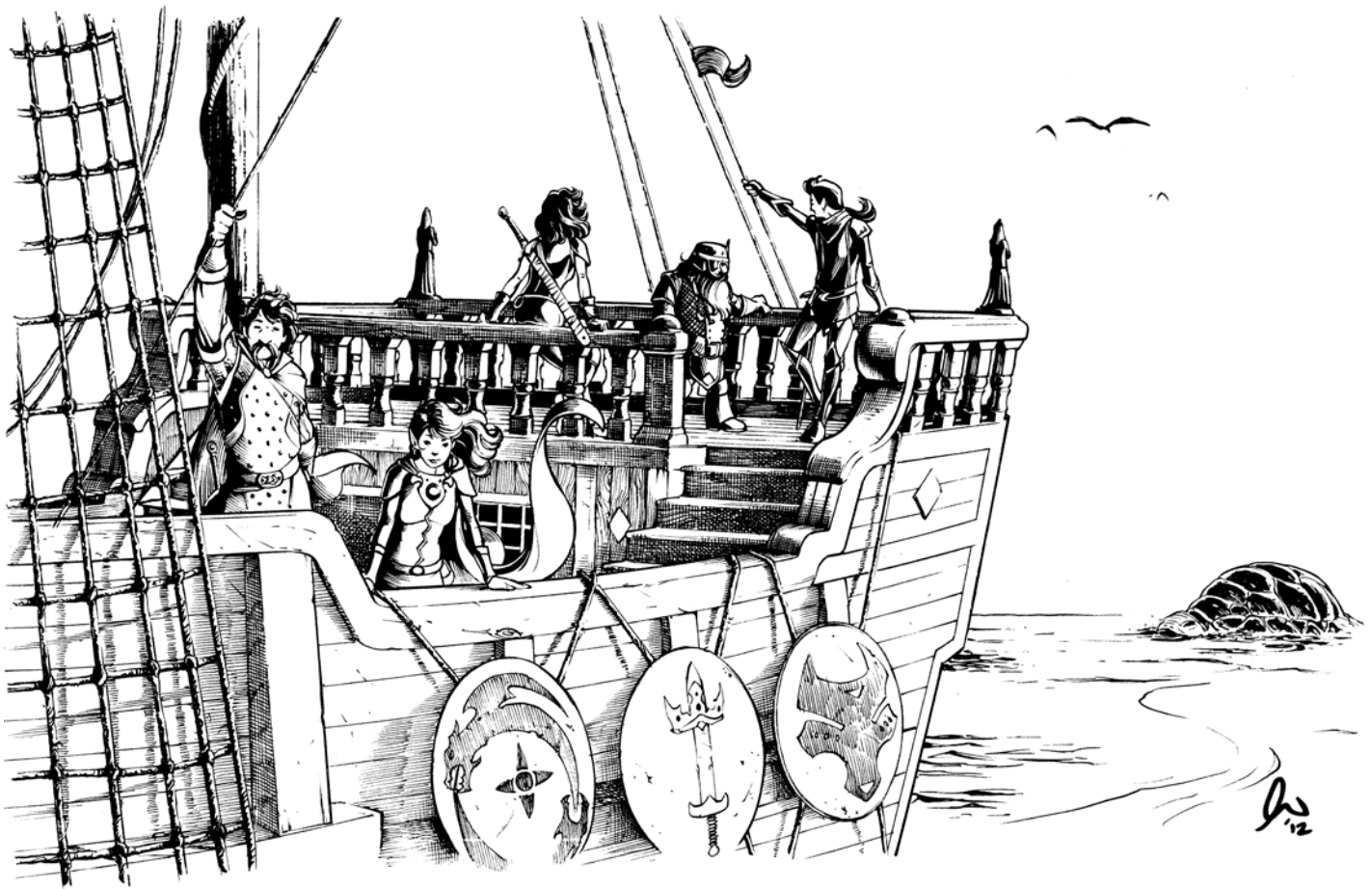
The walls of the Earth Prison are inscribed with many glyphs and sigils that repeat over and over. A wizard or elf making a successful DC 12 Intelligence check recognizes them as arcane symbols connected with the element of earth. A *detect magic* spell reveals them to be enchanted, but many of the symbols' magical auras flicker and spark as if failing, a sign that the geological forces that cracked the prison inflicted mystical damage as well. It is this failure that allowed Queen Cealheewhalool to communicate with the PC owning her token.

Area 3-1—Entry Room: *The floor here is submerged beneath a body of black water that shines evilly in the light. The walls of the chamber are marred by countless occult symbols that overlap and repeat. The eastern wall of the chamber bears an intricate, interlocking geometric carving that is defaced by a jagged crack through its center. There are two exits in the eastern wall.*

The water/tar mix here is mostly water. It does not reduce movement and is unlikely to catch alight if exposed to flame (10% chance). If it does catch fire, a 5-foot-square patch burns for only 1d4 rounds before flickering out.

An area of the floor in the southern section of the room has collapsed, creating a 15-foot-deep pit beneath the oily waters. Any PC moving through that part of the room without probing the ground before him must make a DC 12 Reflex save or plunge into the watery pit. No damage is incurred, but characters in metal armor must make a DC 5 Strength check modified by armor each round to stay afloat. Failure indicates they sink and begin drowning (as per the rules on page 6 above).

The geometric carving is that of a square with an upside-down triangle superimposed over it. Symbols adorn the edges of each. In the middle of the carving is the word "Qeel-Ilsh-aaha." A crack runs through the center of the word. This is one of Cealheewhalool's secret names and the symbols surrounding it helped keep her imprisoned. Earthquakes damaged the symbol, weakening the bonds that hold her. While the symbol is now powerless, the name is not. Should any PC address the queen by this name, she shrieks in anger and attacks the speaker. A wizard or elf



that speaks the queen's secret name when casting spells against her adds a +3 bonus to spell checks.

Area 3-2—Amber Room: *A pale, amber glow illuminates this chamber, reflecting off the thick, inky tar that covers the floor. A 6-foot-tall inverted triangle is etched into the western wall of the room. At each of its three points is a flattened oval of polished amber that shines with a golden light. There are exits to the north and east.*

The tar/water mixture is much thicker in this room and movement through the morass is reduced by 5 feet per round. If touched by open flame, the petroleum has an 85% of catching, spreading a carpet of fire that covers the entire room up to the northern turn in the northeastern passage and down to the northern turn in the eastern corridor.

The amber ovals are hemispherical and measure 6 inches by 4 inches. Each glows with captured sunlight and provides illumination up to 40 feet in diameter when in darkness. If brought into the open sun, the captured sunlight escapes from its amber prison, rendering the oval normal amber. Each amber oval is valued at 200 gp or at 300 gp if the captured sunlight remains within.

Area 3-3—Tarry Troubles: *Eight empty pedestals rise from the tarry water here like bare islands on a midnight sea. Whatever once stood upon these platforms has been toppled or removed. In the middle of the room is a towering statue depicting some ancient titan. From his outstretched hand hangs a long corroded chain with a rough-hewn stone orb dangling at its end. There are exits to the east and south.*

The pedestals are each 3 feet tall, protruding a foot above the water/tar mix. The mixture is thick and gooey, reducing movement by 10 feet per round. It has a 95% chance of igniting if exposed to open flame. If it catches, the whole room fills with fire.

The statue: The statue depicts one of the Earth Titans of legend who formed the world from gravel and mud before sending it hurtling into the night. A DC 10 Intelligence check identifies the subject.

The statue stands 20 feet tall (including its base) and the orb and chain measure 12 feet in length. The orb dangles just above the water/tar mixture.

Mighty Deeds of Arms in this room: The dangling sphere can be employed as a makeshift weapon, swung about the room like a tetherball. Moving the boulder-sized orb requires a successful Mighty Deed of Arms attack vs. the intended target, but if successful it does 2d12 points of damage and cannot become lodged in the living tar. It takes a round for the orb to swing back on its chain, limiting its use as a weapon to every other round.

The pedestals: Beneath the black liquid are six shattered pillars of stone, making the ground treacherous if moving quickly (DC 10 Agility check to avoid falling). The PCs can leap from pedestal to pedestal. Doing so requires a Strength check against a DC equal to 5 + the number of feet being leaped.

The living tar: This room has a lurking hazard. The wavering earth magic once contained in the broken pillars

has merged with the natural asphalt to create a creature of living tar. Still driven by the urge to guard the Imperatrix and prevent her rescue, the living tar attacks intruders who enter this area. It rises from the black water to attack three rounds after the PCs enter.

Living Tar: Init +3; Atk fists +4 melee (1d6+3, plus 1d4 if aflame, plus DC 12 Ref save to avoid being stuck); AC 15; HD 8d8; hp 43; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP immune to fire, sticky (DC 10 Str check to pull weapon free after a successful attack, DC 12 Ref save to avoid being stuck after fist strike), quick step (reform 15' away as full round), vulnerable to cold (-10 initiative, MV reduced to 10', loses quick step); SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.

The living tar is an 8-foot-tall, vaguely humanoid creature composed of thick natural asphalt. It attacks with bludgeoning fists. Any weapon striking the living tar becomes lodged in its sticky body, requiring a DC 10 Strength check to pull free. Creatures struck by the living tar must make a DC 12 Reflex save to avoid the same fate. Although slow, living tar can collapse and reform almost immediately up to 15 feet away in any area containing a substantial quantity of tar or asphalt. It takes a full round to perform this action. Flame attacks ignite the living tar but cause no damage. While alight, the living tar's fists do an additional 1d4 points of fire damage on a successful attack. If exposed to extreme cold, living tar suffers a -10 penalty to its initiative score and its movement is reduced to 10 feet round. In addition, it loses its quick step ability for 2d10 rounds.

Area 3-4—The Shifting Shambles: *Whatever catastrophe affected this structure took a great toll upon the room before you. The ceiling is partially collapsed and the floor itself upheaved by geological forces. Teetering mounds of rubble lie strewn across the flooded floor, leaving only the narrowest of paths between them. A faint flickering emerald light is visible amongst the jumbled stone. There are exits to the north and west.*

This chamber once served as the Earth Prison's powerhouse, drawing earth magics from below the ground and channeling them to the protective wards that kept the queen imprisoned. The tremors caused this magical generator to fail, throwing wild elemental forces about the chamber and bringing down the ceiling. The asphalt seep was plugged by the debris, making the tar/water mix thin and unlikely to catch fire. It has but a 5% chance of lighting if touched by flame and burns out in 1d3 rounds.

Traversing the room requires great care to avoid being buried beneath a mass of teetering stone. If the PCs head straight through, each PC crossing the chamber on foot must make two DC 10 Agility checks to reach the far side without triggering a landslide of debris. A DC 10 Reflex save avoids the mass of falling stone; otherwise, the unlucky adventurer suffers 2d6 damage and must make a DC 8 Fortitude save to avoid being pinned by the rock fall. Pinned characters who fail the save by five or more points are pinned with their heads beneath the water level and begin drowning as per the rules on page 6. A pinned character can be freed by another PC with a DC 12 Strength check.

The pinned PC can attempt to free himself, but the DC of the Strength check is 15.

If a PC scouts ahead, searching for the least hazardous path, that character must make three DC 10 Agility checks, but if successful his efforts reduce the DC of the rest of the party's Agility checks to 5. A thief or dwarf can use either the find trap skill or underground skills to identify the safest path across the room. Both checks are against DC 12, but if successful, either reduces the DC of the rest of the party's Agility checks to 5 as if a path was scouted.

The emerald light comes from behind a large pile of debris near the south wall. Party members choosing to investigate it must make one additional DC 10 Agility check (DC 5 if scouted or examined successfully by a thief or dwarf) to reach that part of the room. Those who succeed discover the light is coming from a crystal capsule of swirling, glowing mud situated in a semicircle of jagged debris. The "debris" is actually an adamantor lizard, a rare elemental reptile that usually dwells deep within the earth. Like all lizards, the adamantor is a master at camouflage. A DC 20 Intelligence check is needed to notice that the rock is really a lizard-like beast curled protectively around the capsule.

The adamantor lizard: The adamantor is sleeping when the party first enters, but any rock fall in the room awakens it. It moves to investigate the collapse 1d3 rounds later. It attacks the PCs if they are still inside the room.

Adamantor Lizard: Init -3; Atk bite +6 melee (3d4+2); AC 18; HD 4d8; hp 25; MV 40' or burrow 20'; Act 1d20; SP resistant to critical hits (-3 penalty to crit table rolls), camouflage (+10 to hide checks); SV Fort +4, Ref -1, Will +0; AL N.

This giant lizard measures 10 feet long and resembles a horned lizard with a body of jagged rock. Magical by nature, adamantors are drawn to areas steeped in sorcery and can occasionally be found as a wizard's mount or guardian. They are resistant to critical hits; such strikes against them suffer a -3 penalty when rolling on the critical hit table to determine the results of the attack. Like all lizards, adamantors receive a +10 bonus to all attempts at hiding.

Fighting the adamantor is a precarious venture. The massive lizard upsets debris as it lunges about the room, requiring anyone in melee combat with the beast to make a DC 8 Reflex check each round or suffer 1d3 points of damage from falling rocks. The adamantor is immune to such minor falls.

Mighty Deeds of Arms in this room: A Mighty Deed of Arms that succeeds against the adamantor could trigger a massive rock fall atop the lizard, pinning and possibly even killing the beast. Such a landslide does a number of d6s worth of damage equal to the total of the deed die. Thus, if the deed die comes up a "4" and the attack hits, the lizard suffers 4d6 points of damage. The lizard receives a DC 10 Reflex save to reduce damage by half. The creature must make a DC 8 Fortitude save or be pinned by the rock fall beneath the water; it can try to free itself with a Strength check (it adds +5 to its check roll).

The glowing capsule measures 3 feet in length and 1 foot in diameter. It holds a form of concentrated elemental mud that acts as acid against aquatic creatures. A successful hit with the capsule does 2d8 points of damage and affects an area 10 feet square. Non-aquatic creatures take no damage. A *detect magic* spell with a spell check of 18+ cast upon the capsule reveals this property.

Area 3-5—Obscure Warnings: *Cracks in the walls of this chamber slowly ooze tar, obscuring the carvings and sigils etched into the stone. The room seems more damaged than others within the complex, and the edges of a handful of flagstones are visible above the tarry water, indicating the floor is in a state of precarious upheaval. There are exits to the west and south.*

The tarry water in this chamber automatically ignites if touched by open flame. Fire engulfs the room and the floor continues to burn until extinguished by intense cold or a massive quantity of water or earth—all likely beyond the PCs' capability.

The tar-covered north wall bears curious carvings that can only be seen if the party scrapes away the viscous substance. The carvings depict a robed figure (Shadankin) casting a spell that creates a round, wavy-seeming sphere. Within the sphere are four figures: a slender female with a crown upon her head attended by two smaller females. The fourth figure is a monstrous beast that bears the features of a shark and octopus. Shadankin always hoped he could free the queen from her possession and steadfastly considered the monster within—even in artistic depictions—as a separate entity. This confusing depiction of Queen Cealheewhalool's imprisonment might lead the players to believe that the queen is guarded or imprisoned with a monstrous beast, instead of a beast herself.

Area 3-6—Element Door: *This chamber, although huge, is also bare. Its sole decorations are eight pillars and a titanic door of hewn stone that stands in a narrow alcove set into the western wall. The face of the door is covered in repeating patterns of three symbols: an upright triangle set within a circle, a square, and an inverted triangle. In the center of the mighty valve is a large keyhole. The keyhole itself burns with lambent flame, illuminating the alcove with a flickering ruby fire. The room has exits to the north and south.*

The tarry water in this room has a 50% chance of burning if exposed to open flame. This includes the fire contained within the door's keyhole (see below) should the water/tar mixture somehow become directly exposed to the enclosed flame.

The three symbols on the door represent earth (square), fire (inverted triangle), and air (triangle within a circle). A DC 13 Intelligence check identifies them. The fire in the keyhole is extremely hot and PCs approaching the door feel its heat.

The door can only be opened with the key from area 2-5. The lock itself is specially constructed to open slowly, and it requires four rounds to turn the key completely and unlock the portal. Unfortunately, the key conducts the heat of the keyhole fire easily and anyone turning the key by hand must make a DC 12 Fortitude save each round or suf-

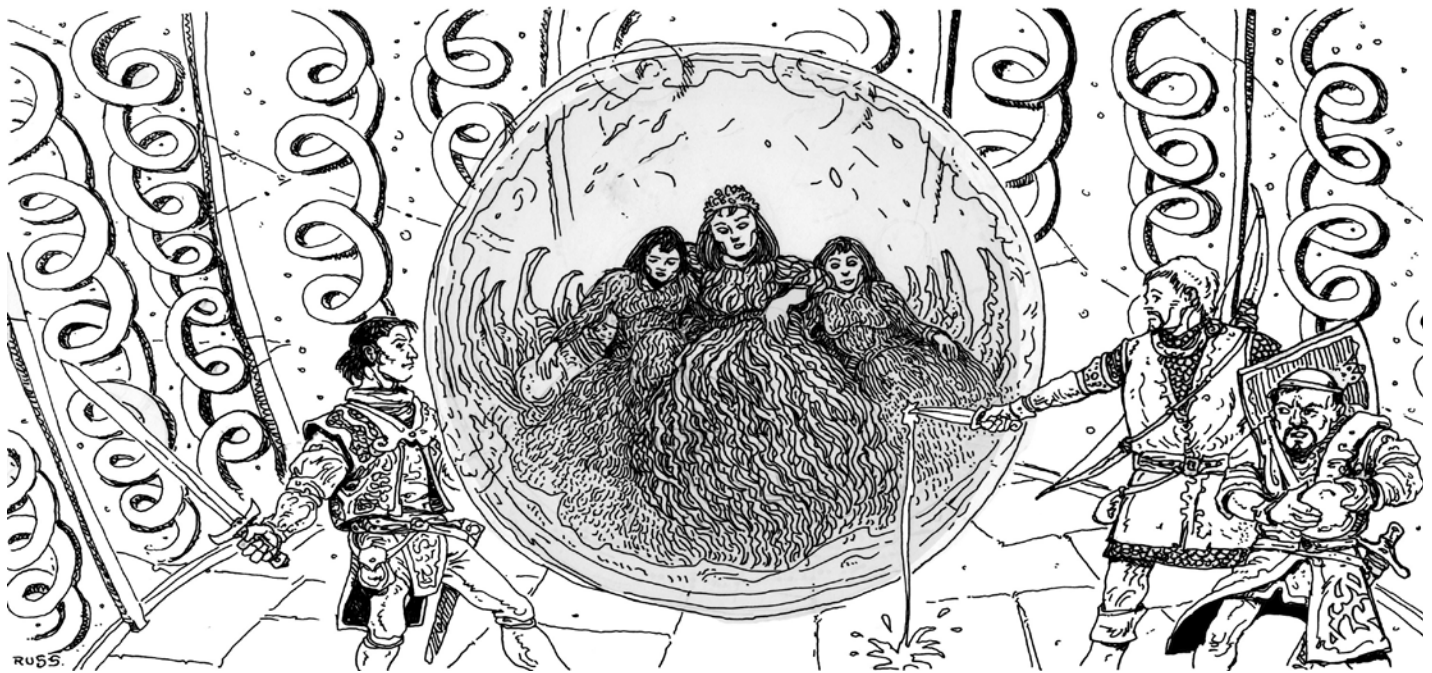


fer 1d4 points of damage. A natural 1 on the save indicates they've burned their hands horribly and suffer a -2 to all attack and damage rolls with weapons until the damage is healed. Steps to protect the opener from fire will negate the need to make a saving throw.

The magical fire can be extinguished with pure water (the element that is missing from the door's symbols) and even a small amount will suffice. The tar/water mixture found throughout the complex is too impure to extinguish the fire and if a handful of the liquid is scooped from the room and poured into the keyhole, the fire actually increases its heat to inflict 1d5 damage. Ordinary drinking water, likely contaminated by salt or the impurities found in a waterskin, has only a 25% chance of extinguishing the fire, but holy water or water created by the *food of the gods* spell always succeeds.

Area 3-7—Cealheewhalool's Prison: *The walls of this octagonal chamber bear more carved symbols, each one glowing with dim silvery-green light. As glimpsed in your dreams, a sphere of water hangs suspended in the air above a dry stone floor. Within the sphere are three slender female forms. One is dressed in a gown of woven kelp and bears a corroded diadem encrusted with barnacles and seaweed atop her head. The other two are clad in simple seaweed dresses. All three lie slumped unmoving on the bottom of the sphere.*

This chamber is dry; the water/tar mix is magically restricted from passing the threshold. The crowned female is Cealheewhalool, and the other two are her handmaidens. All



feign unconsciousness. The presence of the queen's handmaidens might cause the PCs to suspect that all is not what it seems since the queen appeared alone in their dreamy visions. Unfortunately, unbeknownst to the party, opening the door to this room causes the failure of the last remaining wards keeping the queen and her servants imprisoned. Over the next 2d6 rounds, the glowing symbols fade until they go dark, at which time the watery sphere collapses, freeing the Imperatrix of Waves.

When the prison collapses, Cealheewhalool and her handmaidens, along with several thousand gallons of water, drop onto the floor. The Imperatrix slowly rises, helped to her feet by her equally weak servants, to survey their rescuers. Then she speaks:

"Too long I have wasted away in that prison. I've forgotten the scent of the air, the smell of the earth. I've forgotten the motion of the waves that birthed me. Thank you, my stalwarts who braved much to free me. Thank you, a thousand, thousand thank yous! Now, please, I must get to the sea."

The trio stumbles as they attempt to walk, nearly falling in the process. They ask the party for assistance in reaching the sea. If the PCs acquiesce, Queen Cealheewhalool and her servants lean heavily upon them, their heads resting on their rescuers' shoulders.

Any attempts to question Cealheewhalool about her imprisonment, Shadankin, or other topics are deferred by the queen and her handmaidens. The handmaidens stress that unless the queen reaches salt water immediately she will perish. They insist the party get her to the waters surrounding the Lonely Ait at once and that all their questions shall be answered once Cealheewhalool's well-being is assured. If the PCs continue to delay the queen and her servants, they drop all pretenses, transform into their true forms, and attack as detailed below.

Cealheewhalool's long imprisonment has left her and her handmaidens famished. They smell the PC's blood coursing through their veins and their hunger grows. They plan to slake their blood thirst on the party, killing them and then devouring their tender flesh. Should the party prove to be too much of a threat, they flee and attempt to return to the sea. If the party flees first, the queen and her servants chase them to their doom. The lovely monsters prefer to wait until the party enters area 3-6 before feeding, but if they sense the PCs growing suspicious, they attack while still in area 3-7.

Unless the PCs leading the royal entourage make a DC 15 Intelligence check (DC 10 if they state they are suspicious), the party is surprised by the transformation of Cealhee-

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ENDING THE ADVENTURE



If the PCs reduce the Imperatrix to zero hit points, the corroded crown she wears is cloven in twain by the killing blow, its pieces sinking into the blood-stained waters around the dead queen. Although she died while still under the effects of the Sea Demons, Queen Cealheewhalool is finally at rest. And while the PCs may not have earned the wealth and power the malevolent potentate promised them, they at least have the riches they acquired in their quest, including the valuable *Horn of Tundines*.

A few nights after Queen Cealheewhalool is slain, perhaps while the party is on the return trip from Lone Ait, an eerie, dirge-like song is heard drifting outside. The party investigates to find a green-skinned humanoid dressed in an elegant but sparse costume of kelp and sea-silk awaiting them. He is an elder male wearing a circlet of pearls and coral, an emissary from the Sunken Kingdom of Ru.

The old male greets the party with great formality and dignity, naming himself Brooshqual. He thanks the PCs for the service they unwittingly rendered to the people of Ru. He reveals the full tale of Queen Cealheewhalool, pausing to produce her crown, now repaired and gleaming, free from the corrosion and filth that discolored it for so long. When the crown returned to Ru, Brooshqual says the people knew their cursed queen was at peace, free of evil's taint. Ancient magics tied to the crown led him to the PCs and he's come to reward them for ending the Imperatrix's long nightmare.

Brooshqual gives the party a rare black pearl of unusual size and luster (500 gp). In addition, each PC is awarded a small piece of red and purple sea sponge. When placed within the mouth, the sponge allows the owner to breathe water and endure the pressures of the deep sea for 48 hours. After that time, the sponge loses its power. The hours need not be consecutive.

If the players have had enough of the Sea Change Curse and the judge does not desire to incorporate seeking its cure into the ongoing campaign, Brooshqual also produces a bag of sparkling white sand, stating the grains can negate the curse. He sprinkles it upon the head of any suffering PCs. Within moments, they find themselves back in their proper bodies.

As he prepares to depart for Ru, Brooshqual offers the heroes a standing invitation to visit Ru any time they desire, stating they will be further feted and honored if they ever visit the Sunken Kingdom. The judge can use this invitation and the sponges to open an entirely new chapter of undersea adventures in his campaign. The PCs could learn that the sea is just as fearsome as the land in *Dungeons and Dragons*!

whalool and her servants and their attempt to tear into the helpful PCs' necks. Anyone specifically keeping a close eye on the trio notices a sudden change overtakes their formerly comely features. The Imperatrix's face acquires a shark-like aspect. Her eyes turn completely black, her mouth elongates, and rows of razor-sharp teeth replace her smile. Her handmaidens transform into horrific mixtures of woman and grouper.

Queen Cealheewhalool: Init +2; Atk bite +6 melee (1d12) or tentacle +4 melee (grapple; DC 12 Strength check to avoid being held; 1d4 squeeze damage each subsequent round) or spine +3 melee (poison, DC 10 Fort save or 1d3 Agility damage); AC 14; HD 5d12; hp 50; MV 30', swim 40'; Act 2d20 (up to 1 spell per round); SP double damage from fire attacks, spells (check +8, 1/day per spell: *chill touch*, *magic missile*, *magic shield*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shatter*); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +4; AL C.

In her normal form, Queen Cealheewhalool is an attractive, lithe, female humanoid with blue-green skin, silver hair and a dusting of scales around her eyes. A rusted crown encrusted with barnacles and seaweed rests on her brow. When angered, she transforms into a horrific aquatic monster. She grows to 10 feet in height and her flesh becomes gray sharkskin. Her eyes turn completely black and her mouth elongates into a shark's maw studded with saw-edged teeth. A pair of tentacles grows from her abdomen and poisonous spines like those of a lionfish erupt from her arms and back.

Queen Cealheewhalool can make two melee attacks each round, or she can make one melee attack and cast one spell. In battle, she attempts to reduce the number of opponents she faces by either grappling them with her tentacles or using *ray of enfeeblement* or her poisonous spines. If one opponent is deemed the most threatening, she concentrates her attacks on that enemy, seeking to strike him down before moving on to the rest of the party. Cealheewhalool's spells are lingering boons from her former patrons. As such, she can only use each spell once per day.

Handmaidens (2): Init +1; Atk claws +3 melee (1d8+2); AC 14; HD 4d8+4; hp 25 each; MV 20' or swim 40'; Act 2d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +3; AL C.

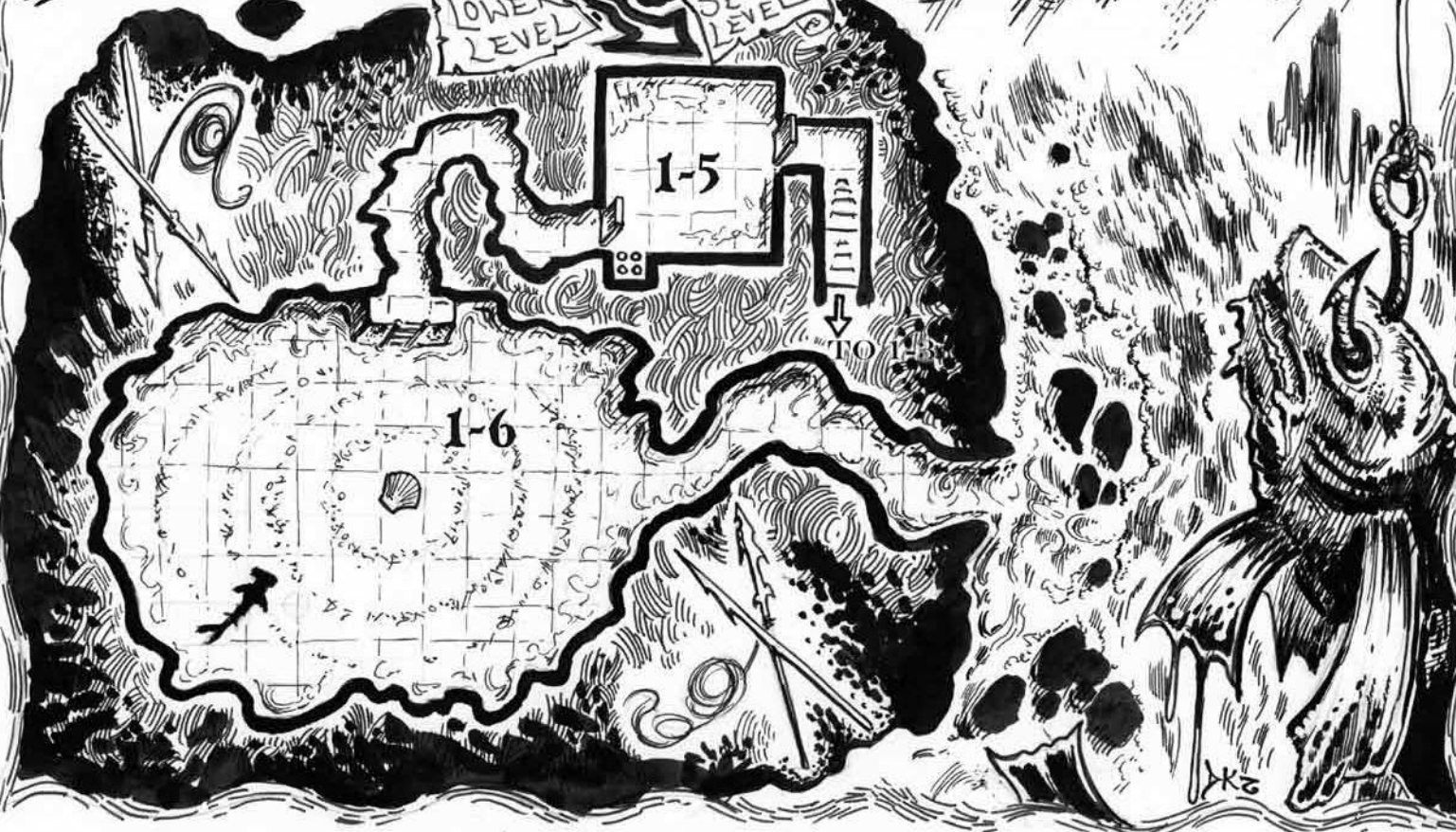
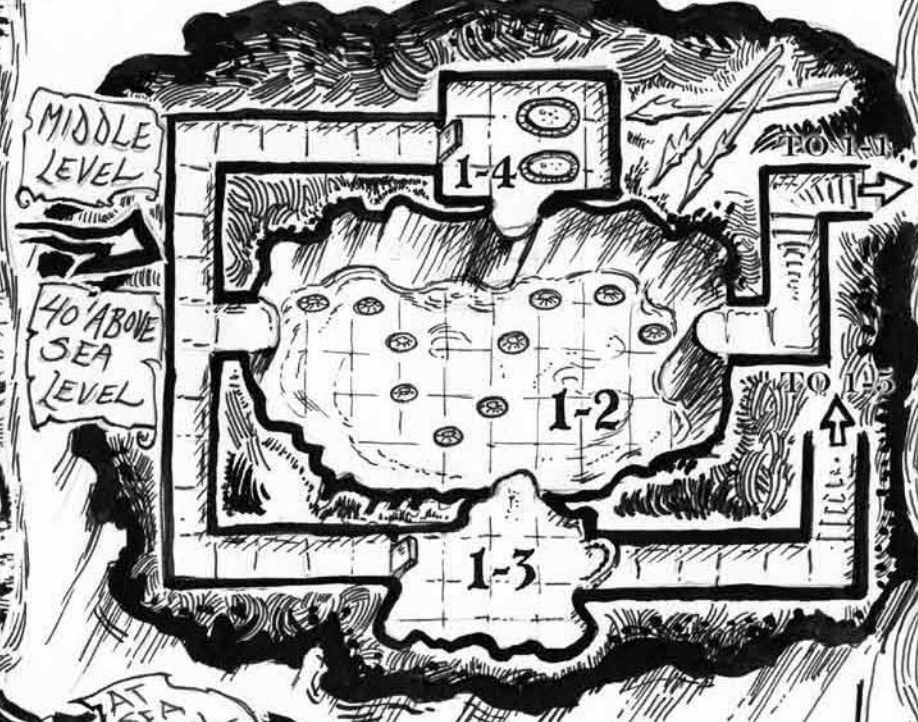
As Cealheewhalool battles the party, she ridicules them for releasing her, telling them the truth about her imprisonment and mocking them for negating all of Shadankin's efforts to save her. The Imperatrix laughs as she relishes both the PCs' imminent destruction and the genocide she plans for her former subjects beneath the sea.

The Imperatrix is a dangerous foe and the party may very well be forced to flee from her and her servants. Quick-thinking PCs can discourage her pursuit by igniting the tar inside the prison. Due to the queen's susceptibility to fire, this tactic might well turn the tide of battle. PCs that acquired the elemental mud in area 3-4 or deduced the use of the queen's secret name from area 3-1 are better equipped to battle the Imperatrix in direct combat.

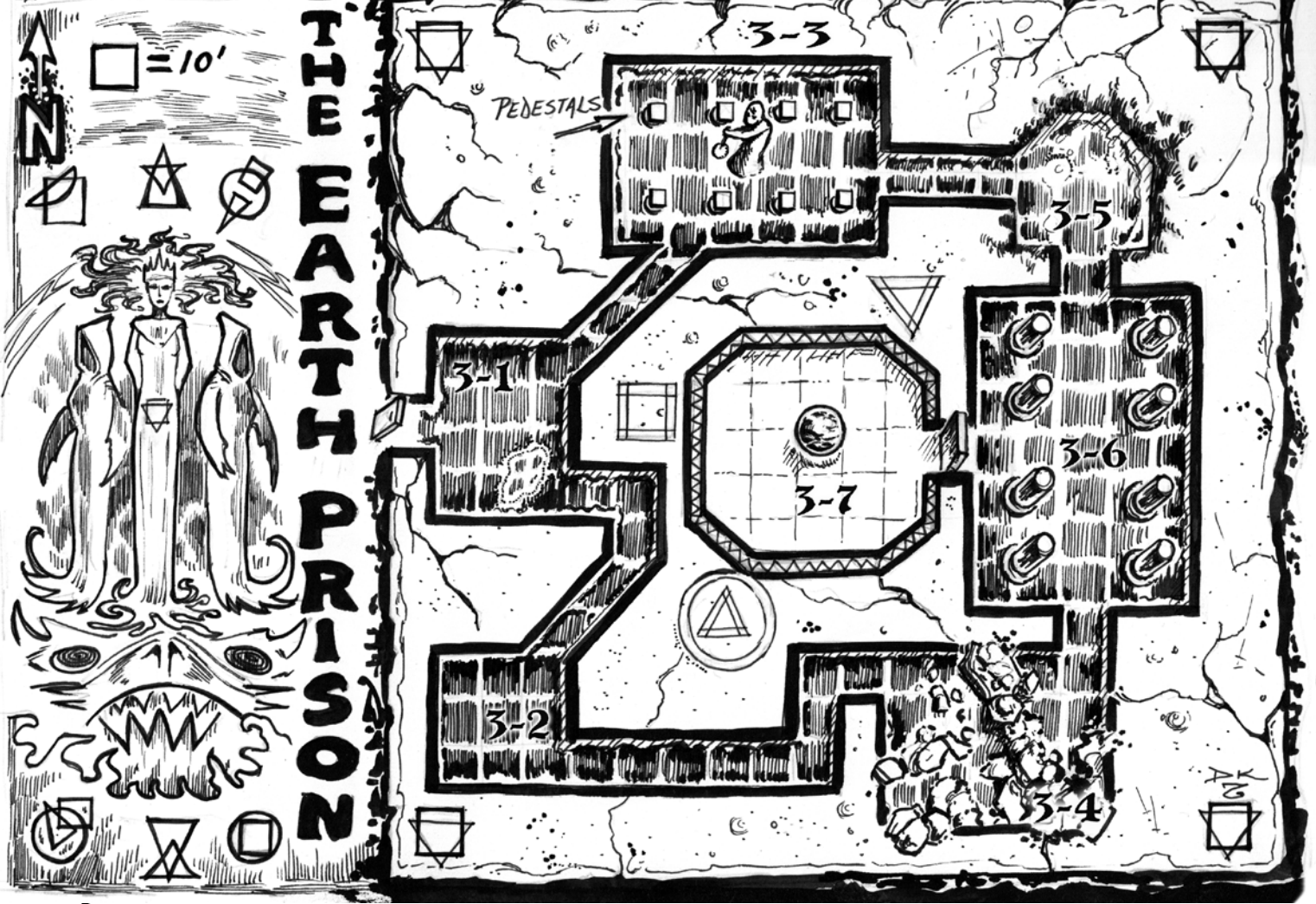
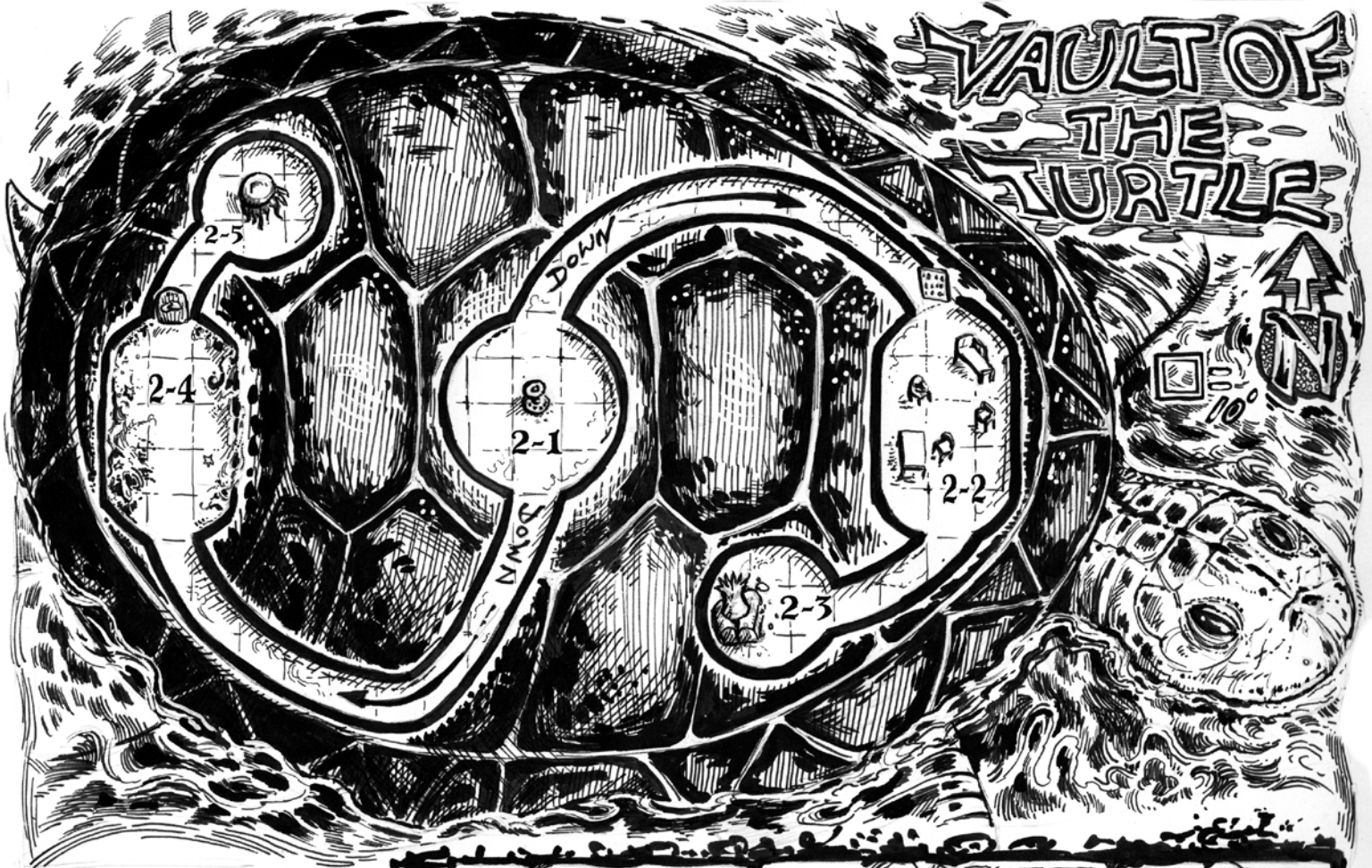


HANDOUT B

SHADANKIN'S SANCTUARY



VAULT OF THE TURTLE



THE SUNKEN KINGDOM OF RU

A MINI-CAMPAIGN SETTING



Millennia ago, the kingdom of Ru was an island realm renowned for its sailors, tradesmen, navigators, and its sorcerers. The Rueans commanded the waves in graceful ships unlike any others known today and possessed an understanding of the tides and stars far beyond that of their rivals. Ru was a hub of trade and learning, with exotic wares arriving daily from distant ports and learned men traveling to its capital of Rucepheelceal City to learn from the Ruean sages and wizards.

Towering above their contemporaries in knowledge, wealth, and accomplishment, it is little wonder that the citizens of Ru grew arrogant. They held themselves above all others, seeing their rivals and allies as younger siblings in need of education, guidance, and the occasional punishment to keep them in line. Legend holds that the Rueans' haughtiness even exceeded the physical plane and that the people of Ru believed they should be lifted up from the world to dwell amongst the gods in the heavens. Although history may never know for certain, it is possible this final hubris brought about the end of Ru as the world knew it.

In a span of five days, the island of Ru sank beneath the waves, drowned by either the wrath of the gods or by the violent but natural contortions of the earth. Many citizens fled the sinking island, but more died in the cataclysm of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, flooding, and titanic waves that rocked the island.

Not all were prepared to abandon their native land, however. As the disasters that decimated the island reached their crescendo, the nobles, priests, and the devout gathered in the most sacred of temples and called upon Pelagia, the Lady of the Sea to intercede and save them. The frenzied faith of the last remaining Rueans, pleading to their deity even as the seawater rose about their necks, moved Pelagia to act. In a single, awesome demonstration of divine power, she forever changed the Rueans so that they might never have to abandon their homeland. Each of the Rueans assumed a new form, one that could sustain them beneath the waves that drowned their homeland.

The Rueans' transformation was startling, but with little choice in the matter and able to remain in their now-submerged land, the people grew to accept, then revel in their new existence. It took many years to restore their land and become acclimated to underwater life. Buildings were no long made from marble and brick, but fashioned from coral, igneous stone, and *peralool*, a strong material made from the shells of giant oysters. The Rueans lost their mastery of their world, but gained piety and humility in return.

Today, the Sunken Kingdom of Ru has achieved some measure of equilibrium beneath the waves. Aside from a terrible time a few decades ago when the then-reigning Queen Cealheewhalool succumbed to dark magics and turned on her own people, Ru has existed in a state of watchful peace, on guard against incursions from neighboring underwater races.

THE RUEANS

The residents of Ru were once human, but the intervention of the Lady of the Sea forever altered them into something else. Humanoid in appearance and human-size, the typical Ruean has blue-green skin, but dark green and light blue tones are also encountered amongst their race. Small patches of scales are common around the eyes, the backs of the hand, atop the feet, and along the shoulders and thighs. Hair color runs from deep indigo to light green, although offspring of the noble bloodline are commonly

born with silver or pearlescent hair. Eye color is largely green, blue or gray. Rueans are partially amphibious and can function outside of the sea for a number of hours equal to their Stamina score. Rueans can live up to 150 years.

The Sunken Kingdom of Ru is a matriarchy, ruled by a noble bloodline that extends back to the days before the island kingdom sank. The ruling potentate is known as the Imperatrix of Waves and bears the title of Queen. She may take a husband if she desires, and although he has no direct power as Consort-King, he often serves as her trusted advisor. The current Imperatrix of Waves is Queen Wuushsharee, the niece of the deposed former Queen Cealheewhalool. She has yet to take a husband, but gifted with beauty, power, and youth, she has a surfeit of suitors.

Not all Rueans are satisfied with their existence, however. Lurking amongst the happy citizens of the Sunken Kingdom are a splinter group known as the Imposed. These Rueans are the descendants of the few original Rueans who were angered by the Lady of the Sea's gift, believing that the transformation into their new aquatic form was no gift, but an imposed curse. They cried out for their land to be saved after all, not for themselves to be changed so they might live like animals beneath the waves. The Imposed move slowly and stealthy, and seek to both reverse the "curse" that plagues their people and restore the kingdom of Ru to its rightful place above the waves.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

The Rueans are a devout people, as they owe their very existence to the intercession of the Lady of the Sea long ago. While there is a separation between ecclesiastical and secular power in Ru, the reigning Sea Queen always considers the high priest or priestess of the temple of Pelagia one of her foremost advisors.

Religious rites are held four times a day in Ru, occurring at high and low tides. Most Rueans attend at least two of the daily rites, with more devout citizens being present at all four. These daily rituals revere the Lady of the Sea in her varied aspects—her serene guise of placid seas and the terrible visage of the raging ocean. Ruean priests regularly perform auguries for citizens as most of the populace believes the Lady is a capricious deity prone assisting or interfering with endeavors as the mood suits her.

Funeral rites in the Sunken Kingdom involve an aquatic form of "sky burial." After imparting the necessary rites over the deceased and holding a ceremony in their honor, the body is conveyed to a special funereal location outside the boundaries of the community. The corpse is placed inside a cage-like casket fashioned from peralool and raised atop a high post of the same material. The body's flesh is slowly consumed by aquatic wildlife and, once reduced to skeletal form, the bones are collected and returned to the family. The bones of loved ones are either interred in coral or peralool mausoleums if the family is wealthy or kept in the home and honored on the deceased's birthday if from a family of more modest means.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER AQUATIC RACES

The Rueans are not the only intelligent species to dwell in this undersea region. Since the drowning of island nation, the people of the Sunken Kingdom have had to contest with others for resources



PLACES OF INTEREST

Blueback Reef: This long reef gets its name from the beautiful azure coral comprising most of it. When the tide is lowest, the reef is exposed above the waves, presenting a spine of sparkling blue coral running parallel to the coast. Despite its beauty, Blueback Reef is a dangerous place. Ships are regularly wrecked against the reef and the coral is home to numerous deadly sea creatures, drawn to the region by the rich hunting grounds of the Shimmer-water Shallows. A network of underwater grottoes and cavities runs through the Reef, their entrances obscured by the verdant sea plants that cover the coral. Some of these submarine caves are natural, but several show signs of being produced by intelligent craftsmen for purposes long-forgotten. The Deep Ones of Y'Xchlt-Thuyill gather on Blueback Reef during certain celestial events, engaging in dire rites dedicated to the sleeping god.

The Deadsilt: When Ru was an island, this region was home to a large, beautiful necropolis filled with ornate mausoleums and elegant marble tombs. Every Ruean was interred here upon his or her death, their mortal remains spending eternity with those of their ancestors. In the cataclysm that sank Ru, the necropolis was devastated by the disasters, its mausoleums and tombs shattered and the sleep of the dead disturbed. Now, this area is accursed, its ruined tombs and restless dead buried beneath a layer of dark, loathsome-looking silt. The occasional broken stone or splintered spire protrudes from the ocean floor to mark the location of one of the ancient houses of the dead. Surrounding the Deadsilt are large pearlescent religious icons, erected by the living Rueans to keep their restless forebears at bay and to help contain them within the former necropolis. Such efforts succeed for the most part, but occasionally other aquatic races venture within the Deadsilt to plunder the ruined tombs and this stirs up the aquatic un-dead. Adventurers intent on pillaging the tombs will face not only the un-dead within, but the wrath of the Rueans should their efforts arouse the slumbering anger of the dead and drive them to venture outside of the Deadsilt.

Everdark Abyss: The coastal shelf plunges more than 1000' into darkness, then levels out to form the Everdark Abyss. This deep sea region is home to weird forms of sea life, tremendous leviathans, and sea serpents that occasionally rise to feed on ships and their crews. Situated far from the sun above, the Everdark Abyss is locked in perpetual gloom, its only lights coming from the strange luminescent creatures that dwell here, the weird lights of Y'Xchlt-Thuyill, and the hellish glow rising from Firewave Chasm. The Everdark Abyss is seldom visited by the Rueans who consider the entire region to be under the domination of the Deep Ones. Yet even that savage race seems to fear *something* that dwells deep down in the darkness of the abyss...

Firewave Chasm: The sea floor is rent here, creating a chasm that plunges deep into the earth's crust. Magma rises from the bottom of the gulf, creating superheated currents of water, smoking black clouds, and roiling semi-solid stone that cools to create weird submarine shapes. Strange animal life, such as the giant tube worms that cling to the edges of the chasm and the enormous mollusks that thrive in the heated water, make the Firewave Chasm a dangerous place to visit. However, the magma is the only source of natural heat capable of smelting steel beneath the waves. Rueans and other aquatic races that sometimes create enchanted blades (which do not rust underwater) come here to craft these exotic weapons. A legend holds that one such wizard was slain while working on a powerful blade and that the weapon was lost in the Chasm. Whether it still exists, complete or merely half-finished, is unknown.

Graveyard of Wrecks: Blueback Reef rises like a mountain from

and defend themselves from incursions into their aquatic nation.

To the east of the Sunken Kingdom and located down in the depths of the Everdark Abyss, lies the Deep Ones city of Y'Xchlt-Thuyill. The Rueans and the Deep Ones have battled many times down the ages, with neither side achieving absolute victory. A state of tentative peace currently exists between the two cultures, but the animosity between the Deep Ones and the Rueans can erupt at any moment. The Sunken Kingdom steadfastly patrols its borders with manta ray-mounted cavalry, ever watchful for Deep One invaders launching another surprise incursion against the people of Ru.

A second underwater race enjoys better relations with the Sunken Kingdom, but even they are merely tolerated rather than welcomed. Ru lies along the seasonal migration path of the Scuttle-Clan, a piscine species of humanoids who live a nomadic existence beneath the waves. The Scuttle-Clan make their homes atop the backs of giant crustaceans such as gargantuan hermit crabs and tremendous lobsters, driving their house/mounts along the sea-floor as they hunt, trade, and bring news from foreign submarine lands. The Scuttle-Clan is seen as a necessary part of undersea life by the Rueans, who benefit from the trade and news they carry, but otherwise have little formal dealings with the nomadic race.

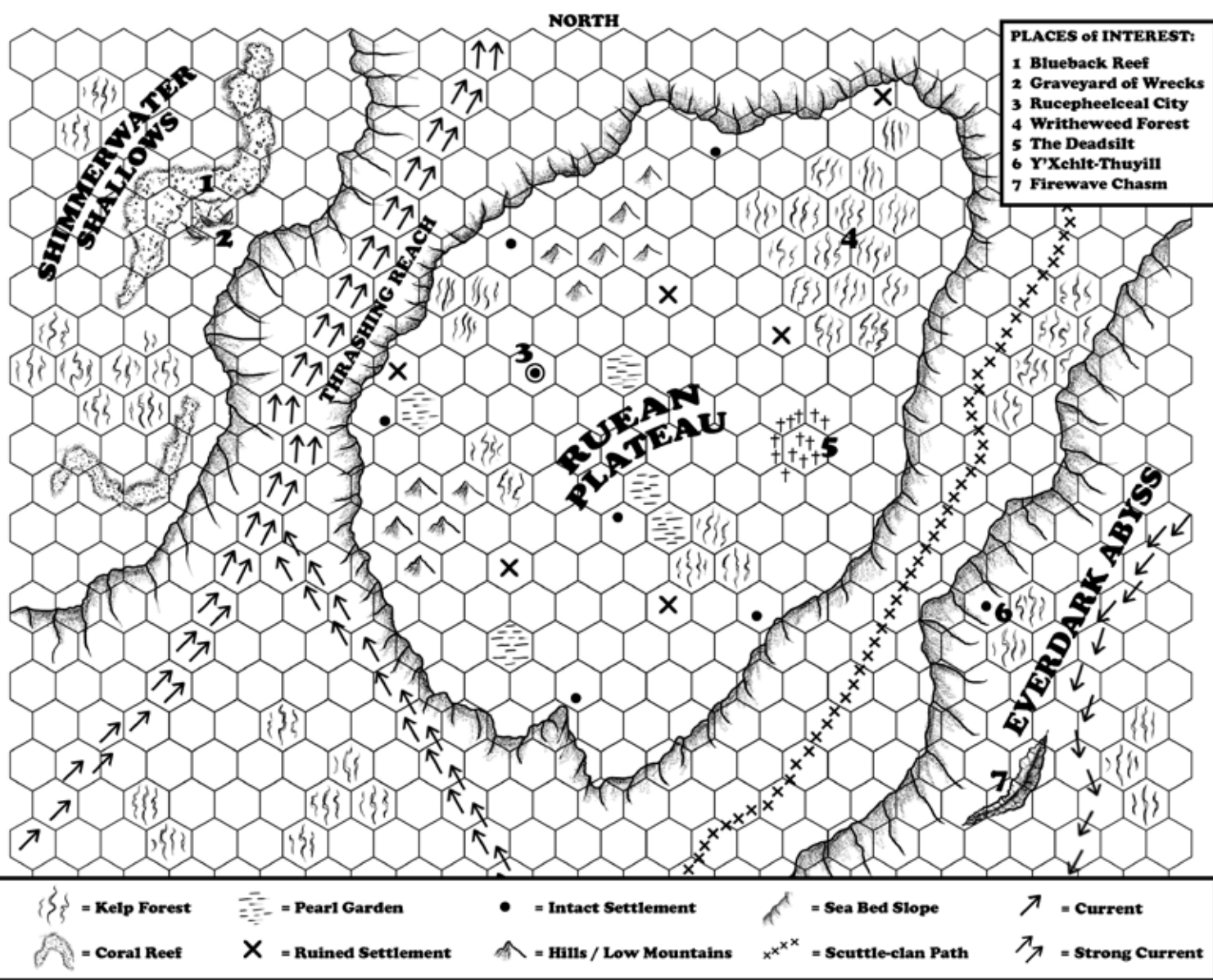
VISITING RU

Few surface world races have ever visited Ru and the Sunken Kingdom does nothing to attract air-breathers to their aquatic realm. Wizards, who, like Shadankin, harbor a love or interest in the sea, occasionally pay a visit to the Sunken Kingdom, sustained by their magic. Sailors believe that some mariners, lost at sea and supposedly drowned, were rescued from drowning by the residents of Ru only to be enslaved (it's unlikely this belief is true, but not all Rueans are pleasant people). For the most part, the Sunken Kingdom remains unknown to the surface world at large, and is at best remembered as a long-lost kingdom destroyed in the distant past.

On rare occasions, an air-breather might receive an invitation to visit the Sunken Kingdom. The invited guest is typically either someone who has performed a great service to the Ruean people or is serving as an ambassador between the surface world and the Sunken Kingdom. In these events, the Rueans present the guests with a gift of *shoalgat*, a special sponge cultivated in Ru for this purpose. Shoalgat has the power to grant a non-aquatic species the ability to breath underwater and endure the pressure of the sea for extended periods of time.

PCs traveling to the Sunken Kingdom without an expressed invitation should be prepared to endure the questioning of the Ruean border guards at the very least and possible imprisonment while local rulers decide whether the adventurers pose a threat to the Sunken Kingdom or an opportunity to be exploited.

THE SUNKEN KINGDOM OF RU AND ENVIRONS



the seabed here and its jagged top has sealed the fate of countless ships over the centuries. Driven against the reef by storms, the ships are wrecked and sink beneath the waves. As they slip under the sea, the wrecks come to rest along the southeastern slope of the reef or settle at the base of the aquatic ridge, creating an ascending panorama of ruined vessels, tangled rigging, and sailors' bones. The oldest wrecks have been claimed by the reef and are covered with sea life, but more recent wrecks are easily explored. The Rueans and the Deep Ones visit the Graveyard of Wrecks after storms to salvage what they can from newly-sunken ships, leading to clashes over resources or battles with any of the savage beasts—giant Moray eels, schools of aggressive sharks, and a greatly-feared giant octopus known only as Crusher—as they contest to pillage the wrecks.

Pearl Gardens: These muddy plains are cultivated by the Rueans who nurture large beds of giant oysters at each of these locations. Reef walls surrounds the pearl gardens and rising towers are set intermittently along their lengths. From these raised positions, guards keep watch for aquatic rivals intent on plundering the rich beds and for aggressive sea creatures who might choose to prey on the pearl bed's caretakers. Garrisons of manta ray-mounted cavalry are stationed at each pearl garden and can swiftly intercept intruders before they descend upon the pearl fields. The oysters are used as meat, their shells are transformed into peralool which is used in the making of buildings, tools, weapons, and armor,

and their artificially-induced pearls serve as the Ruean currency both at home and abroad.

Ruean Plateau: This broad and largely flat stretch of seabed was once the island nation of Ru. Now drowned beneath the waters, the fertile soil has washed away and the former mountains worn down by catastrophe and tides - leaving a vast plateau beneath the waves. The Rueans consider all the territory atop the plateau as the ancestral lands of the Sunken Kingdom and regularly patrol its borders against invasion. The Ruean Plateau is somewhat deeper than the Shimmerwater Shallows, averaging 300' beneath the surface.

Rucepheelceal City: The capital of the Sunken Kingdom, Rucepheelceal City predates the sinking of Ru. It was destroyed in the cataclysms that plunged the island under the sea, but has been rebuilt by the Rueans. Where once rose stout buildings of stone and brick are now delicate, flowing spires made of peralool. Rucepheelceal City is constructed to blend with the natural undersea landscape and is home to vast numbers of sea creatures who co-exist in relative harmony with the Rueans. Rucepheelceal City is dominated by a cluster of spiraling towers that contain the royal palace and the temple of the Lady of the Sea. The sole surviving tower of the great sorcerers of Ru before its drowning also stands nearby, home to the mighty sea wizards of the Sunken Kingdom. When the capital was rebuilt after the sinking of Ru, most of the catacombs, cellars, and other subterranean places were sealed up, but they still exist under the sandy, coral-lined streets of Ru-

cephelceal. What treasures and dangers might still sleep in those spaces are left to the judge's imagination.

Ruined Settlements: A number of these broken communities are scattered about the Sunken Kingdom. They were towns and villages before the sinking of Ru, but now they are coral- and kelp-covered ruins serving as homes to aquatic wildlife, Ruean outcasts, other aquatic races, and similar occupants. Although widely plundered since the sinking of Ru, a few odd treasures might still exist in secret or overgrown places within the ruins.

Scuttle-Clan Paths: These aquatic highways are the routes commonly traveled by the Scuttle-Clan and their armada of crustacean mount-houses. A nomadic people, the Scuttle-Clan tribe makes a seasonal journey along the outskirts of the Sunken Kingdom as they migrate north during the warmer seasons and return to sub-tropical waters in the winter. Scuttle-Clan paths are untraveled throughout most of the year, but during the tribe's migration period, long, slow-moving trains of giant hermit crabs, horseshoe crabs, spider crabs, and lobsters extend for miles down these submarine roadways. At night, the tribe gathers in groups for safety, lighting up the dark around their camps with luminescent jellyfish kept in cages. The Scuttle-Clan act as news-bearers and itinerant merchants, trading both news and goods from far off undersea realms as they pass by the Sunken Kingdom.

Shimmerwater Shallows: This area is part of the continental shelf that runs parallel to the shoreline. In the days when Ru stood above the waves, the Shimmerwater Shallows was a broad, shallow bay separating the island nation from the mainland. The area gets its name from the beams of sunlight that illuminate the shallow waters with rippling light. The Shallows range from 30 to 200' deep and are home to numerous forms of sea life. This abundant life makes it a fertile hunting ground for both Rueans and Deep Ones, but travel to the Shallows is limited. Only when the fierce current of the Thrashing Reach goes slack can visitors from the deeper waters access the rich Shimmerwater. Above the waves, the Shallows regularly sees visits by traders, fishermen, pirates, and other maritime folk—including groups of foul cultists in league with the Deep Ones of Y'Xchlt-Thuyill.

Thrashing Reach: A submarine canyon separates the Shimmerwater Shallows from the Ruean Plateau. This expanse is the Thrashing Reach, a 200' deep chasm that acts as a channel for the coastal currents that flow past the continental coast. Funneled into the canyon by the underwater landscape, the current flows fast and strong, battering anyone unlucky enough to be caught in its grasp. The current serves as a natural defensive barrier, protecting Ru from incursions from the west, but it is an inconsistent protection. The current falters on a semi-regular basis, allowing the Rueans to cross to the Shimmerwater Shallows to hunt, but they must also keep constant watch on the Reach for fear of potential attacks when the tide goes slack. The bottom of the Reach is bare seabed, stripped by the strong current that rushes through it. Despite this fact, rumors persist that the Reach's bottom contains the sunken riches of a treasure fleet once caught in the current during a winter storm and crushed by the waves and tide.

The Writheweed Forest: This underwater forest is a vast expanse of dense kelp and seaweed, species that grow up to 100' in height. The aquatic plants grow in tightly packed thickets, allowing little of the diffuse sunlight that pervades the submarine world to penetrate their hearts. A few narrow pathways wind through portions of the Writheweed, but no Rueans know all the secrets of the dark kelp forest. Ancient lore from the days when Ru still sat above the waves speaks of a sorcerer's tower that once stood in the region the Writheweed now occupies, but the fate of that structure is unknown. If it still exists, intact or in partial ruins, it likely contains lost wonders from Ru's heyday—and likely ferocious guardians.

Y'Xchlt-Thuyill: Situated in a dark crevasse along the plunging seabed wall of the Everdark Abyss, is a small city of Deep Ones that often clash with the Rueans. Y'Xchlt-Thuyill is comprised of semi-permeable domes fashioned from a bizarre fleshy material, natural caves, and crude stone buildings linked by flooded tunnels. Some portions of the city are air-filled and the Deep Ones keep their prisoners and human breeding stock confined to these places. On the nights of the new moon, when the seas grow darkest, strange rites are held in the city's central temple. Burbling horns, weird lights, and croaking chants can be witnessed by those who stray too close to the Deep Ones' home. The Rueans have launched crusades against Y'Xchlt-Thuyill several times in the past with limited success. Despite the Deep Ones' savage appearance, the city is home to several powerful priests of Cthulhu and a cabal of aquatic bestial sorcerers who can contend with the Rueans own magical forces.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The following adventure ideas can be fleshed out by any judge seeking to incorporate the Sunken Kingdom of Ru into his DCC RPG campaign. PCs drawn into these events will soon find themselves beneath the waves and in contact—for good or ill—with the Ruean culture.

- A powerful figure (a king, merchant-baron, or wizard, for example) was expecting the arrival of a special ship containing an important piece of cargo. The vessel never made port and the figure has just learned the ship met its doom at sea, wrecked against Blueback Reef during a storm. The individual wants his cargo salvaged and is recruiting adventurers to plumb the depths of the Graveyard of Ships and recover his lost parcel. Adventurers are provided with the means to survive beneath the waves, but their exploits soon attract the attentions of the Rueans, the Deep Ones, and the dangerous wildlife that dwells around the shoal.
- The Imposed have launched a bold stratagem to achieve their goal of raising Ru above the waters once more: an alliance with the Deep Ones! Should the Sunken Kingdom rise again, the Deep Ones would once more be the dominant undersea race in the region and have lent their grudging aid to the Imposed. The alliance seeks to call upon the power of Deep One's horrible deity to undo the Lady of the Sea's transformation and raise Ru above the waves. The PCs first get wind of the conspirators' dire plot when Deep One raids on shore-front communities increase as the sea demons gather sacrifices to raise their god's power. Investigation of the raids soon uncovers the plot and the PCs and the citizens of the Sunken Kingdom must band together to stop the Imposed and the Deep Ones from succeeding.
- The PCs are traveling at sea when disaster strikes and their ship sinks. As the waves close over their heads, they are rescued by Ruean border guards who noticed the sinking ship. Before the adventurers are brought to shore, however, the Rueans announce Queen Wuushsharee wishes to meet with them. The Imperatrix of Waves is in need of bold adventurers to complete a clandestine mission for her and needs agents with no discernible ties to the Sunken Kingdom. This secret quest might lead into the depths of Y'Xchlt-Thuyill or back to dry land where a potential threat to Ru must be quashed before it grows too powerful. Completing the mission successfully—and without their Ruean ties discovered—earns the PCs honorary citizenship in the kingdom beneath the sea.

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