

CALL OF THE KRAKEN

WATERDEEP



An adventure suitable
for PCs of levels 5-7

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Kraken Priest Kerttu

“Call of the Kraken” is a D&D adventure designed for a party of player characters levels 5 to 7.

Set in Waterdeep, it is designed so it can be used after PCs have completed the official hardcover adventure, “Waterdeep Dragon Heist.”

The use of the Kraken Society makes it useful as a side quest for the adventure “Storm King’s Thunder.”

Its many aquatic adversaries also make it an appropriate nautical scenario for PCs opposed to the Crushing Wave and its leader, Gar Shatterkeel, from “Princes of the Apocalypse.”



Evil's long reach



Over the centuries, the Kraken Society has found channels into the great cities of the Sword Coast, including Waterdeep. The society established safe houses and false fronts to hide their underground access points into the city, marking them with stonework symbols understood only by those faithful to the great kraken, Slarkrethel.

As the Kraken Society's influence in Waterdeep waned (thanks to the vigilance of sea elves and the merfolk residing in Deep Harbor),

many of these locations were abandoned. Surface dwellers put the buildings to other uses, or in some cases, allowed them to fall into disrepair.

A Kraken priest surfaces

Kerttu, a female Kraken priest, had success converting many residents of a fishing village near Red Rocks into her school of believers. She lured these humanoid into the sea and

transformed them into piscine hybrids called deep scions.

Emboldened, she established a beachhead in Waterdeep, using the sea caves and underground temple beneath a trading house as a base. She has attracted some of the neighborhood's weak-willed inhabitants and outcasts into the society. She then entrusted her deep scions to guard the surface entrance.

Out of necessity, Kerttu allied with a tribe of sahuagin to protect the seawater-filled passages linking the sea caves to the harbor. The sahuagin already established a shrine at the location. A *Sword of Vengeance* they venerate as the *Blade of Sekolah* rests in the hands of a great marble sculpture the sahuagin salvaged from the seabed and placed upon a pedestal in the underground temple.

Kerttu hopes she might co-op the sahuagin beliefs in the shark god into her cult. However, her primary agenda is to use tried and true Kraken Society proxies — smugglers, slavers and assassins — to achieve her ends.

Kerttu's infiltration of the city went undetected until a curious dwarven faction agent, Skittles Runehammer, stumbled upon her operation. In an unrelated investigation, he discovered the pattern of Kraken Society stonework in the foundations of buildings in many of the sea-facing districts. He recognized them as being aquatic in nature, but he was unable to decipher their true purpose.

Curious, Skittles followed them like a trail of breadcrumbs to the trading house a few blocks from the shore in the Southern Ward. Kerttu's deep scion followers took the dwarf prisoner and intend to turn him using more forceful means of persuasion.

Underwater situations

Players may want their characters to swim and a DM may want to run underwater combat during the course of the adventure.

Relevant sections of the *Player's Handbook* are: swimming movement on page 182, movement and position on page 190, and underwater combat on page 198. For the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, note the swimming rules in the underwater section on pages 116-117.



Course of the adventure

A faction leader contacts the player characters and asks them to locate the missing dwarf, Skittles Runehammer, last seen in the vicinity of a trading house a few blocks from the shore in the Southern Ward.

PCs who investigate may discover the trail of runes leading to the trading house. They will encounter the trading house's two proprietors, who are deep scions in their human form.

Stairs lead to an underground passage partially flooded by seawater and inhabited by cultists, sea spawn, deep scions, and sahuagin.

Investigating the sea caves the PCs would discover the treasures — and their guardians — the sahuagin and the Kraken Society have placed there for safekeeping.

Probing deeper into the underground chamber they will find the cell where the dwarf is being held prisoner, the leaders of the sahuagin and, eventually, confront the Kraken Society priest, Kerttu.

Faction Assignment

Skittles Runehammer, a dwarven agent (see Faction sidebar), has gone missing. Concerned, his faction handler employs the adventurers to investigate. Skittles was last seen in the vicinity of a rundown trading house a few blocks from the shore in the Southern Ward.

Skittles was following a trail of related runes inscribed in the foundations of some of the older structures in the ward. During his last report, Skittles suspected the markings were linked in some way he'd not yet determined.

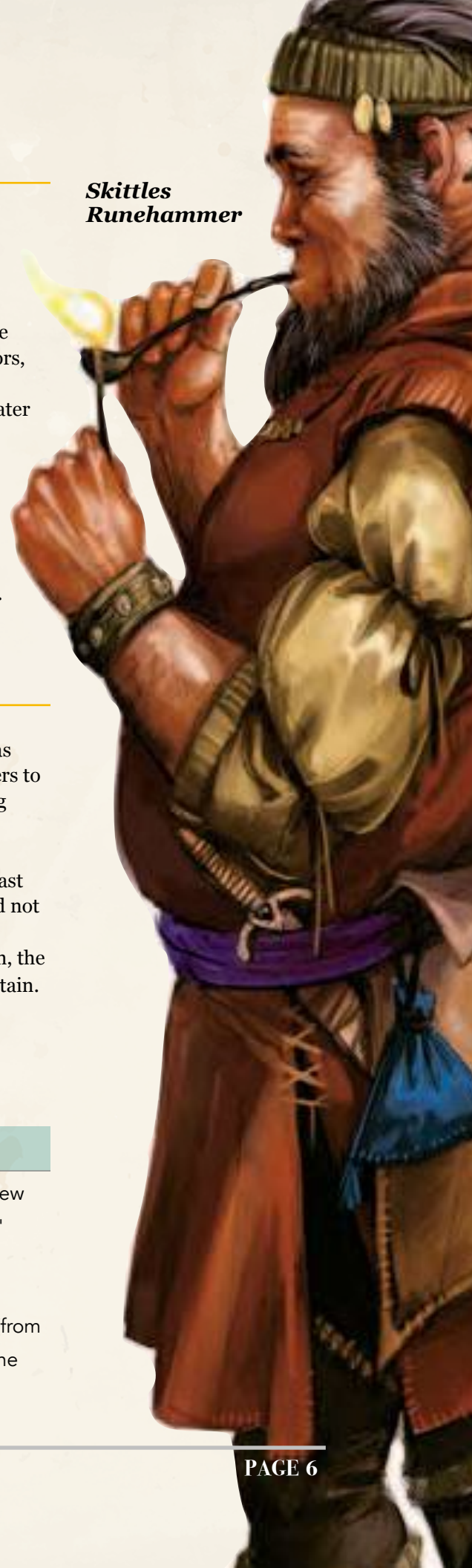
Whether the markings were related to the sea elves of T'quossion, the merfolk of Thanqualnaar or some other undersea race, he wasn't certain. But they seemed an aquatic derivation of the Primordial language.

In truth, the handler is worried less about their agent's fate than whatever business he might have run afoul of.

Make it a pirate scenario

For a different flavor, this adventure could be undertaken by crew members of a pirate ship that docked in Waterdeep on "business." Perhaps they are searching for the *Blade of Sekolah* and the dwarf Skittles is their contact. In this case, replace the **deep scions** in Encounter area 2 Trading House: Interior with two **swashbucklers** (from *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* or *Volo's Guide to Monsters*). Roleplay the swashbucklers in all their over-the-top piratey goodness.

Skittles Runehammer



Faction sidebar

Skittles can be a member of whatever faction makes most sense for your Waterdeep campaign.

Bregan D'aerthe: As an unwitting operative, he believes he is working for Illuskan captain Zardoz Zord of the carnival ship *Eyecatcher*.

Emerald Enclave: Employed as a gardener at Phalkonmere, he is under the watchful eye of Melannor Fellbranch. His task is to unearth historical clues about the region's natural order before it became a city.

Gray Hands: As a former member of the City Watch who reports to Meloon Wardragon, he investigates old lore, trying to unearth magical threats that are slumbering or waiting for the right conditions to waken.

Harpers: As a warehouse employee of Ulbrinter shipping, he keeps his ear to the ground about goings on in the shore wards and informs Lady Remallia.

Lord's Alliance: As a former sailor, he is kept on the city payroll as a minor official in the Southern Ward. His reports reach the ears of Mirt through a chain of contacts.

Order of the Gauntlet: He was part of an old fighting unit that maintains close association through Helm's Hall in the Southern Ward. Amelda Tomakdautir, a halfling priest of Helm, acts as his patron.

Xanathar Guild: A Southern Ward enforcer named Darthen runs a host of operatives and informant, of which Skittles is one.

Zhentarim: He acts as an informant for Zhentarim's master of opportunities and negotiations, Davil Starsong.

1 Trading House: Exterior and Surrounding Grounds

The trading house is a sturdy three-story structure with an inverted T-shaped floor plan. It features a high foundation of heavy stone blocks, indicating a deep and reinforced basement, and brick walls for the upper two floors.

A new sign, too small for the space allocated for it, has been erected over the main doors. It reads: Red Rocks Trading Co.

It has a narrow yard on both the east and west sides of the building, leading to the T-shaped cross hall.

Search. A DC 10 Intelligence/Investigation of the perimeter reveals a rain-soaked satchel tucked into the T-corner on the southwest side of the building. It contains Skittles' journals and rubbings he made of the runic inscriptions carved into foundation stones.

The runes are old and hard to see with the naked eye because of weathering. Examining the rubbings, however, a character familiar with Primeval might discern some of it. The gist of it: phrases of praise to the shark god Sekolah.

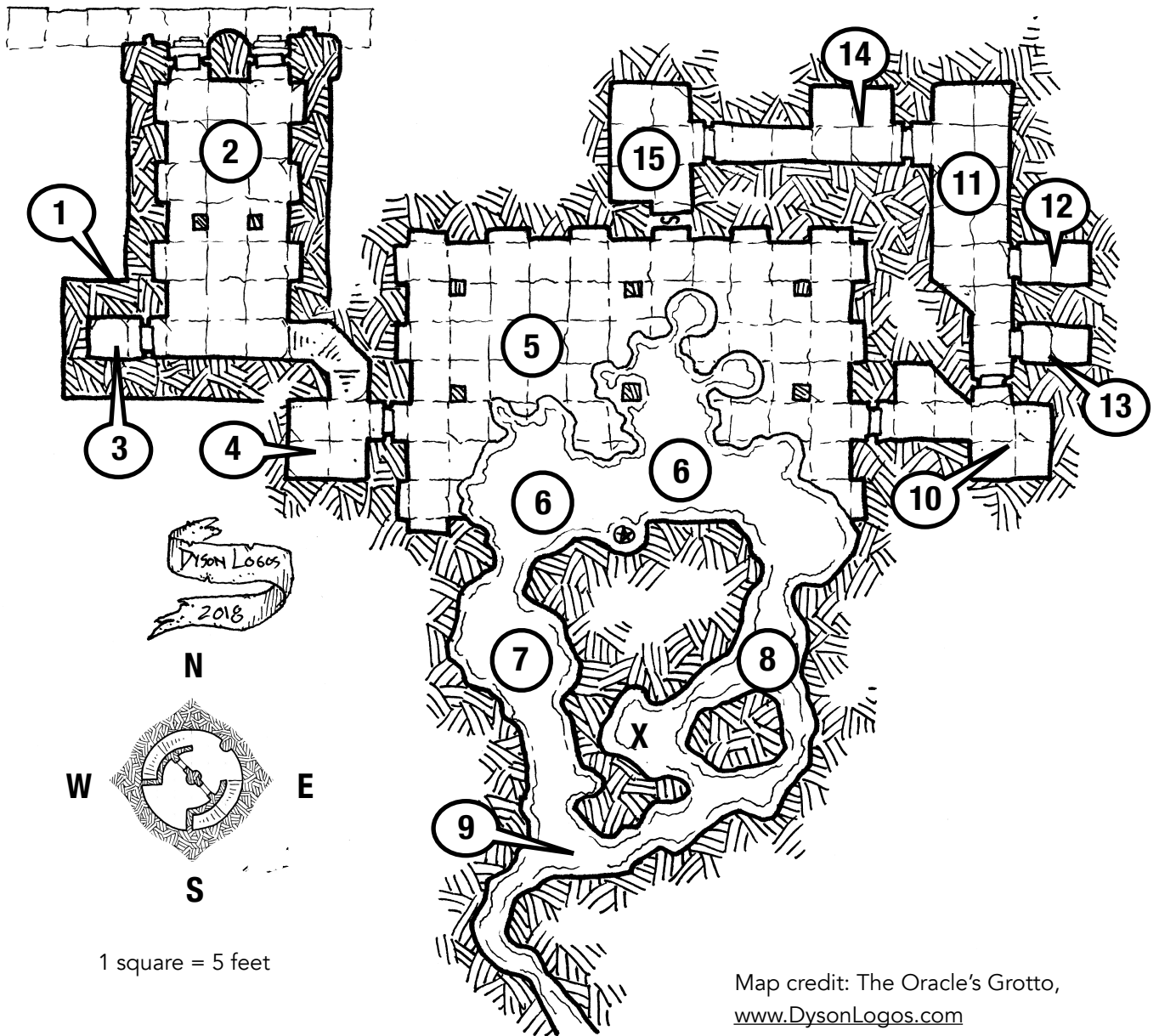
A DC 15 Intelligence check might spot that interspersed among the characters are very stylized symbols that might represent the fins of sharks cutting through the water.

2 Trading House: Interior

The main doors are divided by a pillar. The place is a ramshackle: dust everywhere, cobwebs dangling from the ceiling, floor littered with papers and discarded refuse. Twin wood pillars that extend to the ceiling divide the room. But it has neither stacks of shipping containers nor the display of goods one might expect from trading house.

Amid the clutter there are two tables set up as desks, one in the front of the room and one in the back. Both are occupied.

A human woman in smart nautical attire sits in the front. A man in similar clothes is



Map credit: The Oracle's Grotto,
www.DysonLogos.com

scratching notes with a quill in a ledger in the back. Compared with their surroundings, the desks and their clothes are new, clean and well-kept. They appear oblivious to the mess they are working in.

There is a placard on the front desk that says "Welcome" in Common.

Shallows and Dorsal. The two proprietors are both **deep scions** in humanoid form. Both the woman, Gilly Shallows, and the man, Evertide Dorsal, have flat expressions and a monotone way of speaking. Neither is unpleasant, simply

expressionless, placing no emphasis in any of their speech.

The woman at the reception desk greets the player characters: "Welcome to our place of business. What can we do for you? My name is Gilly Shallows, associate manager for the Red Rocks Trading Company."

Any inquiry made by the players is met by the reply: "That sounds like a question for my associate, Mister Evertide Dorsal. Let me get him for you." She then turns and heads over to the desk where the man is working at the ledger. They return. A DC 10 Wisdom/Perception check shows

they have a steady, yet tentative walking stride, as if they are unpracticed at it.

When Dorsal speaks, his manner is identically even and emotionless.

“Welcome to our place of business. What can we do for you?”

Some expected responses to queries:

What do you do? What are you trading?

“We represent the interests of a fishing village near Red Rocks. Things are going swimmingly, yes?”

Why is this place a mess?

“This place suits our needs. We’ve made quite a few improvements. Do you like them?”

This place is empty. Where are your goods?

What do you trade?

“Arrangements have been made. I assure you, we are fully operational.”

We are searching for a dwarf, Skittles Runehammer. Have you seen him?

“There was a dwarf. We did not get his name. He wanted to look at the foundation. We agreed. I don’t know what happened to him.”

We found his pack. What do you make of that?

“That looks like the pack he carried. Why would he leave it?”

There are stairs back here. Where do they lead?

“You are not permitted to go down there. Get away from there.”

For any other questions, they reply:

“I think that is enough for today. If you aren’t here to trade or sell, I am going to have to ask you to leave.”

If PCs do not leave or they persist in investigating the building, Dorsal and Shallows transform into their humanoid piscine hybrid forms and attack with bite and two claws.



**Evertide
Dorsal
and Gilly
Shallows**

Substitute statistics

If you do not have access to *Volo’s Guide to Monsters*, substitute the deep scion with **werewolf** stats, adding an additional claw attack.

Substitute the sea spawn with **sahuagin**, but give it 32 hp.

Substitute Kraken priest with a **sahuagin baron**, do not use the bite and claw attacks, but give it the following spells: *call lightning*, *Evard’s black tentacles*, *control water*, *darkness*, *water breathing*, *water walk*, *command*, *create or destroy water*. The priest has a Wisdom spell save DC 13 and +5 to hit with spell attacks.



**Sculpture
holding
the Blade
of Sekolah**

3 Closet

A water tank sits on a table. The tank is filled with a dozen **quippers**.

4 Stairwell

Three flights of steep stairs curve to the right. At the bottom of the stairs there hangs a light, like a single bulb, suspended in the center of the room.

A DC 10 Wisdom/Perception check reveals that the light is an *everburning torch* that hangs from a cord that extends up into a hole in the ceiling.

Trap. Touching the light or the cord activates the hidden pit trap, opening a trapdoor that is the length and breadth of the floor. It drops into a 40-foot deep well filled with seawater. The surface of the water is 20 feet from the floor. A **giant octopus** is kept in the trap (fed quippers from Room 3) and attacks anyone who falls into it.

The trap is a mechanical trap of the setback variety. It has a Save DC 11 to detect and disable. Falling into the water does one-half 1d10 damage but the splash alerts the giant octopus that there is prey.

5 Temple to Sekolah

This underground temple has a 30-foot-high ceiling with three pairs of support columns. The floors are a mosaic of sea green and blue tiles that depicts a monstrous shark with a toothy maw. The room is partially flooded by two sea cave channels in the southern wall. The walls of the temple are smooth and reflect the water, projecting the illusion that everything is under water.

A prominent feature is a sculpture, draped in clothing, of a humanoid figure holding a massive sword. The figure is twice again life-sized.

A human female adorned in priestly robes stands knee deep in the flooded waters in front of the sculpture. She reads from stone tablets resting on a stone lectern. Standing roughly in a semicircle around the reader are two humans and two elves, paired male and female, in similar attire, carrying

scimitars on their belts, and four piscine humanoids covered in spiny barbs, barnacles and possessing gills.

Worship service. The assembly is listening and responding to a litany in the language of the sahuagin. The holy response is a pledge of vengeance by the sea dwelling folk against surface peoples who do not submit to the toothy might of Sekolah the shark god. The litany includes praise for as-yet unrevealed champion who will wield the *Blade of Sekolah*.

The reader is Arowana, a **deep scion** in humanoid form, who is armed with a *berserker axe*. (After taking damage in combat, Arowana makes a DC 15 Wisdom check. On a failed roll she attacks the nearest person, and continues attack until there are no persons within 60 feet that she can see or hear.)

The humans and elves are **cultists**, Waterdeep residents who make their living from the sea. The other four are **sea spawn** (*Volo's Guide to Monsters*). They are also worshipping, but will quickly switch to defending the hall against any intruders.

Treasure. The cultists carry 2d6 silver pieces each. Arowana carries a cursed item, a *berserker axe*. The statue holds a greatsword that is the *Blade of Sekolah*, which is a *Sword of Vengeance*.



6 Flooded Seaway

Sea life swims in the flooded sections of the chamber and the two channels that lead out to the sea. Any creature in the water has a chance of the following encounters on a given round.

d20	Result
1-8	No encounter
9-10	Awakened shrub (kelp)
11-12	Swarm of quippers
13-14	Two reef sharks
15-16	Octopus
17-18	Two giant crabs
19-20	Giant sea horse

7 Deep channel

This section of the sea cave has a deep water channel running 20- to 50-foot deep in places (1d4+1 to determine depth of a particular section). An air pocket between the waterline and the ceiling of the cave is less than 5 feet.

Three **hunter sharks** patrol this section on behalf of the sahuagin, though they are mostly concerned with intrusion by sea elves and merfolk.

8 Shallow channel

This section of the sea cave rarely runs deeper than 20 feet (4d6 to determine depth of a particular section in feet).

Occasionally, a **reef shark** will swim in this section of the caves (a chance of 1-4 on a d20 roll).



Vikliti the merrow

Two **sahuagin** are sometimes (a chance of 1-10 on a d20 roll) assigned to guard the treasure placed on an underwater shelf (marked X on the map). Two **merfolk** might be investigating these caves (a chance of 1-8 on a d20 roll) in an attempt to uncover sahuagin mischief.

If the merfolk and either the reef shark or the sahuagin appear at the same time, the PCs will come upon them doing battle in the shallow waters.

Treasure. 3 gems (worth 50 gp each), 140 pp and 1,000 gp. The coins are loose in piles, resting in chests of sodden wood and rusted metal platters.

9 Channel convergence

The two channels have a chokepoint before merging into a narrow sea cave. This cave, which extends roughly 1,500 feet out toward a deeper section of the Great Harbor, is filled to the ceiling with water and has no air pockets.

Vikliti, a **merrow**, was assigned here by the Kraken Society to guard against intrusion by sea elves and merfolk. A solitary hunter, however, he often neglects his duties. He dislikes the cramped space of the narrow cave and much prefers open water for his hunting (He can be encountered here on a 1-7 of a d20 roll).

10 Foyer

Starfish and Brine, female and male **deep scion** guards in their hybrid forms are stationed here. Their purpose is two-fold, escort persons into the Royal Hall for an audience with the sahuagin priestess and to attend to the dwarf captive.

There is a bucket here filled with fish, a snack for Brine. Starfish carries a “scroll” of *ray of enfeeblement* inscribed on a seashell. The item is a trophy she took in battle with a sea elf and not useable by either deep scion.

11 Royal Hall

The leader of the Kraken Society's sahuagin allies holds court here. The room appears hastily decorated to look like an audience chamber. There is a large stone chair that acts as a throne and large seashells and other ocean paraphernalia adorn the walls.

Wishalagala (wish AL-ga-la) is a **sahuagin priestess**. She has 6 **sahuagin** attendants, two positioned in front of the doors to the two cell, the others are lined up against the west wall. They perceive anyone who is not a sahuagin or a member of the Kraken Society as a threat.

Wishalagala disagrees with Kerttu's decision to keep the dwarf captive. She thinks the dwarf would make better shark food. A key made of whale bone that fits the lock to both cells is on her person. She also has the dwarf's shortsword and hand crossbow tucked behind the throne.

If threatened by the PCs, Wishalagala warns them that she is under the protection of Baroness Korshinka who will bring the wrath of the seas upon them if she is harmed. She says Korshinka's arrival is imminent.

12 Cell A

The door is unlocked. The room is empty.

13 Cell B

The door is locked. Skittles, the dwarf **spy**, is here. He is unconscious and has 0 hp. He has been abused by his captors.

14 Priest's Quarters

A pool 1 foot deep filled with seawater serves as a "bed" for Kerttu.

15 Inner Sanctum

This door to this room is locked (DC 15 to unlock, key is held by Kerttu).

This room is adorned with imagery of tentacles, swirling patterns and other octopus-themed decor.

Empowered by the sea. Once Kerttu, a **Kraken Priest** (*Volo's Guide to Monsters*) is aware that the adjoining priest's quarters has been violated (such as someone trying the lock on the door), she will retreat through the secret door to Room 5, the Temple to Sekolah. Her first action will be **Voice of the Kraken** to frighten her enemies. Her allies, including sharks in the channel, will hear it and rally to her side.

On her turns in combat, she will cast these spells: *control water* to flood the area, and then *Evard's black tentacles* and *call lightning* to attack intruders. After wearing down the PCs, she attacks with *thunderous touch*.

Sahuagin surprise. At any point during or after combat with Kerttu, but only if the DM deems it within the PCs' capabilities, the **sahuagin baroness** Korshinka arrives via the deep channel access. Her primary goal is to rescue and escort the other sahuagin, most especially the priestess Wishalagala, to safety of the harbor. If she doesn't see Wishalagala during the combat, she will go to the Royal Hall. If she finds her people slain, she will return to the temple and join the attack on the PCs. She fights until she loses half her hit points. At that point, she will make a vow of vengeance and retreat down the deep channel to the harbor.

What's next?

The PCs gain a point of renown from their faction for the safe return of Skittles.

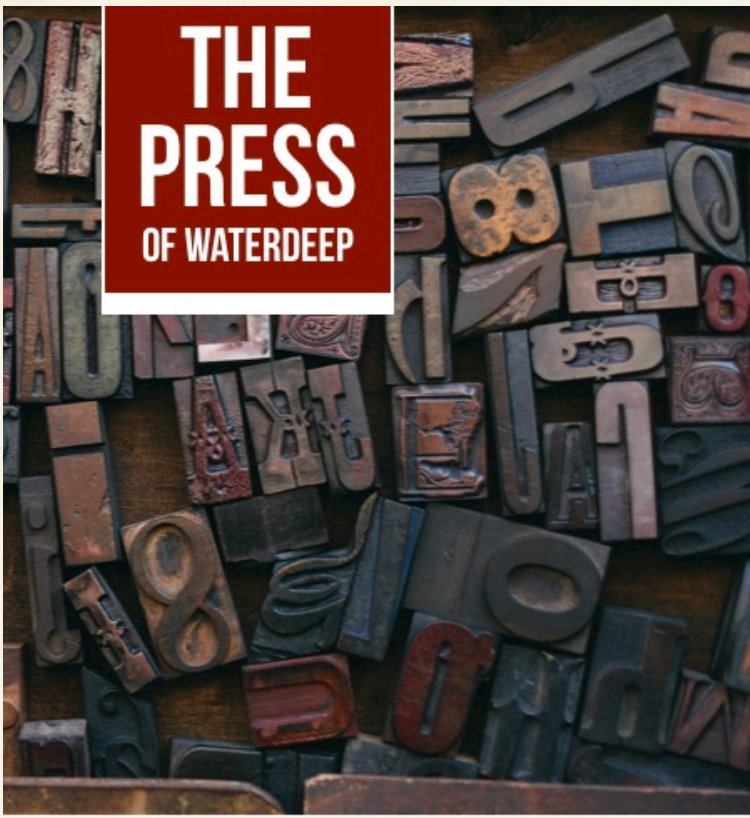
The PCs have made enemies of the Kraken Society and the sahuagin baroness Korshinka, if she survives. Either could provide complications or further adventures for the PCs.

The PCs' faction will be interested in turning the trading house into a legitimate business or using the underground section as a safe house. The access to the harbor is especially useful for smuggling, spying, or for defense of the city.

Learning that there is a fishing village in the vicinity of Red Rocks that has been overrun by the Kraken Society might be an incentive for the PCs to investigate.


Dungeon Masters, use these products to enhance your players' experience as they take part in **Waterdeep Dragon Heist** and other adventures featuring the most famous city in fantasy roleplaying.

DIVE INTO WATERDEEP

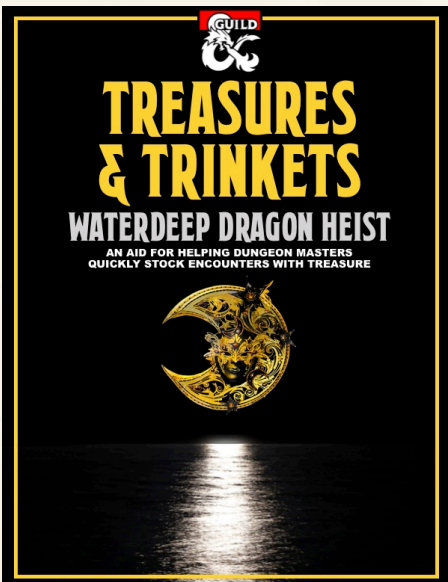


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